



U6 & U8 Coaches Guide

Category: Psychological practices
Difficulty: Beginner

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Description

Ideas and Theories for the U6 & U8 age groups

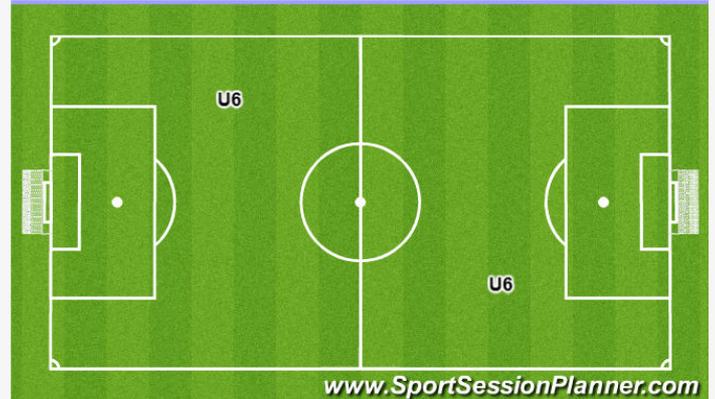
U6

Fun is #1! Developing fundamental dribbling skills will give players a solid foundation at a young age.

Understanding the capabilities of a 5 year old / U6 player helps coaches know why kids this age play the way they play. They have no sense of direction or boundaries. Their soccer vision is limited to what is around them. They play "bumble bee" soccer (every player wants the ball) and have tunnel vision to the goal.

Instead of teaching positions, try to teach your players to find open space (area) on the field. By allowing players to naturally move around the field they will start seeing the game on their own and will learn how to help (support) their teammates.

Kids this age need encouragement and validation, be their #1 cheerleader during practices and games!



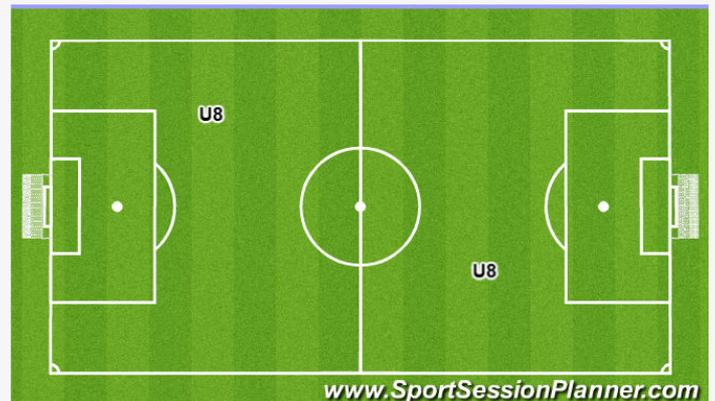
U8

Fun is still #1! Building upon everything learned in U6. Players at U8 are developmentally capable of understanding more complex concepts. Dribbling skills is still the main focus, **Technical Skill Development**. Players need to be comfortable with the ball at their feet and have confidence when they are on the field.

Learning to dribble with different surfaces of their foot, change of direction (turning with the ball), and being introduced to passing & receiving are important U8 skills.

Having an understanding of spatial awareness allows players to learn the concept of passing, moving to open space, and defending principles.

All players develop at different paces. The key is to find a balance to challenge players of different abilities in a team environment.



Field Positioning

I am a strong proponent of teaching roles rather than teaching positions. A team just needs to stay balanced and organized. At the U6 & U8 age groups, explaining the field by using "lanes" works well.

The field is like a highway: Right Lane, Middle Lane, Left Lane

Players starting on the Right are able to play in the Right & Middle Lane.

Players starting on the Left are able to play in the Left & Middle Lane.

Players starting in the Middle are able to play in all 3 Lanes.

