

U6 ACTIVITIES



The FUNdamental Stage—to understand how best to approach U6 players, you must first understand who you are coaching. When you consider the following characteristics of U6 players, planning activities becomes easier.

General Characteristics of the U-6 Age Group

- Catching skills not yet developed
- Constantly in motion—love to run, jump, roll and climb
- Eye-hand and/or eye-foot coordination is primitive at best—not ready for bouncing or flighted balls
- No sense of pace—go flat out
- Physical coordination is immature—can balance on dominant foot
- Controlling the ball is a complex task
- Prefer large soft balls and foam balls
- Only understand simple rules
- Individually oriented (me, my, mine)—little or no concern for team activities
- Believes in Santa Claus, but will not discuss with peers—lofty imagination
- Physical and psychological development of boys and girls are quite similar
- Psychologically, easily bruised—need generous praise
- Short attention span—tends to one task at a time
- Limited understanding of time and space

Typical U-6 Training Session

- Should not exceed 45 minutes
- Every child should have a ball
- Free play or a warm-up, including movement education challenges and soccerastics—approximately 15 minutes
- Game-like activities, mostly body awareness and maze games—approximately 15 minutes
- Finish with a 3v3 game with two goals, no goalkeepers—approximately 15 minutes

This table shows the appropriate ball-to-player ratio for practices with players U6 thru U12

Age	Ratio
U6	1:1
U8	1:1 up to 1:2
U10	1:1 up to 1:4
U12	1:1 up to 1:6

Warm-Up "I Can Do-Can U?"

Players are all inside a little area. Coach starts off by saying "I can do something without a ball-can u?". Then the coach performs a simple motion like hopping on one foot, walking and clapping hands in front and behind, walking and clamping hands between legs.

Then the coach says, "I can do something with a ball can you?"

The coach then asks the group "Who can show us something we can all try with a ball?"



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LESSON PLAN: U6 COORDINATION



Listening
Coordination
Balance
Creativity

1st Activity "Shapes"

All players are in a grid. They dribble the ball around inside the grid. A coach will yell a shape. When a shape is called, dribble the ball and "paint" the shape.

So, if circle is called they have to dribble the ball around in a circle. Call triangles, diamonds, McDonald's arch, etc. Let them come up with their own shapes while dribbling a ball.

"What parts of the feet can we use to move the ball?" (outside, inside)

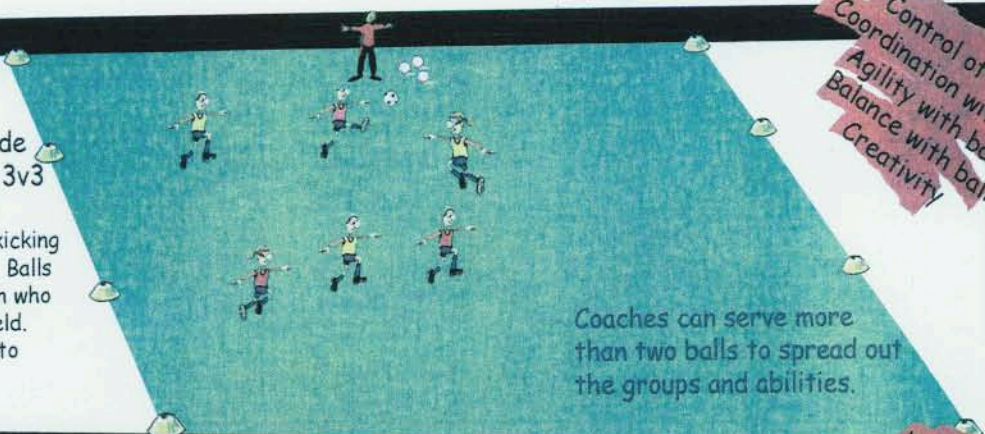


Control of Ball
Control of Body
Coordination
Agility
Balance
Creativity

2nd Activity

3v3 endline soccer
Set up a 15 yd x 20 yd grid. Divide the players into two teams. Play 3v3 with no goalkeepers on the field.

