

HFC: Hints, Tips, and Tricks for U6 Soccer:

At the Under 6 level, the goals of the season should be for:

- (1) the players to learn basic soccer/ball skills (i.e. dribbling/kicking).
- (2) making soccer so much fun that *players* will want to keep playing soccer!

- Practice activities should be fun and engaging and will generally consist of activities where **ALL players have a ball at their feet** to keep players interested and allow them to learn new skills. It's important to give each player plenty of time with their soccer ball.
- Players should be given TONS of POSITIVE feedback (ex. "I like how you're using both feet to kick the ball," "Wow! That was a big kick!" "Watch how NAME dribbled the ball!")
- Many of your practice activities should encourage players to learn the skill of **dribbling (baby kicks, take turns with both feet, eyes up)**. As the season progresses the players should become more skilled dribblers and increase the speed and ease of their dribbling.
- Coaches should expect to run 2-3 FUN drills during the practice portion of the session.
- **Keep in mind that repetition is good for players!** Sometimes it helps to run a drill the players played at a previous session (maybe adding a new challenge/element when played for the second time). You may want to include one familiar drill (from last week's session) along with 1-2 new drills/activities each session.
- Keep explanations BRIEF. When explaining drills to players, sometimes you may want to have them place their ball somewhere away from the group (i.e. in the net, on a line, etc.) so they aren't distracted during the quick explanation. Coaches can demonstrate the skills/process with the coach's ball. Other times, you may want their ball at their feet to imitate the skill while explaining the drill.
- Coaches should refer to the **U6 Practice Activities Packet** with sample drills for ideas of drills to run.
- Ideally a U6 Soccer Match (3 v 3) will end with many goals scored by each team. Coaches should encourage wide-open games with lots of scoring opportunities!
- **There ARE NO Goalies!** Oftentimes there will be players who decide to station/position themselves in front of the goal and act as "goalie" to stop the other team from scoring. Sometimes the player won't leave the goal area even when the ball is in the other end of the field. As a result, it will be very difficult for opposing players to kick the ball into the protected (and small-sized) net. (And the player acting as goalie will not be part of the game). As a result, players on the opposing team will become frustrated and discouraged. Therefore, **positioning players in a solely defensive position (i.e. stationed in front of the goal) is not permitted in U6 small-sided games.** Players should be reminded **MOVE TO THE BALL, NOT TO THE NET.**
 - If you have a player who consistently retreats to the net, take the time to explain to him/her individually that you'd like him/her to move to the ball and try to take the ball away from the player(s).
- **There are no 'field positions.'** Coaches should teach players to move with the ball throughout the game – stay within the offensive zone when their team is on the attack, and to fall back only when the opposing team gains possession of the ball.

Coaches Can Support U6 Players by:

- minimizing competitive pressures at practices and during the games AND strongly encourage parents to do the same. Remember that the emphasis of the U6 age-group is to promote the player's **enjoyment** of the game and the development of BASIC soccer skills.
- helping every player to succeed and interact with the ball during the practices/games.
- Giving every child an equal opportunity to participate each session
- Letting the players learn through experience during the game
- Using positive reinforcement to ENCOURAGE and MOTIVATE players and identifying the successes no matter how small or big.

Where can I find FUN Drills & Activities to play with the players?

- U6 Practice Activities Packet (provided by HFC)
- <https://www.soccerxpert.com/>
- <https://www.usyouthsoccer.org/lesson-plans/>
- <http://www.freeyouthsoccerdrills.com/> (U-4/U5 Soccer Drills/U6/U7 Soccer Drills)
- First Time Coaches: <https://www.usyouthsoccer.org/first-time-coaches/>

What Important Safety Measures should I expect to enforce with my team?

- Coaches should familiarize themselves with the Player Safety Guidelines on HFC's Website: <https://www.harleysvillefc.org/player-safety>
- **Shin Guards:** Players are **REQUIRED** to wear **SHIN GUARDS**. Shin guards should be worn over the shins with soccer socks directly on top of shin guards. Please enforce this rule with parents and players each session.
- **U8 Soccer Goals:** Players may NOT hang from soccer nets/goals (i.e. larger U8 Goals) for safety reasons. If you see players/siblings of players hanging from the nets/goals, please remind them to stop for their safety and the safety of the players on our fields.
- **Sandbags/Anchors on U8 Goals:** Check the Goal on your practice field prior to the start of your session to be sure the sand bags/yellow net anchors are on top of the arms of the goal (to stabilize the goals). Please do NOT allow players to stand on the sand bags or anchors on the U8 Nets. These bags/anchors are there to anchor the goal and prevent them from toppling.
- Heading is not permitted at the U-6 Level (Heading Policies): [EPYSA Heading Policies](#)
- Players should remove ALL jewelry (i.e. bracelets, necklaces, earrings) before playing soccer.

How do I explain the "Soccer Rules" to the players?

Encourage players to follow these simple rules.

They can be reviewed and discussed during the "Game Prep" time each session.

- No hands in soccer
- Try to take the ball away from the other team with your feet and kick it in the goal. (Before the game and after each center restart, it's always a good idea to have your team point to the goal they will be trying to score on).
- Be a good sport and kind to the players on ALL teams.
- HAVE FUN!
- Always say "good game" at the end of the games (both teams can meet in the center and clap/cheer and say good game) or traditional end of game hand-shake.

What equipment does each player need?

Every player should bring/wear the following each week:

- Players should wear their soccer uniform each session.
- Size 3 Soccer Ball (LABELED with CHILD'S NAME)
- Sneakers or Cleats
- Shin-guards (socks should be pulled up OVER the shin-guards) NO EXCEPTIONS!
- Water Bottle (LABELED)

