

Player Development Curriculum U6

Varied movement experiences: balancing, skipping, somersault, throw & catch

Differences between boys & girls minimal

Easy fatigue, rapid recovery

Increase use of all body parts

Short attention span

Not yet a team sport

Experience bouncing & rolling ball – away from player, to player, across player

Variety of balls – heavy balls, rubber balls, small & large balls

Give brief directions

Water breaks every 10-15 minutes

Look at the game through their eyes

-Every now and then get down on your knees in a training session activity

1 player & 1 ball

Dribbling out of pressure should be the emphasis

Love and protect the ball hog

Don't play elimination games unless there is an easy way to get back in.

For a good player to develop, she must have three types of play: training with a coach and team, free play with friends, individual practice. Please encourage all of these.

No trophies, no standings.

Kids who are good or bad players right now will change dramatically in the future. Please avoid labels and pigeonholes for these kids. Don't lock them into positions.

Encourage them to dribble, dribble, dribble and dribble some more. Passing will come much later. The real objective is to send us a bunch of kids who love to dribble the ball. Practice before the games should be full of dribbling activities: 1 kid – 1 ball.

We play 4 on 4 because

- Players get more touches on ball
- Smaller numbers on field makes kids more comfortable
- Less competitive, more fun
- In line with national movement

Warm-up 10 minutes, Main activities 20 minutes, play 4v4 match

Defending: immediate chase to get it back

Attacking: Dribble – feint, scissors, pull it back

Dribbling coaching points:

- Body mechanics – keeps ball close to body, use all parts of both feet, When turning, lift the toe to wrap the foot around the ball
- Body shape and balance - knees bent & low to ground, arms out
- Change of pace / direction

- Deception
- Protecting the ball

Running with the ball Coaching Points

- Use laces of shoe
- Point toe down, and turn foot a little to the inside
- Touch ball every step, keep it close

Warm-up activities: stretch every now and then while doing these.

Body part dribble – Dribble in a grid. Stop the ball with the body part coach calls out.

Ball Retrieve – Dribble ball to the coach who picks it up and tosses it away. Then coach calls out different ways to bring the ball back with hands or feet.

Cones – Scatter cones over the field randomly. Line players up shoulder to shoulder. Then tell them to go to a cone and perform a skill – spin around with inside or outside of foot 2 times – before returning home.

Ball toss – toss in air & clap as many times as possible before catching it.

What can you do? - Ask a player, “what can you do with the ball?” Then have the whole group do it.

Main Activities:

Glob – an early sharks and minnows. Coach stands in the middle of Globland (a 20 x 15 area) and then has kids run to the other side of the grid. Begin without a ball. Then add the ball. Kids who are knocked out can either jump right back in for the next round or toss the ball up and clap then catch it to get back in.

Everybody’s It – In a grid, each player has a ball. Tag someone else without being tagged. If tagged, do 5 ball toe taps or some other easy skill. You can also do this with freeze tag – if tagged, pick up your ball, spread your legs. You can be freed if someone passes through your legs.

Shark Attack – Make two boats with cones about 10 yards apart. Each diver (player) gets an air tank (ball) and gets in a boat. Then they are encouraged to take their air tank out of the boat to explore the coral reef. Then the sharks (coaches with cones on head) hum two bars to “Jaws” and say, “Shark Attack!!” Any diver caught is allowed to wriggle free and get in the boat to start again.

Chase – In a grid, all players have a ball. Two players get together and pick a favorite TV show or movie that has a good guy & a bad guy. When the coach says, “Go get ‘em” the bad guy chases the good guy. If caught, the bad guy now chases. Do for 2 rounds, then get a new partner with new characters.

Monsters – have all players in a grid with a ball except for one outside without a ball. This player is his favorite monster, and stalks the other players until coach says go. Then the monster charges in and tries to knockout the balls of the prey. The knocked out players do a soccer skill and get back in.

Pick up cones – great after the Cones warm up activity. Scatter cones randomly, and then see who can run to pick up the most. Scatter them again and do it with a ball.

Gates – set up small gates of two cones randomly in the area. Give them 60 seconds to dribble through as many as possible. Have them keep count. At the end of 60 seconds, ask to see the totals. Then do it again to see if they can better their scores. (You might want to watch the lowest scoring kid and give them all enough time for that player to get a higher number than last time.) Don't be surprised if you get scores of 1,000 or higher reported to you. You can also do follow the leader in this activity.

NASCAR – Set up two ovals. 3-5 players get at a starting point on each oval. Start without a ball, then add a ball. At the go command, they race around the oval. Add different color flags: yellow – caution, slow, no passing; green – race; red – stop. You can even bring these color of shirts and hold them up to get the kids to look up while dribbling. Also get crazy and call out “Switch cars” to get them to leave their ball and get another player's ball. Could also tell them to go the other way after a few races. Maybe have them pick their favorite NASCAR drivers.

Relays – run to flag & back – dribbling ball, holding it on head, going backwards, hopping, slalom course, etc.

1v1 – set up two small goals about 12-15 yards apart. Let them play 1v1.

Cartoons – Kids in a grid with a ball each. Pick between two favorite cartoons, foods, TV shows, etc. Opposite sides of the grid correspond to opposite choices. Dribble around until coach calls out name of one side. Dribble to that side asap. Then pick two teams & each team must get to their home line first.