

Mass Youth Soccer U6/U8 Specialty Clinic

U6 Age Group Characteristics

Coaching at the U6 level can be one of the most rewarding experiences in sports. The children's enthusiasm is contagious and their smiles can brighten up even the gloomiest of days. Coming home after a long day of hard work and arriving at the park to be welcomed by the cheers of players who think you are the harbinger of fun is an experience we would hope everyone gets to feel at some point in their life. That being said, a little crankiness or malaise can make coaching U6 players a very difficult challenge at times. Remembering these general guidelines will help maintain everyone's happiness throughout the entire season.

Typical Characteristics of U6 Players

- *Focused on themselves* – reality to them is solely based on what they see and feel.
- *Unable to see the world from another's perspective* – it is “the world according to me” time. Asking them to understand how someone else is seeing something or feels is unrealistic.
- *Everything is in the here and now* – forget about the past and future, they live in the moment.
- *Heating and cooling systems are less efficient than adults* – we need to give frequent water breaks (every 8-10 minutes) or they may just run until they cannot run anymore.
- *Enjoying playing, not watching* – they feel no enjoyment from watching others play when they could be playing too. Make sure every player has a ball in practice so every player is always playing.
- *Limited attention span* (on average 15 seconds for listening, 10-15 minutes when engaged in a task) – keep your directions concise and to the point. When in an open environment, such as a park, their attention span will dwindle towards 10 seconds.
- *Effort is synonymous with performance* – if they have tried hard, they believe they have done well. This is a wonderful quality and we should be supportive of their enthusiasm.
- *Active imaginations* – if we utilize their imaginations in practice activities, they will love practice!
- *Look for adult approval* – watch how often players look to you for approval or to see if you are looking. Also be encouraging when they say “Coach, look what I can do!”
- *Unable to think abstractly* – asking them to think about spatial relations or runs off the ball is unrealistic.
- *Typically have 2 speeds* -- extremely fast and stopped.

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- *Usually unaware of game scores* – we should keep it that way.
- *Often like to fall down just because it is fun* – they are just children having fun ☺
- *Often cannot identify left foot vs. right foot* – they know which foot they use most and if they point to their feet you can help teach them left and right.
- *Practices length-* never last more than 1 hour and should really be 45-50 minutes
- *During activities-* If there are special roles (e.g. a few players start as sharks or as ice monsters) make sure you give every player a chance to be “special”
- Do not expect children at this age to understand passing as that means they are giving their toy away. They are only focused on themselves.
- Speak to the children at their level. Kneel or bend down and make sure you have gained eye contact and all players in your view.
- If you find particularly shy players, try to pair them up with friendly, mature children who can help create a social bridge
- If you have a particularly angry/aggressive player, immediately set firm conditions to control this behavior and insure the safety of the larger group
- If you are concerned about the behavior of any player, contact that child’s parents to either inform them or seek advice as to how to work with the player most effectively
- Have fun!!!

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U8 Age Group Characteristics

Players in the U8 age group will display a wide range of both technical skills and emotional maturity. You will see great variations in children's motor control and social skill as well. It is the task of a coach at this level to set up practices in which each child of varied ability can challenge him or herself to a level that allows for repeated successes, yet is individually challenging. Players at this age still have good imaginations, though are not as involved in their imaginations as their U6 counterparts. They are more involved socially and do enjoy working with a partner however. In fact, social approval is primary to these children who want everyone to like them and will look for approval from the coach quite regularly. It is important for us to make attempts to give this feedback and make practices fun. If you ask players, they play soccer in order to have fun! We need to keep soccer fun for them. At the same time, we can begin to stress technical development. One of the main components of fun, according to young players, is seeing themselves do better at something. By setting up fun activities that beg the players to demonstrate technical skills, we are doing exactly what these players like and what is best for them developmentally.

Typical Characteristics of U8 Players

- *Tend to play well in pairs* – unlike 6 year-olds, these children enjoy playing in pairs. Try to set up the pairs yourself to control the games and manage the personalities.
- *Are now able to take another's perspective* – they now have a sense of how other people are feeling.
- *Still unable to think abstractly* – still do not have this capability, be patient.
- *Heating and cooling system still less efficient than adults* – still make sure to give frequent water breaks. Practices should be no longer than one hour
- *Still much prefer playing to watching* – keep everyone active during practice and remember, no lines.
- *Limited attention span (on average 15-20 seconds for listening, up to 20 minutes when engaged in a task)* – this may vary greatly on any given day depending on school, diet, etc. Try to get a gauge each day and do not fight crankiness.
- *Have an understanding of time and sequence* – they now understand “if I do this, then that happens”.

