



U6 / U8 Live Coach Training

Aug 27, 2022

Goals of the U6 / U8 Coach

- 1) **All the children have fun and want to continue playing soccer**
 - a) Be entertaining
 - b) Be enthusiastic at all times
 - c) Play fun games
 - d) Positive reinforcement only
- 2) Use games and drills that do not include 'lines'.
 - a) Getting all players as many touches on the ball as possible
 - b) Players get bored and goof off if they are standing in lines
 - c) Keep the activity level high
 - d) Don't use 'knock-out' or elimination games
- 3) Teach fundamentals of ball control:
 - a) Push the ball with the laces of the shoe, foot pointing down, to move forward
 - i) Controlled dribbling - soft pushes keeping the ball close
 - ii) Speed dribbling - hard pushes allowing a faster run
 - b) "Bells" / "Tick Tocks" to control the ball between the feet
 - i) Tap the ball with the inside front of the feet, back and forth.
 - ii) This should be done standing in place at first
 - iii) More advanced: can use this to move the ball down the field
 - c) Toe Taps to encourage balance, coordination and muscle memory
 - i) Alternate feet tapping the top of a soccer ball with the sole of their foot
- 4) Teach fundamentals of kicking:
 - a) Discourage kicking with the toes
 - b) Point toe down, ankle locked, kicking with inside laces for shooting / kickins
 - c) Open hip using the side of the foot, ankle locked, for passing (U8 only, avoid teaching passing to U6)
- 5) Teach the rules and basic concepts of 4v4 soccer
 - a) No Hands
 - b) A field that has lines that the players need to stay within
 - i) Kick-ins / Corner Kicks / Goal Kicks
 - c) The concept of "attacking" vs "defending"
 - d) Encourage the players not to 'goaltend'
 - e) 'Let them play' -- avoid stoppages when possible
 - f) Be sure to point them in the right direction!
 - i) "Our goal" (don't let the ball get in that one) vs
 - ii) "their goal" (try to get the ball in that one)
 - iii) U6 you probably don't want to switch sides



Tips

1. Don't feel like you have to play new games every practice session! Repetition is good. The kids get used to the games and know what to expect. You can see their improvement from week to week.
2. Be Adaptable. If a drill isn't going the way you expected it to feel free to change it up on the fly, or abandon it and switch to something else.
3. Be Patient, Don't get Discouraged
4. The [Online Soccer Academy YouTube channel](#) has some good demonstration videos on how to do the fundamentals of [Ankle Locking](#), [Dribbling](#), [Shooting](#) and [Passing](#).
5. Save the team's favorite game for last and use it as a carrot for good behavior and listening to the coach.

Basic Anatomy of a Session Plan

1. Introduction / reminder of the four most important rules of soccer
 - a. Have Fun!
 - b. Do your best!
 - c. Don't use your hands!
 - d. Listen to the coach!
2. Warm-up [~10 minutes]
 - a. Toe-Tap races – who can get to 20 first? [2 minutes]
 - b. Tick-Tock races - who can get to 20 first? [2 minutes]
 - c. Follow the coach - dribble around the field having all players follow in a line [5 minutes]
3. Skill development games [~40 minutes]

Try to pick games that focus on different skills (dribbling, shooting, challenging for the ball, etc)

 - a. Shark & Minnows [~10 minutes]
 - b. Ball Tag [~10 minutes]
 - c. Pirate Ship Drill [~10 minutes]
 - d. Clean your room [~10 minutes]
4. Scrimmage [~5 to 10 minutes]
 - a. This lets the players get a feel for the games in a friendly environment. Gives you a chance to coach on game specific rules like kick-ins, goal kicks and corner kicks
 - b. Keep it short, there is only one ball and the players don't get many touches during a Scrimmage
 - c. Divide the players into two teams, one with pinnies
 - d. Play a half-field game with normal rules
5. Cleanup [~5 minutes]
 - a. Kids must help!
 - b. Bring the team together for a group cheer to end the session



Example Drills

Sharks and Minnows

Goals

- Practice 1v1 defending and competition for the soccer ball
- Practice controlled dribbling
- Practice speed dribbling in “open space”

Setup

- Create a 20 x 30 yard grid
- One player is the ‘Shark’ and starts in the middle
- All other players are “minnows” and line up along one of the short edges of the grid
- Each minnow has a soccer ball

