



U4's, U5's and U6's Coach and Parent Reference Guide



1. Quick Facts about U4/U5/U6 soccer players

- a) Characteristics of the player – “Body and Mind” under construction
 - i) Short attention span (sometimes only a few seconds)
 - ii) Individually focused – “It’s all about ME”
 - iii) No understanding of pace – they run till they drop!
 - iv) Easily bruised psychologically (be careful what you say!)
 - v) Not physically coordinated – lots of falling down!!
 - vi) Eye-hand and/or eye-foot coordination primitive and developing
 - vii) Can balance on good foot
 - viii) Love to climb, run, jump and roll (Often will do these things during a game for fun)

2. Training Sessions – Homework

- a) The player’s needs – A ball should be included in most activities
 - i) Tag games with and without a ball
 - ii) Relay races with and without a ball
 - iii) Ball awareness – what a ball can do: bounce, roll, go up and come down
 - iv) Ball mastery (activities that promote foot skills)
 - v) Fundamentals (dribbling and shooting)
- b) Young players need frequent touches (one ball per player)
- c) Demonstrate if possible – paint the picture for the players
- d) Involve all children in activity (NO LINES, NO LAPS, NO LECTURES)
 - i) The coach should participate in activities and have fun right along with the kids (Coaches enthusiasm for what they are doing is critical)
- e) Players need continuous, consistent positive encouragement
- f) End with small-sided games: 1 vs 1, 2 vs 2 and 3 v 3

3. U4's, U5's – U6's Sample Practice Session Outline

- 5:00 – 5:06 pm Warm-up activity (6 min)
5:06 – 5:07 pm Water break (1 min)
5:07 – 5:15 pm 1st Activity (8 min)
5:15 – 5:23 pm 2nd Activity (8 min)
5:23 – 5:25 pm Water Break (2 min)
5:25 – 5:33 pm 3rd Activity (8 min)
5:33 – 5:41 pm 4th Activity (8 min)
5:41 – 5:43 pm Water Break (2 min)
5:43 – 5:58 pm Scrimmage (3 v 3 no GK if possible or 2 v 2 no GK) (15 min)
5:58 – 6:00 pm Praise players and briefly ask what the players liked about the session (2 min)

4. What will this “Soccer” game look like?

- a) It is designed as 3 v 3 or 4 v 4 but it will end up being 1 vs 5
 - i) Everyone versus the player with the ball!
- b) It resembles a bee hive or a swarm chasing a ball. Somewhere in the middle is a player kicking the ball.
- c) A child may run off the field to hug a parent, have their parent tie their shoe, stop and waive at a parent
- d) A child may stop playing to admire a plane, a butterfly, etc
- e) The kids will not remember the score or whether they won or lost
 - i) They will remember the treat after the game
- f) It will not look organized nor will it be played as though it is organized

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5. General Information

- a) Practice should not exceed one hour
- b) NO LINES, NO LAPS and NO LECTURES – Games are awesome and FUN, standing in lines are not and listening to a coach talk all the time is not.
- c) Passing to teammates is not encouraged. Players tend to spend a lot of time trying to get the ball and the last thing they want to do is give it to someone else once they get it. Remember these age groups are all about “ME, MYSELF, and I”.

6. Injury Prevention

- a) Proper use of equipment (shin guards) with socks pulled over the shin guards
- b) Check field for problem areas (rocks, holes and glass)
- c) Field-appropriate footwear (soccer cleats)
- d) Adequate water supply and breaks
- e) Avoid training during peak heat hours
- f) Follow-up call to parents if a serious injury occurs

7. Game Day

- a) **The Field** – Rectangular in shape; a center circle, a halfway line, goal line and sidelines
- b) **The Ball** – Size 3
- c) **Number of players** – the game is played 3 v 3 or 4 v 4 (depending on roster numbers). Each team shall have no more than three or four players on the field, none of which are designated a goalkeeper (teams will play with equal numbers)
- d) **Player's equipment** – Tennis shoes or soft cleat shoes, shin guards, socks that cover the shin guards and team uniform are mandatory
- e) **Referee** – A coach or coaches shall act as the referee. Usually, the coaches of the teams will tag-team the match.
- f) **Duration of the match** – The match shall consist of four quarters, each 8 minutes long with a two minute break between each quarter and a five minute half time.
- g) **Start of Play** – The ball must be played by the team in possession before it can be touched by an opponent.
- h) **Ball in and out of Play** – The ball must completely cross the end line or touchline (sideline).
- i) **Free Kicks** – All free kicks will be indirect free kicks; the ball, after being played by a team awarded the kick, must touch another player before a goal may be scored.
- j) **Throw-in / Kick-in** – Do-overs are allowed for an incorrectly taken kickoff, goal kick, corner kick, or throw-in
- k) **Substitutions** are allowed during a goal kick; own throw-in/kick-in, goal scored and start of each quarter.
- l) A goal cannot be scored off a kickoff.
- m) There are **no penalty kicks**.

8. Coaches / Equipment

- a) A basic first aid kit
 - i) You should always carry the players medical information and contact information
- b) Age-appropriate ball (size 3)
- c) Cones
- d) Well thought-out plan for each training (practice)
 - i) Including a game day player rotation
- e) Plenty of Patience and Positive Enthusiasm
- f) Post-game treats and drink – The most important thing to the young players on game day!!

9. Resources

- a) Hub City Soccer Club
 - i) Director of Coaching – Merle Aske – hcsdoc@gmail.com
 - ii) HCSC office – 605-225-0088 – aberdeensoccer@nvc.net
- b) US Youth Soccer – www.usyouthsoccer.org