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- *Many have incorporated a third or fourth speed into play* – not all players, but many players now have incorporated a speed or two between stopped and as fast as possible.
- *Extremely aware of adult reactions* – be very aware of your verbal and nonverbal reactions, as they look for your reaction frequently.
- *Seek out adult approval* – be supportive when they ask about their performance or try to show you skills. They very much need reassurance and you need to help build their confidence to try new things at this age.
- *Begin to become aware of peer perception* – a social order is beginning to develop. Be sensitive to this.
- *Wide range of abilities between children at this age* – children all develop at varying paces. You may have an 8 year-old who seems more like a 10 year-old and one that seems more like a 6 year-old on the same team. Your challenge is to manage this range in your practice in a way that challenges each player at a level that is reasonable for that player.
- *Some will keep score* – the competitive motors churn faster in some than others. Surely some parents are fueling the motors with their own. Regardless, we do not need to stress winning and losing at this age. Results should not be important at this age.
- *Beginning to develop motor memories* – by attempting beginning technical skills, they are training their bodies to remember certain movements.
- *Less active imaginations than U6 players* – still have active imaginations by adult standards, but some of the silliness that 6 year-olds allowed will not be appreciated by this group. However, children at this age are still quite silly, just in a different way. Still use their imaginations, but watch their reactions to games to read how far you can go with things. Always keep things fun!
- No laps, no lines, no lectures!
- Have fun!!!!

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Psychological/Fun Aspects of Coaching U6 and U8

The most important aspect of working with these age groups is FUN. If not having fun, children will no longer want to play. Children remind us adults of this fact over and over again when asked in research studies and anecdotally. Psychosocial development is also a very important focus for this age group. Children are still learning how to enter and interplay within a social group and we can help with this through soccer. It is important that we praise children of these ages regularly and help build self-esteem and a willingness to be creative. In this manner, we can support them as individuals and help facilitate their entry into the world of group play.

Five and six year-olds have a short attention span and loads of energy. As a result, quick instructions and simple activities work best. Activities that utilize their active imaginations are preferred and will help keep their attention. These players all want to play with the “toy” on the field, which is the ball. In practice, make sure to have a “toy” for each player.

The U8's, like the U6's, need activities that have fun as a central theme. From a psychosocial standpoint, the U8 player has a high need for approval from adults and can be easily bruised psychologically by negative comments from adults. They are very aware of not only what you say to them but how you say it. U8 players are more involved socially, and do enjoy working with a partner; however, they will struggle with larger group sizes. It is important to note that there is a wide degree of variation in the social and physical development of players at this age.

Technical Development of 6-8 Year Olds

Fun, dribbling, and motor development (running, skipping, galloping, turning, jumping) should be the central soccer themes in U6 practices. In order to become comfortable on the ball, U6 and U8 players need to touch the ball as often as possible. The U8 player is now ready to continue development of dribbling skills, and begin passing and shooting; however, touches on the ball and fun are still the focus from a technical standpoint. As we have said repeatedly, players tell us they play soccer in order to have fun! What we must remember is that one of the main components of fun, according to young players, is seeing themselves improve at something. For this reason, helping them see their technical improvement when they make improvements and praising them for it is vital. It is important that each player be shown their own improvement and that we do not compare all players to the “best” player.

We cannot stress enough that tactical instruction should be kept to a minimum at these ages. An appropriate analogy that helps describe our rationale for this is again the learning of a language. You can find a full description of this analogy and further details in the Sample Program Rationale found in the parent section. Below are recommended guidelines for you to follow in your work with these young players.