Instructions

- Shark starts the game by yelling something like “Minnows I’m hungry”
- Minnows must dribble their soccer ball across the grid to the far side
- The Shark tries to steal balls from the minnows and kick them outside the grid

Play the game multiple times so everyone gets a chance to be the Shark

Ball Tag

Goals

- Dribbling with the ball
- Protecting the ball while you dribble
- Aiming shots with the ball

Setup

- Create a 20 x 20 yard grid. You should adjust the size of the area depending on the size, skill set, and the number of players
- All players start in the grid with a ball

Instructions

- Players dribble around in the grid
- Players try to kick their ball and hit other players’ balls. Have them count how many times they hit other balls.
- Players try to protect their ball from being hit by another player’s ball



Clean your Room

Goals

1. Encourage competition for the soccer ball
2. Practice shooting the soccer ball
3. Practice dribbling

Setup

1. Create a grid that is approximately 15 X 15 yards. You should adjust the size of the area depending on the size, skill set, and the number of players.
2. Assign one player to "clean the room." This player will act as the defender to knock everyone's ball out of the grid.
3. Every player other than the room cleaner needs a ball.
4. Cycle each player through being the 'cleaner'

Instructions

1. Start by having the players dribble around free in the grid.
2. The coach should release the room cleaner into the grid.
3. The room cleaner's job is to steal the ball from the dribbling players and kick the ball out of the grid.
4. The dribblers must retrieve their balls and attempt to get back into the grid as quickly as possible.
5. The room is "clean" once all of the balls are out of the grid at one time.
6. The room cleaner should kick the ball out of the grid as far as they can to give them a chance to get all of the players.

If a player is struggling to clean their room, a 2nd room cleaner can be sent to assist.



The Gauntlet

Goals

- Changing speed and direction while running
- Aiming shots with the ball

Setup

- Create a 10 x 30 yard grid. You should adjust the size of the area depending on the size, skill set, and the number of players
- All players start along one of the small edges of the grid, without balls
- The coaches start on either side of the grid with all the soccer balls

Instructions

- When the coaches say go all the players try to run to the other side of the grid without getting touched by a ball
- The coaches kick the soccer balls at the player's FEET
- Any player touched by a soccer ball becomes a shooter in the next run
- Continue having players run back and forth until they are all shooters
- For fun have the coaches run The Gauntlet after all the players are shooters

Notes

- Instruct the players to shoot properly with their laces, or use a passing kick with the inside of their foot.
- **IMPORTANT:** Instruct the players to keep the ball on the ground. No scooping or chipping of the ball.



Pirate Ship Drill

Goals:

- Practice a variety of dribbling skills
- Foot coordination
- Practice shooting

Setup:

- Create an 15x15 yard area and call it 'the pirate ship'
- Each kid must have a ball
- Tell the kids to dribble their ball around the area
- Periodically call out a phrase from below, the first few times instruct the kids what they are supposed to do when you out the phrase. After they have played the game a few times they will know what to do for each phrase.

Notes:

- Remember to demonstrate each phrases every time and with lots of energy
- repeat previous phrases - repetition is good in this game
- Play it frequently as a warm-up so the kids get used to the game

Phrases:

- "The captain's coming" = the kids stop, place one foot on the ball and salute the captain by saying "ay, ay captain!"
- "climb the riggin" = on the spot the kids do 'toe-taps' on the ball and with their hands climb up an imaginary ladder.
- "Scrub the decks" = on the spot the kids roll the ball backwards and forwards using the bottom of their foot. Use both feet!
- "Polish the decks" = on the spot, this time the kids will move the ball from left-to-right using the bottom of their foot.
- "Ring the bell" = Kids do 'bells' pushing the ball with the inside of their feet back and forth.
- "Starboard turn" = the kids (perhaps without knowing it) will learn a quick turn here known as the drag back/pull-back turn. Get the kids to stop, put one foot on the ball, and roll the ball behind them using the bottom of their foot.
- "Man overboard" = the kids dribble quickly to the edge of the ship (area), place their foot on the ball, hand on their forehead as if they're looking for somebody. On your command the kids will continue dribbling.
- "Fire the Cannon" = the kids kick their soccer ball using their 'shooting' foot (using the inside shoelaces, toe pointed down) as far away as possible outside of the ship toward other pirates. Once all balls have been kicked the kids can retrieve their soccer balls and carry on dribbling.