

The U6 Soccer Player

Characteristics

Focused on themselves.

Everything is in the here and now. They live in the moment.

Effort equals performance. They believe if they have tried hard, then they have done well. We should support and encourage this.

Often cannot identify right from left foot.

Able to make straight runs up and down the field. Expectations of movement away from the ball are unrealistic.

Exercises

Ball Toss

Coach tosses ball for each player to bring back with hands, feet, elbow, forehead, etc.

Body Part Dribble

Players dribble their own ball while avoiding others. Coach calls out a body part and players immediately stop their ball with that body part (knee, chin, belly button). Also play it like Simon Says.

Everybody's It

Players dribble their own ball in a specific area and attempt to tag anyone else to gain a point. Players must maintain control of their ball.

Crossover

Players dribble their own ball around a defined circle. On coach's signal, players attempt to cross through circle without touching others or their ball. If it is a large group, number players one or two and call out one number at a time to crossover.

Gates Game

Coach places pairs of cones about three feet apart in a defined area (20 yards by 20 yards works well). Have players run through the gates for 60 seconds. When the players understand the game, add a ball for each to dribble through the gates. Have them count how many gates they go through. Repeat and add a little time so each can beat their first score.

Summary

Each player should have their own ball.

Give very brief directions and repeat as necessary. No lectures.

Use many exercises but don't expect them to work together.

Define the space to play otherwise this age group will run all over.

Limit practice time to 45 minutes with frequent water breaks.

Utilize their active imagination. Make practices fun!