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<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Skill Priorities</u>
U-6	Dribble with all sides of both feet Dribble out of trouble Dribble past someone Soft first touch
U-8	Dribble with all sides of both feet Dribble out of trouble Dribble past someone Shielding Soft first touch Introduce proper shooting technique Introduce passing

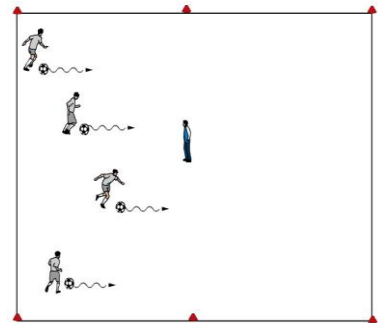
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U6 Sample Lesson Plan:

1) Juggling---Everyone with a ball. Hold hands out with ball in between, drop ball directly down and kick back up to hands, etc. Players practice keeping the ball in the air with feet and thighs, Have each player try to get 1, then next time 2 and so on. Players count how many times they touch the ball before it drops to the ground. (8 minutes)

2) Paint the Field---Every player dribbles their ball in the area defined. You explain to them that their ball is actually a paintbrush and wherever it rolls on the ground, it paints that area. The task is to paint as much of the area as possible in the time allotted by dribbling their soccer balls all over the grid. *Version 2:* Can ask them to paint with only their left foot, then their right foot. (8 minutes)

3) Red light/Green light---All players have a ball and dribble in a limited space. When coach says “red light”, players must stop ball and put foot on top of ball. When coach says “yellow light”, players must dribble very slowly. When coach says “green light”, players dribble fast. Coach controls this game with frequency of light changes and variety of changes. Once players catch on to this game, add light of other colors and affix different actions to them. (i.e. purple light = hop back and forth over ball, orange light = run around the ball, black light = dance, blue light = hide behind the ball etc. etc.). (8 minutes)



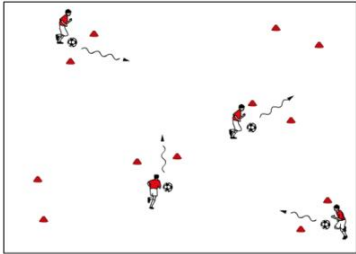
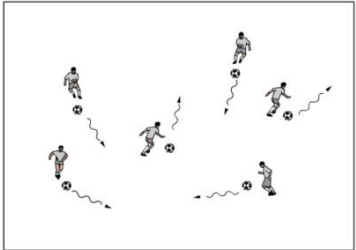
4) Pirate Ship---Set up a 20x20 grid (Pirate ship deck) with a small 6x6 grid (safe shark cage) just in one of the corners of the field. Coach makes up variations and adds them to their pirate ship journey one at a time. Variations on the ship can be: *Scrub the deck*-players must roll the ball back and forth with the sole of their foot, then coach can ask them to do this while moving all around the Pirate Ship deck. *Hoist the sail*-players can knock the ball back and forth between their feet (foundation), then dribble all around the Pirate Ship deck as fast as they can. *Walk the plank*-players must do toe touches on their soccer ball, then dribble all around the Pirate Ship deck as fast as they can. *Shark attack*-Coach (aka: ‘Shark’) runs after players and they have to try and dribble their soccer ball into the 10x10 grid (safe shark cage) before the ‘shark’ catches them. (8 minutes)

5) 3v3 scrimmage—On a field 30 yards long by 20 yards wide, players will be playing 3 versus 3 without a goalkeeper. (20-25 minutes)

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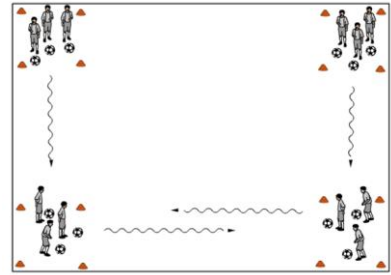
U6 Sample Activities:

Dribbling, Balance & Coordination

- 1) **Gates**---Set up many pairs of cones (with roughly 2 yards in between pairs) all around the playing area. These pairs serve as gates or many mini-goals. Players each have a ball and must dribble through the gate in order to score. Have players count how many goals they score and when playing a second time ask them if they can beat their score by one goal. Coaches can vary this by asking players to dribble with left foot or right foot. If players end up dribbling back and forth through only one goal, set up a rule to protect against this.
- 2) **Tag**---Every child dribbles a soccer ball in the space defined while trying to tag other players with their hand. Players cannot leave their own ball. Have them keep count of how many people they have tagged and, if playing twice in a row, see if players can tag more people than they did in the first game. *Version 2:* Players must tag other players on their knees.
- 3) **Hospital tag**---Same as tag in that each player dribbles a soccer ball and that they try to tag each other with their hands. In this game, each time a player is tagged he/she must place their hand on the spot on their body at which they were tagged. Obviously, if tagged a third time, players have no more hands to cover those spots, so they must go to the hospital to see the doctor. The coach acts as the doctor and performs a magical task (pretend) to heal all the little soccer players so they can continue playing the game.
- 4) **Body Part Dribble**---In designated area, coach has all players dribble a soccer ball. When coach yells out the name of a body part, players must touch that body part to the ball as quickly as possible. Coach should vary body parts and rate at which he calls out body parts. At times, call out body parts consecutively (i.e. tummy, nose, elbow) during one stoppage or call out two body parts at once (i.e. both feet).
- 5) **Kangaroo Jack**---All players except two or three begin with a ball. Players without balls are kangaroo jacks and must hop like a kangaroo and try to tag players. If a player gets tagged, he/she becomes a kangaroo as well until all players are turned into kangaroos.

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- 6) **Planets**---Set up cones into multiple squares or triangles that serve as planets (or cities). All players must follow coach's order and dribble into the planet he calls out. Coach can have all players follow same directions or break up team so they start at different planets and then have them dribble through the solar system in clockwise or counterclockwise fashion. Coach can have groups dribble in opposite direction through the solar system.



- 7) **Crab Soccer**---Set up a grid roughly 18yd x 10yd. Have 3-4 players inside the grid acting as crabs. These crabs do not have a soccer ball. Other players start at one end of the grid and when the coach says "Go", they dribble their soccer balls to the other end of the grid. The crabs try to kick the balls out of the grid. If a dribbler's ball goes out of the grid, that player becomes a crab as well. Play until all players turn into crabs.
- 8) **Snake**---In an appropriate space for the numbers you have, have all players dribbling soccer balls except for 2-3 players to start. These players hold hands and work together as one snake to tag the other players. The players with balls try to avoid getting tagged by the snake. If they are tagged, they join hands with players making up the snake. The snake grows until all players are part of the snake. The snake must stay together as one animal and not break off into little parts. Encourage fun by having the snake hiss. ☺

- 9) **Shrek/Spiderman/Spongebob**---Place a couple players in pennies and have everyone else get a soccer ball. Set up a 20 yd x 15 yd space and have the players with balls dribble around in the space. The players in pennies are Shrek or Spiderman or SpongeBob etc. etc. and try to tag the players who have soccer balls. When players are tagged they go to into the goal (castle, spider net etc. etc.) and can only get back out if a teammate with a ball tags them or the coach uses his/her magic powers to let everyone free. Use any character or images you like for this and make sure all players get a chance to be one of the special characters at some point during every practice.

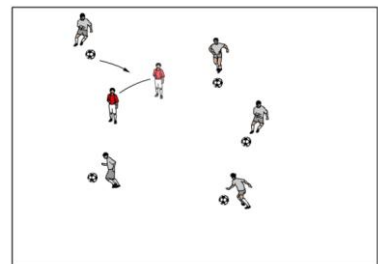
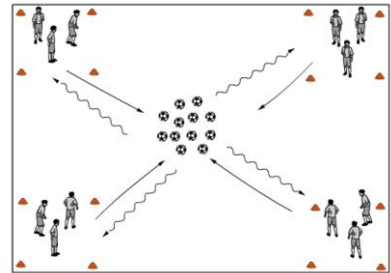


Dribbling, Passing, Balance & Coordination

- 1) **Freeze Tag**---Break up the group into two teams. Everyone must dribble their soccer ball, but one team tries to tag (freeze) the other team. If they do tag a player on the other team, that player must freeze, place their ball above their head and spread their legs. Another player on their team must kick his/her ball through the frozen player's legs to unfreeze the teammate. If all players are frozen, game ends and the frozen team becomes the taggers. Otherwise, stop game after a few minutes and have team reverse roles. *Version 2:* Coach can be the freeze monster and try to tag all the players with players unfreezing each other in same fashion.

