



U5/6 Community Soccer

Although sometimes we may mistake 5-6 year-olds for little adults, they are clearly not little adults. They have many years of childhood and development to enjoy before they are able to look at life through the lens of an adult. The reason for this is that they need time to intellectually, emotionally, and physically develop.

Dribbling should be the primary focus of our efforts, and practices should strive to give each player as many touches on the ball as possible. In order to fully understand this wonderful age group and to make practices run as smoothly as possible, it is extremely important for us to understand the following characteristics about U5-U6 children.

Typical Characteristics of U5-U6 Players

Ego-centric - focused on themselves – reality to them is solely based on what they see and feel.

Unable to see the world from another's perspective – it is “the world according to me” time. Asking them to understand how someone else is seeing something or how they feel is unrealistic.

Everything is in the here and now – forget about the past and future, they live in the moment.

Heating and cooling systems are less efficient than adults – we need to give frequent water breaks (every 8-10 minutes) or they may just run until they cannot run anymore.

Enjoy playing, not watching – they feel no enjoyment from watching others play when they could be playing too. Make sure every player has a ball in practice so every player is always playing and has the chance to make decisions with the ball.

Limited attention span (on average 15 seconds for listening, 10-15 minutes when engaged in a task) – keep your directions concise and to the point.

Effort is synonymous with performance – if they have tried hard, they believe they have done well. This is a wonderful quality and we should be supportive of their enthusiasm.

Active imaginations – if we utilize their imaginations in practice activities, they will love practice! As the coach suspend reality and enjoy your time with them.

Look for adult approval – watch how often players look for your approval or to see if you are looking. Also be encouraging when they say “Coach, look what I can do!”



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Unable to think abstractly– asking them to think about spatial relations or runs off the ball is unrealistic

Characteristics continued-

Typically have 2 speeds -- extremely fast and stopped

Usually unaware of game scores – we should keep it that way

Often like to fall down just because it is fun – they are just children having fun.

Often cannot identify left foot vs. right foot – they know which foot they use most and if they point to their feet you can help teach them left and right

Skill Coaching Priorities

- Decision making.
- Comfort with the ball at their feet
- Movement Education – Running, Jumping, backwards, turning, falling down, etc.
- Basic coordination and motor skills
- Keep it active and FUN! – No laps, lines, lectures

Game & Practice Specifications Play – Practice - Play

- Teams are made up of up to 6 players and games are played 3v3 with no goal-keepers
- Games are 25-30 minutes and are a part of the Play-Practice-Play method.
- Substitutions are made during the game. The game opens up as players tire out.
- Players should receive 50% playing time
- Balls should be size #3
- Every session is a practice and a game. 25-30 minutes devoted to both.
- End ALL practices with a game – this is why the kids are here and we want them to WANT to come back

Ownership · Teamwork · Leadership · Respect