A team scores by dribbling the ball or kicking the ball over their designated end line. Balls are served in one at a time by the coach who is positioned outside the field at midfield. Coaches can serve more than two balls to spread out the groups and abilities.



Coaches can serve more than two balls to spread out the groups and abilities.

Control of Ball
Coordination with ball
Agility with ball
Balance with ball
Creativity

Game

3v3 Game

Set up a 15 yd x 20 yd grid.

Divide the players into two teams.

Play 3v3 with no goalkeepers on the field.

A team scores by dribbling the ball or kicking the ball over their designated goal. Balls are served in one at a time by the coach who is positioned outside the field at midfield. After a bit, tell them that "The boss is taking a break" and have them do their own kick-ins.



Let them play.
Tell them to be "smart" with the ball.

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LESSON PLAN: U6-U8 MOVEMENT

1 Goofy Says Activities

30x20-yard area
Players move freely in the area w/o the ball
Coach is named Goofy
Players do what Goofy says

ADD VARIATIONS:
CHANGE DIRECTION, BACKWARDS, ETC.



Coach demos log roll to players. On command, players perform log roll and back up and jog. On command, players jump up high off two feet, then jog. On command, players jump up high off one foot, then jog. On command, players run fast for 3 seconds (coach counts out), then jog. On command, they perform all tasks in a row.

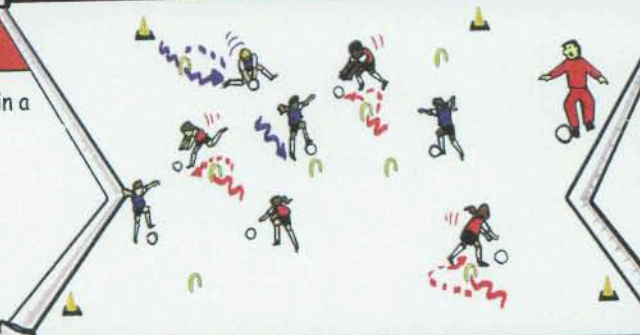
MOVEMENT EDUCATION:
JUMPING, ROLLING, CHANGE OF PACE.

2 Strawberry Farms

Set up 6 to 8 one-yard gates within a 20x30-yard area

All players with a ball

MORE MOVEMENT EDUCATION
FAMILIARITY WITH THE BALL
EYE-FOOT COORDINATION,
AWARENESS.



Coach asks players to collect as many strawberries as they can by dribbling their ball through a gate, bending down to scoop the strawberries. Next, the players must step on the ball and pull it back, because the road is closed on other side. Next, step on ball, do a front roll turn, and run back through with ball. Use your imagination.

U8 can take a few balls away; now must get ball to get strawberries.

3 Fisherman Game (Sharks and Minnows)

20 yards wide x 30 yards long
Players w/o a ball
Coach is the fisherman
Players are the fish

DIRECTIONAL PLAY, CHANGE OF SPEED AND DIRECTION.
LEARNING TO RUN WITH THE BALL,
KEEP THE BALL, TAKE THE BALL ...



Players line up on end line (their pond, which has no more food). The coach (fisherman) is in the middle. The players attempt to run across the lake to the other pond that has more fish food. Fisherman attempts to tag players (fish); they become fisherman if tagged. Progress to players dribbling across. Fisherman must clear ball over any line (so fish could win it back if lose ball).

4 1 vs 1 to Goals

20 yards wide x 30 yards long (beginning in the middle of the side-line). Players line up on both sides of the coach.
Balls are at coach's feet.

EMPHASIS ON AGILITY SKILLS:
STOPPING, STARTING, AND CHANGING DIRECTIONS.



PROGRESS TO 2V2

LEARNING TO COMPETE!
DRIBBLING VS. AN OPPONENT

Coach explains to teams which direction they are going. Also explains if the other player has the ball, try to take it away and score on their goal. First player in each line goes after ball and tries to score when coach sends ball into play. Can have many of them at the same time. If they score, both come back to coach and get ready to go again. Progress to 2 vs 2.

5 3 vs 3 OR 4 vs 4: Boss of the Balls

LET THEM PLAY!