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- 2) **Ball Tag**---Similar to other tag games except players try to tag others with their soccer ball instead of their hand. Have them keep count of how many times they kick their soccer ball and tag another person. Have the tag count if their ball hits another player or that player's ball. Can have the players tag the coach for 10 or 20 points. Then can have players tag other selected players for 50 or 100 points etc. etc. *Version 2:* Rather than having players tag each other, have them tag the coach by kicking their soccer ball. The coach moves around without a ball to avoid being tagged. Have players count up how many they got and can do the same variations as in the other game by affixing a lot of points to players.
- 3) **Cops and Robbers**---Coach sets up 8-10 stand up cones in a 15yd x 15yd space. Robbers all have soccer balls and knock over the cones (banks) by kicking their balls into the cones and knocking them over. Cops (have 2 or 3 cops for each game) do not have soccer balls and need to stand the cones back up (before all the banks' money falls out). Coach can help knock over cones or pick up cones as he/she sees fit. Rotate who gets to be cops.
- 4) **Capture the Balls**---Set up three or four "home bases" (squares) with cones roughly 2-3 yards wide. Break up the players into teams and have each team get together in their home base. Place all the balls in the center of the space between the home bases. On the coach's command the teams are free to gather as many soccer balls as they can into their home base. Players cannot use hands and there is no pushing each other or sitting/laying on the balls. Teams try to gather as many balls as possible into their home bases. Teams can steal balls from each others' home bases. Coach calls time and counts up how many balls are in each space to determine a winner. Coach allows team 1 minute to make up a new team strategy before playing again.
- 5) **Moving Goal**---2 coaches use a vest or an extra piece of clothing to form a movable goal with each coach serving as a post and the shirt serving as the crossbar. Players each have a ball and try to score by kicking their ball through the goal. However, the coaches constantly move and turn to force the players to keep their head up and to change direction as they dribble.



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General coaching points:

- Keep your instructions to a minimum, these games are simple to understand and should stay that way. Do not talk for more than 20 seconds at a time and try to keep it much less than that
- By counting down the last 5 or 10 seconds of an activity you can add excitement
- If you see players not understanding or enjoying a game, be flexible and change it
- Keep all players involved all the time, do not have players knocked out who then sit and watch
- When sending players on a water break, have them go backwards or have them act like a rabbit or frog and hop. Have them act like a monkey or dinosaur, or anything else they come up with for fun and to help coordination skills.
- Be animated
- Change the inflection of your voice, do not be monotonous
- Have fun!

Coaches, please utilize our website, www.mayouthsoccer.org, under the coaches section for more activities and information on leading the U6 players to having a fun experience in soccer!

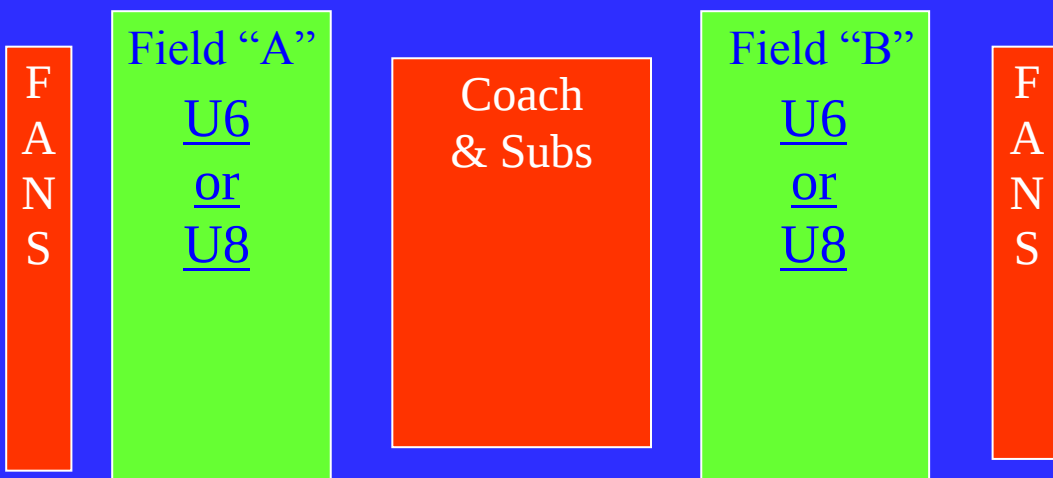
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US YOUTH SOCCER U6 GAME RECOMMENDATIONS

