

Coaching tips for U6 & U8 Soccer courtesy of US Youth Soccer

Help! I Volunteered to Coach!

Many first time coaches volunteer or are volunteered to the job. The first thing is to relax. Relax and think about how much fun you are going to have with these little Under-6 and Under-8 soccer players.

Goal: Create a fun, learning soccer environment for your players in training and in games.

How?

- Talk to the Program Director and request helpful coaching materials and coaching aids.
- Talk to other Soccer Coaches in the program or in your community who have worked with these age groups before.
- Call your State Youth Soccer Association and request helpful coaching materials and coaching aids.
- Call your State Youth Soccer Association and ask to speak with the State Director of Coaching about specific age appropriate coaching courses and age appropriate training materials.
- Call US Youth Soccer at 1.800.4SOCCER or visit their web site at www.USYouthSoccer.org and request and/or order helpful coaching materials and coaching aids

Team Management:

Prepare a list of simple and clear rules for your players and their parents. Conduct a preseason meeting to review these rules and to go over other important information and to complete important administrative paperwork.

Consider the following:

- Schedules and locations for training sessions and games.
- Drop off and pick up times for training sessions and games.
- Player responsibilities and behavior at training sessions and games.
- Parent responsibilities and behavior at training sessions and games.
- Player equipment (#3 soccer ball, shin pads, soccer shoes or sneakers, water, appropriate clothing).
- Coaching equipment (#3 soccer balls, 25-30 cones, 10 vests/pennies, basic first aid kit, small cooler of ice and zip lock bags).
- Fill out program registration forms and medical release forms.
- Discuss the procedure for canceling training sessions and games.
- Discuss your philosophy of coaching...it's about player development, not winning and losing!

Risk Management:

- Provide proper age appropriate activities at training sessions and games.
- Assure that training and playing areas are safe.
- Make sure that all players are wearing the correct equipment and that it is appropriately sized.
- Make sure that you are assisted by another adult when coaching the players (This includes the time when players arrive and when they depart from training sessions and games).
- Create a plan for any medical emergencies/injuries.

The Training Session - Under-6 Format

- Duration is 45-60 minutes.
- Every child has a ball.
- Individual activities.
- Warm-up activities include movement education approach...with and without a ball (10 minutes).
- Fun games activities with and with out a ball (20 minutes).
- Conclude with 3v3 games to two goals, with no goalkeepers.

The Training Session - Under-8 Format

- Duration is 60 minutes.
- Every child has a ball.
- Individual and partner activities.
- Warm-up activities with and without the ball – dribbling and passing (15 minutes).
- Maze games and target games (25 minutes).
- Conclude with 4v4 games to two goals, with no goalkeepers.