3(4) players enter field and play against 3(4) others to goals. If ball goes out of play the coach simply serves another ball into play. When all the balls are gone make subs and have the players collect the balls for you to have by your side to serve into next game



All facets of the game come into play
✓ Many chances to touch the ball in fun, fast-paced game
✓ Makes children think fast, as a new ball is played in.

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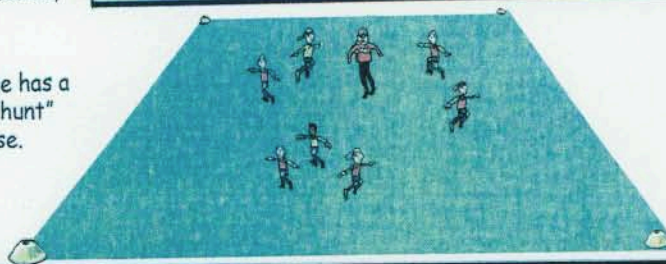
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U6 Lesson Plan

1st Activity (warm-up)

Players run around area at random, coach calls out a group of players, or a player, who then become hunters. Who can tag the most players in a minute? Identifiers can be: hair color, t-shirt color, sock colors, letter of name, etc.

Progressions: Everyone has a ball; players dribble and "hunt" while keeping the ball close.



2nd Activity DOG AND MASTER

Each player (master) dribbles their ball (dog). The coach calls out various commands: keep him on a short leash, dog runs away - then catch it, master strokes dog, master jogs with dog, masters swap dogs, etc.

Introduce: tall cones as trees (stay away from trees); an evil dog catcher who kicks the ball out of the park (players have to see the park ranger (coach) to get back into the park)

"TIGERS IN THE JUNGLE"



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3rd Activity

Each child chooses to be a type of animal that lives in the jungle and makes the sound of that animal, only tigers are not allowed. The tiger is most feared and kicks the ball out of the jungle into the swamp. If a ball is kicked into the swamp, the animals must bring it back, but must stand with legs apart and ball in air. When another animal dribbles though their legs, they are free to play again.

Progressions: Animals dribble only using left foot, outside of the foot, etc.

4th Activity

"DISNEY GAME"



TWO TEAMS OF EQUAL NUMBER STAND AT EACH END OF A 25 X 18 AREA. GIVE EACH PLAYER A DISNEY CHARACTER NAME (MAKE SURE THERE IS A MATCHING CHARACTER AT EACH END). COACH SENDS IN A BALL AND CALLS OUT WHICH PLAYERS ARE TO PLAY.

Phase Two: After players play for a number of goals, minutes or until the balls goes out, the players return to their starting spots.

Progressions: Two names for 2 v 2. With older players try calling out two different names. (First name from one end, second name from other)

Don't be afraid to play more than one 1 v 1 at a time!

5th Activity (the game)

"LET THE PLAYERS PLAY!"



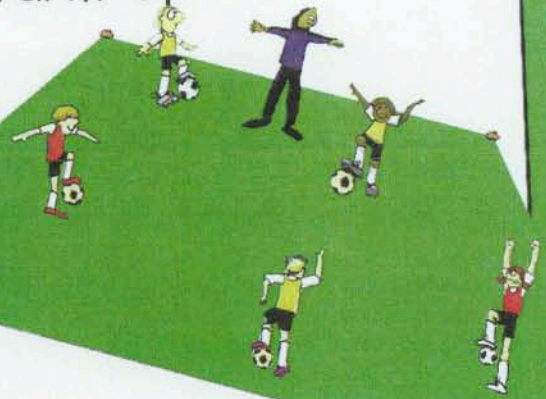
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LESSON PLAN: U6 Balance

1st Activity "Goofy Stop"

All players have a ball. They all dribble around and when the coach says stop, they have to stop the ball with the bottom of their foot and make a funny/goofy pose.

Warm-Up



2nd Activity "Body Parts"

Each player has a ball and dribbles the ball in an area. As a coach, you call out a "body part" for the players to stop the ball with.

3rd Activity (Direction Game) "Sharks and Minnows"



4th Activity 3v3 Game-no goalkeepers



LESSON PLAN: U6 DRIBBLING (HEAD UP!)