- Under 6's play 3 vs. 3 (*without a goalkeeper*)
- Field Size: 30 yds x 20 yds
- Ball: #3

Game Day Arrangement

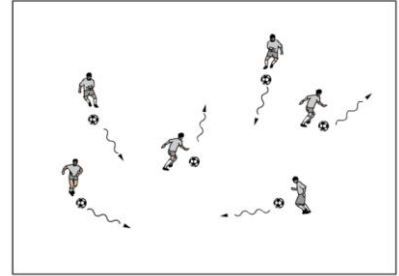
- 3v3 & 4v4: Play "dual field" format



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U8 Sample Lesson Plan #1:

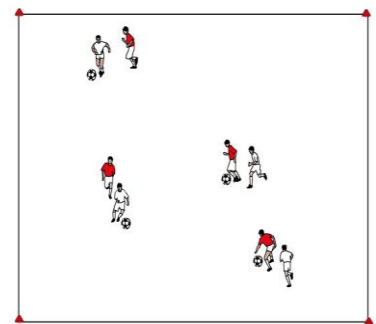
1) Tag---Every child dribbles a soccer ball in the space defined while trying to tag other players with their hand. Players cannot leave their own ball. Have them keep count of how many people they have tagged and, if playing twice in a row, see if players can tag more people than they did in the first game. *Version 2:* Players must tag other players on their knees. (8 minutes)



2) Free Dribble---Everyone with a ball, use inside, outside, and sole of the foot. Have players dribble with speed (laces/instep dribble), change direction (“spin in” with inside of foot and “spin out” with outside of foot), and perform moves. Coach calls out moves or changes in direction and sets the pace as the manipulator of the session, kids carry the ball towards someone and try a move. *Version 2:* As players get comfortable, coach can walk around and put pressure on players as they are performing dribbling tasks. This adds fun and interaction. (8 minutes)

3) Knock Out---In same space as previous activity, have players dribble balls while trying to knock other player’s balls outside of the grid. Players can never leave their own ball. If their ball gets knocked out have them retrieve it quickly and get back into the game. (You may wish to have them perform a skills task before re-entering such as 10 sole of the foot touches or juggling 5 times). (8 minutes)

4) Shield-Steal---Two players (partners) with one ball. One player starts with the ball and, on the coach’s command, her partner tries to steal the ball from her. Play 30-45 second matches. Whoever has the ball at the end of the time allotment, receives a point. Play many matches. If ball goes out of bounds, one of the players must get it back into play quickly. **Coaching points:** Show shielding technique with body sideways on to opponent, arm providing protection, ball on outside foot, knees bent, turning as defender attacks, using feel to understand where defender is going. Fix technical shielding errors throughout this activity and make sure entire group knows how to properly shield. (8 minutes)



5) 4v4 scrimmage---On a field 35 yards long by 30 yards wide, players will be playing 4 versus 4 without a goalkeeper. (20-25 minutes)

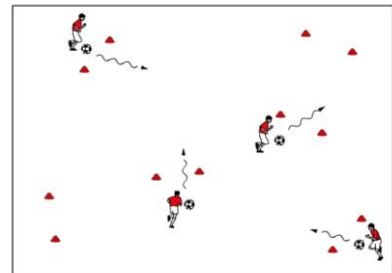
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U8 Sample Lesson Plan #2:

1) Shadow Dribble---One player with a ball and another player behind them with a ball as well. The player in front can go anywhere in the 20x20 yard box and the player behind must try to keep as close to them as possible and follow where they are going and what they are doing. The leader determines where they are going and the player who is the shadow tries to keep up with them. Then reverse the roles. Players can use both feet to start, then can choose to use one foot, then the other. *Version 2:* Now the leader adds in moves while they are dribbling and the shadow player must do the same. (8 minutes)

2) Snake---In an appropriate space, have all players dribble their soccer balls, except for 2-3 players (the snake). The snake players hold hands or lock arms and work together to tag the other players. The players dribbling the balls try to avoid getting tagged by the snake. If they are tagged, they join hands or lock arms with the snake. The snake grows until all players are part of the snake. The snake must work together and stay connected...they cannot break into little parts. Encourage fun by having the snake hiss. (8 minutes)

