



★ RECREATIONAL ★ COACHING CURRICULUM

WHAT TO TEACH YOUR PLAYERS??

Another key component for coaching in these age groups is to identify what we should teach the players. The characteristics of the players give us the following clues.

Balance, Coordination & Basic Motor Skills

Four and five year olds are still learning how to control their bodies and now we are introducing a ball into the equation! Not only should we play games that allow for one ball per player but we should also use activities that do not use a ball and concentrate on general movements of the body; running, changing direction, jumping, hopping, rolling, etc.

Dribbling, Changing Direction, Turning & Stopping with the Ball

With our ratio of one ball per player, dribbling is the number one technique players will use. All the games we use at these ages should have some component of dribbling, along with stopping, turning and changing direction. Although balance and coordination is an issue, particularly with the ball, we should still introduce elements of players changing direction, stopping and turning with the ball into our games. Players at these ages will find it difficult to change direction sharply and will do so in big arcs with different surfaces of their feet, which is fine. Stopping the ball with the sole of the foot will be difficult but should still be introduced as well as with the inside of the foot. With turning we should use the same surfaces as stopping the ball and introduce a drag back with the sole of the foot and an inside of the foot turn.

Shooting & Passing

We can summarize these players as 'ME' orientated, however, they will look to pass the ball occasionally but only if given plenty of time and space to do so (usually kick ins, kick offs and goal kicks). Although you will rarely see a player shooting the ball in a game (players will usually dribble into the goal), shooting or striking the ball with the laces (some will use toes!) should be encouraged through games used in practice. The progression into shooting and passing will become more important at the U6 age group. Players will be more used to dribbling the ball and have better balance at this age.

Just as important as what to teach we should also be aware of what not to teach! There are some important elements of the game that we shouldn't teach or expect players at these age groups to do.

Receiving the Ball. Because there is very little passing, there are few opportunities for players to receive the ball.



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Heading. Players at these age will not head the ball in dynamic (game) activities.

Support Play. Players will have no concept of supporting a teammate with the ball and your scrimmages will look like 'Bee Hive Soccer'.

Positional Play. Teaching positions is irrelevant and detrimental to the fun and enjoyment of the players. Expect disorganization and 'Bee Hive Soccer'!

Defending. Players will naturally try to win the ball back after they lose possession. This is as complicated as defending should get!

In summary, we are looking at the following topics to be introduced and working on at the following ages:

U5 Age Group	U6 Age Group
Balance, Coordination & Motor Skills	Balance, Coordination & Motor Skills
Dribbling	Dribbling
Changing Direction with the ball	Changing Direction with the ball
Turning with the ball - Sole & Inside of the foot	Turning with the ball - Sole & Inside of the foot
Stopping the ball - Sole & Inside of the foot	Stopping the ball - Sole & Inside of the foot
	Striking the ball - Laces

Remember, we are trying to guide our players towards these skills by using activities and games that will require the players to execute them. Do not spend lots of time demonstration and breaking down their technique at these ages. Facilitate and let the game be the teacher!