WARM UP: Retrieval Activity
Each player gives their ball to the coach. The coach tosses the ball out for each player to collect and bring back...

PURPOSE/ COACHING POINTS:
*INTRO TO DRIBBLING
*COORDINATION/BALANCE



Pick up ball and run back...
Pick up ball and skip back...
Pick up ball and hop back...
Collect ball and dribble back!!!

2ND ACTIVITY: Maze Game

All players are in a grid. When the coach says, "Green" all players dribble their ball...

When the coach says, "Red" all players stop the ball with the bottom of the foot...

COACHING POINT:
KEEP THE BALL CLOSE



"Red Light-Green Light"

Progress to the coach holding either a Green or Red cone, towel, t-shirt, etc...

The coach now doesn't say anything, simply holds up a color and the players must look up and react...

GUIDED DISCOVERY QUESTIONS:

WHAT PART OF YOUR FOOT CAN YOU USE TO DRIBBLE?
WHEN NO ONE IS TRYING TO TAKE THE BALL FROM YOU, WHERE SHOULD YOUR HEAD BE?

USE THE TOE LACES INSIDE OR OUTSIDE!

3RD ACTIVITY: Direction Game "Traffic"

All players on the goal line. They must dribble from one line to the other.

The coach calls: **RED!!!** or **GREEN!!!**
Players dribble on Green, and stop on Red!
If a ball is not stopped, then the player goes back even with the last player...

the player goes back even with the last player...

Variation:
Drop disc cones down as potholes!

Again, progress to the coach raising a colored t-shirt, cone, towel, etc.

The players must look up and react to the coach's instruction **AND** avoid potholes!

4TH ACTIVITY: 3v3 Game (No Gk's)

Encourage them to be brave with the ball!

Let them play!

3v3 is really 1 against 5 at U6

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GUIDED DISCOVERY QUESTIONS:

HOW FAR AWAY SHOULD THE BALL BE FROM YOU? (Close enough so that you can control it!)
WHY DO YOU WANT TO AVOID THE POTHOLE? (So that you don't get a flat!)



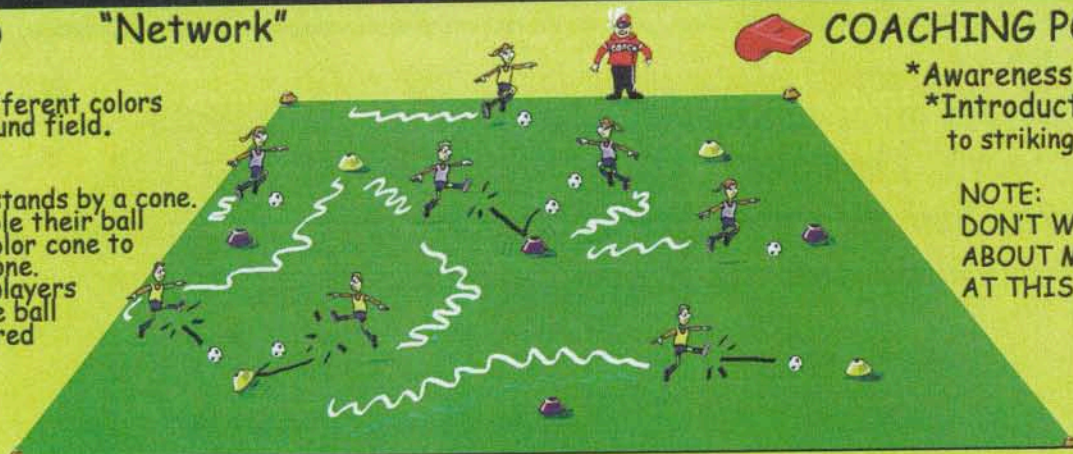
LESSON PLAN: U6 STRIKING THE BALL

Warm-Up

"Network"

Place two different colors of cones around field.

Each player stands by a cone. Players dribble their ball from same color cone to same color cone. Progress to players "striking" the ball at their colored cone.



COACHING POINTS:

- *Awareness
- *Introduction to striking the ball

NOTE:
DON'T WORRY ABOUT MECHANICS AT THIS AGE...