3) Gates Dribbling---Set up many pairs of cones (with roughly 2 yards in between pairs) all around the playing area. These pairs serve as gates or small mini-goals. Players each have a ball and must dribble through the gate in order to score. Players must count how many goals they score; when playing a second time, ask them if they can beat their score by one goal. Coaches can vary this by asking players to dribble with left foot or right foot. If players end up dribbling back and forth through only one goal, introduce a rule to protect against this. (8 minutes)



4) Gates with Bandits---Same game as above, but add 2 or more bandits (without soccer balls) who try to steal soccer balls from the other players. If bandits are successful and steal soccer balls, they are no longer bandits. Players who lose their soccer balls become bandits! Play multiple 1-2 minute games. Play is continuous for the 1-2 minute period. Players who have possession of a soccer ball at the end of time are awarded a point. (8 minutes)

5) 4v4 scrimmage---On a field 35 yards long by 30 yards wide, players will be playing 4 versus 4 without a goalkeeper. (20-25 minutes)

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U8 Sample Activities:

Receiving, Balance & Coordination

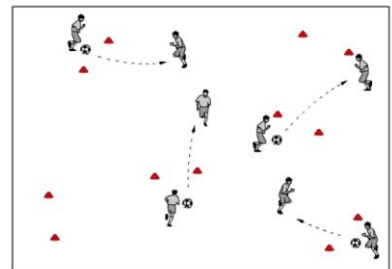
- 1) **Juggling**---Everyone with a ball. Players practice keeping the ball in the air with feet, thighs, and head. Players count how many times they touch the ball before it drops to the ground.

Dribbling, Balance & Coordination

- 2) **Paired Tag**---Pair players up, each pair has 2 balls. One player starts and is given a 2 second lead to get away from his/her partner. The chaser ("it") dribbles after the first player and tries to tag him/her with his/her hand. If tagged, the roles reverse and the player who was previously "it" has two seconds to get away before their partner tries to tag them. Players must always dribble their soccer ball during this activity.

Dribbling, Passing, Receiving, Balance & Coordination

- 3) **Marbles**---Players are in pairs, each with a ball. This time instead of chasing each other like in paired tag, one player plays out his ball and the partner passes his own ball in an attempt to strike the ball his partner played out. Players should keep track of how many times they hit their partner's ball. *Version 2:* Once players understand this game, make it fast paced by having the players take turns at trying to hit each other's ball without ever stopping. If player 2 misses player 1's ball, then player 1 immediately runs to his own ball and tries to hit player 2's ball (player 2 does not get to touch his ball after missing player 1's ball). After player 1 has a chance, then player 2 immediately tries to hit player 1's ball right back. etc. etc. This game is continuous and players should keep score. Hint: If 2 balls are very close to each other a player should kick their ball hard at the other ball so when they hit it, it is more difficult for the other to hit their ball back.
- 4) **Gates Passing**---Same set up as Gates Dribbling. However players are now paired up and must successfully pass the ball through the cones to their teammate to earn a point. Again, players try to accumulate as many points as possible in the time allotted. Similar to previous game, have them pass only with their left foot or right foot, or the outside of their foot.



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- 5) **Triangle Tag**---Set up cones in a triangle formation with each side of the triangle being roughly 1 yard long. Every triangle has a pair of players, each with a ball. Similar to the tag game, one player is being chased and one is “it”. However this time the player who is “it” tags the player by kicking her ball and hitting the other player’s ball or hitting the player below the knee. Players can dribble in either direction around the triangle and must stay close to their own triangle. Neither player can go through the triangle. *Version 2:* Allow the player being chased to go through the triangle. When in the triangle she is safe. However, after going through triangle, player must go completely around triangle before she can go through triangle again. She cannot stop inside the triangle. *Version 3:* Allow pairs to move from triangle to triangle (incorporates speed dribbling and traffic). If two pairs are at the same triangle at the same time that is fine, but players still only compete with their partner. Note: To increase difficulty, do not count hitting a player below the knee as a tag.

