

**MOON AREA SOCCER ASSOCIATION
U-6 GUIDELINES
FOR COACHES and PARENTS**

Characteristics of U-6 Children

- Short attention span
- Constantly in motion
- Little or no concern for team activities
- Physical and psychological development similar for boys and girls
- Eye/hand or eye/foot coordination most primitive
- Love to run and jump
- No sense of pace (race about until exhausted, then they stop, breathe, then restart)
- Very different levels of skills, interest and understanding of the game

Goals for the Season

The primary goal within this age group is to make soccer a fun sport for the kids. The emphasis should be on *enjoyment* of the game, *not competition*. The *main objective* of each game is to teach the players soccer fundamentals and team play, ***not just to score goals***.

Three objectives for the season:

1. Introduction to dribbling, kicking, dribbling, stopping the ball with the feet, and dribbling. Clear enough?
2. Introduction to basic soccer terms.
3. Introduction to team play.

Practice Routines

Practices should be one day per week for no more than 1 hour. Thursday or Friday evenings work out well, because the kids will retain what they learned in practice for Saturday's game. Short activities are suggested in order to keep the players' interest. Frequent breaks are recommended.

Coaches should have the players introduce themselves to the team, and practice this until all players know each other's name (including the coach). Practice a "cheer" to learn the team name ("1,2,3...Go Tigers!")

It is not necessary for children this age to stretch, but it is a good habit to learn, and can be made fun. Keep the drills short in duration, and fun. Small-sided games are more productive than having kids stand in line. These games can include soccer golf, follow the leader, red light/green light, crab soccer, etc.(these are all DRIBBLING games!) **More games can be found on our web site in the Coaches section.** (<http://www.moonsoccer.org>)

Developing dribbling skills is the first priority in this age group. After the kids are comfortable moving the ball around with their feet, developing passing and receiving skills should be the next priority. Emphasis should be on the basic triangle of play (and making sure they don't play "bee-hive soccer).

Positions on the Field

The U-6 Division plays 3 players verses three players (3 v 3), with no goal keeper.

Two games will be played simultaneously. Players will be matched based on skill level, size and age.

Game-day Information

U-6 Division plays five-minute “periods” with 1 minute in between. One coach or parent should be the designated “time-keeper” and use a whistle to signal start/stop of play.

One coach from each team is permitted on the field during the game to provide direction for the players. Please keep instructions to the players to a minimum. Let the players play.

Players are not permitted to be positioned in front of either net or as a goal keeper.

If one player is dominating the game (i.e. takes the ball from everyone, including team mates, and runs down and scores) that player should be instructed to only pass the ball (do not shoot on goal) for a period of time. Remember, one of the objectives of this age group is to teach **team play** (and passing!).

Parent’s Information

Parents, please reread the section on the “goals for the season”, and keep in mind that the mission of this division is to introduce soccer as a fun sport. We have no standings, and we don’t even keep score. The “objective” of each game is for the kids to understand the fundamentals of soccer, not to score goals.

All parents and other spectators should be no closer than five yards from the playing field. Please refrain from shouting instructions to the players. Soccer is a players’ game, meaning it is the players who must make the decisions on the field (unlike some of the other traditional American sports). Soccer players need to learn to think for themselves, and the sooner they learn to stand on their own two feet, the better. The kids WILL make mistakes, resulting in a goal for the other team. Do not be concerned! Parents *and coaches* must resist the urge to tell the players what to do.

Parents must never tell the players to “kick” or “boot” the ball. As discussed in the section on skill priority, just “kicking” the ball needs to be discouraged. **Please do not coach the players at all.** Cheer and clap and jump up and down for *both* teams.

Parents and coaches should be aware that children develop very differently. The star players of the U-6 division may not develop into a world cup player. That little shy kid over on the side who doesn’t touch the ball much at five years old, may turn out (sooner than you think) to be the varsity starter. Parents should not be discouraged if their child does not excel at this level. Also, don’t assume your little star will sty the dominating player. Enjoy the ride with your child. Help them practice at home. The coach can only do so much in one practice. And besides, practicing with your kid in the back yard is a great way to spend quality time with him or her. Enjoy!