1st Game "Moving Goal"

Every player has a ball. Two adults hold a "pool noodle" by each end. Players with the ball follow the coaches around and strike the ball between the adults and below the "pool noodle". Adults walk around to encourage the players to run and strike the ball



COACHING POINTS:

To spread out the players even more, there could be more than one "moving" goal.

- Running with the ball
- Striking the ball
- Scoring goals
- FUN!



2nd Game "3v3" (No goalkeepers)

Two goals are placed on the ends. Two teams of 3. Each team is attacking a goal and defending a goal. Coach has a collection of balls and is the "boss". Coach will always make sure that there are always two balls in play at a time.



COACHING POINTS:

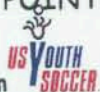
- *Scoring goals
- *Concept of parallel play
- *Break up the groups with multiple balls to get more repetition.

Game "3v3" (No goalkeepers)

Play 3v3 game where a goal is worth "ONE MILLION" POINTS!

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COACHING POINTS:

Note:
3v3 is really 1 against 5 with U6's!

Let the players play!

LESSON PLAN; U6 DRIBBLING CHANGE OF DIRECTION

All players in the middle without a ball. Four people (coaches and/or parents each go on a side of the square.)



The parents/coaches raise their arms (on cue from coach) and when the players get close, put their arm down. Another parent/coach then may raise their arm up. The players must run towards the arm that is up. Progress to all players dribbling to the arm that is "up".

"How can you change direction with or without the ball?" (plant your feet and turn your body)

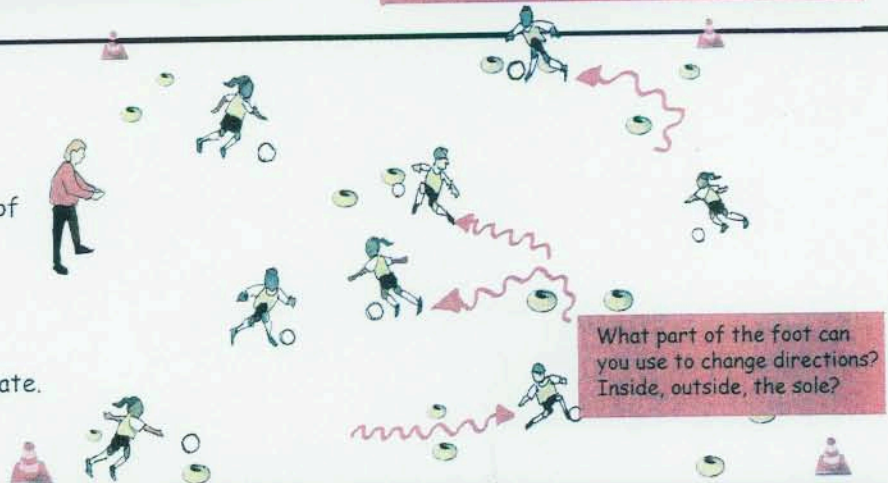
"SCHOOL OF FISH" "GATES"

Make gates inside the grid 3 yards apart. You can even let the players do it for you. Make at least one more gate than the amount of players.

Players are instructed to dribble through as many gates as possible.

After several rounds-add gate blockers in which players/coaches run and simply block a gate.

The player arriving at that gate has to go to a new one.



What part of the foot can you use to change directions? Inside, outside, the sole?

"FROGGER"

All players have a ball and line up on a line facing a direction. The players are the Frogs.

The coach and several parents are in the middle. The coach is the alligator and parents are the "logs".

The "logs" walk back and forth and the "alligator" tries to tag the "frogs".

The "frogs" try and cross without the "alligator" tagging them.

The "frogs" can use the "logs" to help them get across. If the "frogs" get next to a "log" they are safe. If a "frog" gets tagged they are then next to the "alligator" and help him/her.



"How can you avoid being tagged by the alligator?" (change directions and go fast!)

"What can you do if the alligator is coming at you?" (change direction)

"Where should your head be?" (up!)

Play 3v3 game with no goalkeepers



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LET THEM PLAY!

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