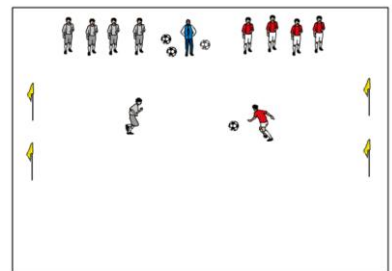
Shooting, Receiving, Balance & Coordination

- 6) **Clean Your Backyard**--- Break group into two teams and have each team stay only on their half of the field. Place a 6 yard buffer zone between halves that no one can enter or cross. Each player needs a ball. Place three small (2-3yd) goals at the far end of each side of the field. Have both teams shoot balls at other team’s goals in an attempt to score through anyone of the small goals (below knee height). Players cannot cross the buffer zone or go into the other half. Balls get recycled naturally in the game. This is a competition and teams need to keep score. Play 2 or 3 games and have teams re-strategize between each game. Teams can play defense though no hands. Only shots with laces count as goals.



Dribbling, Shooting, Passing, Receiving, Balance & Coordination

- 7) **Get Outta Here**---Place two small (2 yard) goals at the end of a field 15 x 10 yards. Place half of team behind each goal and coach stands at halfway line with all balls. When coach plays out a ball the first two players run out and try to score on each other’s goal. If the ball goes in the goal or out of bounds, the coach yells “get outta here” and plays in a new ball immediately for the next two players. *Version 2:* Coach can stop yelling “get outta here” after a while and see if players recognize when balls go out and are attentive. *Version 3:* Coach can vary service of ball.

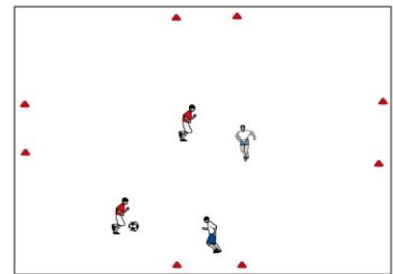


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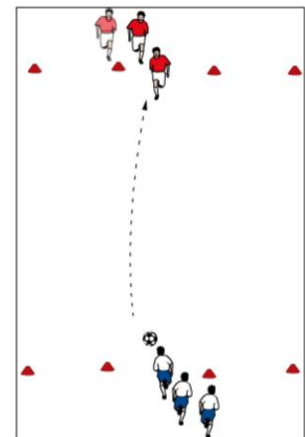
Sometimes play it to one player, sometimes toss the ball up in the air. *Version 4:* Have the first two players from each group come out each time a new ball is played they play 2 vs. 2.

8) **Numbers**---Same set up as Get Outta Here, but teams assign numbers (1-6) to each player and when coach calls out a number, the player from each team with that number comes out to play 1 vs. 1. Coach can set up particular match-ups and can call out more than one number at a time for 2 vs. 2 or 3 vs. 3 etc.

9) **2 vs. 2 to Four Goals**---Teams defend one goal and have the opportunity to score on the other three, you must dribble through a goal to score a point. The goals are on the ends of a large cross in a square grid roughly 10yd X 10yd. Have one team of 2 on deck, they come on when a team gets scored on twice. Game is continuous, they must run on immediately.



10) **1 vs. 1 to End lines**---In a space that is wider than long (15 x 20 yds) each player defends one end line and attacks the other. Players score by dribbling the ball in control over the opposing player's end line. *Version 2:* You can make this 2 vs. 2, 3 vs. 3 or 4 vs. 4.



Coaches, please utilize our website, www.mayouthsoccer.org, under the coaches section for more activities and information on leading the U8 players to having a fun experience in soccer!

Coaching Notes:

- Focus on the technical points of the game
- Teaching positions and elevated tactical choices is not important
- Keep talking to a minimum (no longer than 20 seconds, preferably less) and let players play

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- Dribbling is still a primary focus, though passing and shooting become secondary topics at this age
- Change the inflection of your voice, do not be monotonous
- Be animated
- Keep all players involved all the time, do not have players knocked out who then sit and watch
- Encourage players to try new things and take risks, encourage creativity
- Keep it fun!!

US YOUTH SOCCER U8 GAME RECOMMENDATIONS

■ Under 8's play 4v4 (*without a goalkeeper*)

■ Field Size: 35 yds x 30 yds

■ Ball: #3

Game Day Arrangement

■ 3v3 & 4v4: Play "dual field" format

