

Wellsboro Area Youth Soccer

U6 Curriculum

This is an exploratory stage for players. This will be the first exposure that many children will have to the game. At this age children do not have the same capacity as adults to analyze the environment. Children at this age continue to explore and have an egocentric conception of the world with little concern for team activities. Consequently, empathy and the capacity to consider the thoughts and feelings of others are very low. Essentially, they are still gathering the experience necessary to interact with their surroundings and with others. In order to help children build their own experience, many exercises will be individual in nature (ex. each player will have a ball). The tactical component of the game will be reduced to small-sided games with basic explanations about space distribution. The focus should be on becoming comfortable with the ball while moving in the playing space and playing fun games. Training sessions will be treated more as physical education than specifically as soccer training. - US Soccer Curriculum

Psychological:

Objectives: The player will...

- show a developing sense of fair play, emotional control, imagination, and courage.

Physical:

Objective: The player will...

- demonstrate basic motor skills with games that incorporate balance, walking, running, jumping, turning, spinning with and without the ball.
- demonstrate space awareness on the field (Head up, scanning the field at all times, moving to open spaces).

Technique:

Objective: The player will...

- demonstrate increased ease and comfort moving with the ball at their feet (dribbling).
- stop a rolling ball with feet.
- strike a ball using a "soccer hop and load" motion - [The Soccer Hop](#)
 - Passing is not something to emphasize at this age group.

Tactics:

Objective: The player will...

- show an understanding that one can dribble, pass, or shoot the ball (rather than just kick the ball).
- show the identification of open space to move with the ball.
- demonstrate field orientation (which goal to attack; which goal to defend).
- know "how to play the game" - understand the basic rules (ex. boundaries, no hands).

Training Sessions:

Objective:

- 1 practice day/week plus one game/week
- 45-60 minute practice sessions
- training activities that include a ball for each player
- practices that utilize multiple, useful touches on the ball for each player

Principles:

- Be sure the training area is appropriate and safe.
- Activities should be developmentally appropriate and relevant to the game of soccer. (See EPYSA U6 season practice plan below)
- Be clear, concise, with accurate information.
- Practice session activities should build from simple to complex.
- Encourage player decision making on the field.

Structure:

- [Setting up a practice area](#)
- Each practice session has four main ingredients:
 1. Warm-up - Elevating body temperature (use the ball)
 2. Individual Activity - technique improvement (each with a ball)
 3. Small Group Activity - improve technique and understanding with small numbers
 4. Large Group Activity - application of technique and decision making in the game.
- Preparation: All coaches should have a plan coming into the practice session.
[EPYSA U6 season practice plan](#)
 - 30% of time spent on the physical component.
 - 35% of time spent on technique.
 - 35% of time spent playing the game.
- During the Session: Do not stop the activity too often. Players must learn to find solutions without constant coaching. Give clear and accurate coaching points and quickly restart the practice.
- Evaluation: Take a few minutes after the session to review and note what worked well and what needs improvement.

The Game:

Objective: By the end of the season the player should be capable of:

1. Running, jumping and stopping with and without the ball.
2. Handling the ball with at least one foot and both hands.
3. Occupying the original space during the game once an action is finished.
4. Playing the game with a basic understanding of how the game is played.

Terminology

Dribbling - Controlling and moving the ball with the feet.

"Soccer Hop" - When the player hops on to their plant foot while at the same time loading their shooting leg - as opposed to just contacting the ball while in the running motion.

Touchline - The longer boundary line marking the side of the field. The full touch line is in the field of play.

Goal line - The shorter boundary lines marking the end of the field. The full goal line is in the field of play.

Dribbling Games

1. Red Light - Green Light

As in the game we played in our youth, one player is "IT". He stands at one end of the field with his/her back to the others and calls out red light, green light one, two, three and then turns around. The players meanwhile have been dribbling toward him/her and must stop, with their foot on top of the ball, when the player turns around. Anyone moving must go back to the beginning to try again.

Coaching Points: Keep the ball close and under control

2. North - South - East and West

Players dribble where the coach tells them to, i.e. a direction as suggested in the title.

Coaching Points: Keep the ball close and under control, keep head up.

3. Big Bad Bear

Each player with a ball in designated space. The coach is the "big bad bear" and moves about trying to get the ball from the players. If a ball is knocked away, the player quickly recovers the ball and rejoins the game.

Coaching Points: Keep the ball close and under control, keep head up, look for open space away from the coach who is trying to get the ball.

4. Draw

Partners face each other. Place one soccer ball between the two players. The objective of the game is to "draw" the ball back using the sole of the foot. The command to "Draw" is given by the coach. The fun part is that the coach tells a story in which he uses the word "draw" to signal the player movement.

For example: "Willy and his sister were working on cleaning their rooms. Willy said, "Where should I put these socks?' And his sister replied, 'In your **Drawer**.'" Make up really silly stories.

You can add progression to this activity by having the players jog in place, have the players only use the non-dominant foot, have the players move up a ladder if they win and down if they lose the round and see who can get to the top first

Coaching Points: using the sole of the foot to pull the ball away from the opponent

5. Pac Man

In this game players are moving in any direction in a designated space. All players except one has a ball. The player without a ball is the "ghost" and tries to knock the other player's soccer ball out-of-bounds. Any player who loses his ball becomes the "ghost".

Coaching Points: Keep the ball close and under control, keep head up, look for open space away from the "ghost" who is trying to get the ball.

6. Sharks and Minnows

Set up a rectangular grid with cones. One player is in the center and is the "shark". Everyone else is along an end line with a ball. The objective is to get to the other end, in control of the ball. Don't let the players just kick it and run after it. The "shark" has to knock the ball out of bounds. Whoever's ball goes out becomes a "shark" and assists in getting the remainder of the players. The last player in becomes the next "shark".

Coaching Points: Keep the ball close and under control, keep head up, get past the opponent

References:

Arkansas State Soccer Association

Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer Association (EPYSA)

NFHS Soccer Rules Book

National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA)

Perry, George. January/February 2008. Fun For The Little Ones. Soccer Journal.

Success in Soccer. March 2006. "Playful Training

US Soccer Federation Curriculum (USSF)

US Youth Soccer Coaching Education Assistant Coach Series