

Guidelines for play competencies U6-U18

U6

Physical capabilities: Balance, walking, running, how to start and stop, jumping, hopping, rolling, skipping, changing direction, bending, twisting and reaching.

Fitness: Introduce the idea of how to warm-up and movement education. Begin education about nutrition with players and parents.

Technique: Dribbling (stop and start) and shooting. Experiment with the qualities of rolling ball. Introduce the push pass.

Psychology: Sharing, fair play, parental involvement, how to play and emotional management.

Tactics: Where is the field? The concept of boundary lines, at which goal to shoot and playing with the ball wherever it may go.

Training should not exceed 45 minutes

Each player should have a ball

End of season competencies:

- Able to receive the ball (trap) on the ground using inside of foot

- Able to pass/kick ball with inside of foot

- Shoots using inside of the foot/instep (laces)

- Understanding that teams switch sides at half time

- Understanding of names of various lines on field

- Understanding that other team gets the ball when your team kicks it out

- Understanding that play starts in the center of field at start of game and after goals

U8

Physical capabilities: eye-foot and eye-hand coordination, balance, leaping, bounding, tumbling, catching, throwing, pulling, pushing, warm-up activities and movement education.

Technique: Introduce ball lifting, juggling, receiving ground balls with the inside of foot, shooting with inside of the foot, passing and shooting and dribbling while changing direction. Introduce throw-ins.

Psychology: Encourage working in pairs, sportsmanship, parental involvement, how to play, emotional management, creativity, dynamic activities, participation of all players and a safe and fun environment. Still a short attention span. Like to show what they can do – encourage trying new things. Developing self-esteem – activities should foster positive feedback and attainable positive success.

Tactics: beginning understanding of back line and forward line; choosing to dribble or pass. Introduce names of positions

Training should not exceed 1 hour

End of season competencies:

Able to receive the ball (trap) on the ground using inside of foot

Able to pass/kick ball with inside of foot

Able to change direction while dribbling

Shoots using inside of the foot/instep (laces)

Beginning to display proper throw-in technique (not lifting back foot)

Able to work with a partner in drills

Beginning to understand difference between corner kick and goal kick

Beginning to understand proper field position

Beginning to understand defensive body positioning

Beginning to develop methods to get past defenders

Beginning to understand man-to-man “marking up” defense

U10

Physical capabilities: Greater endurance, range of motion flexibility, rhythm exercises and running mechanics.

Technique: passing with the inside and outside of the foot with emphasis on the push pass; instep drive, receiving ground balls with the instep and outside of foot (body behind the ball), receiving bouncing balls with the instep (cushion), inside and outside of foot, fakes in dribbling and turning with the ball. Introduce crossing. For goalkeepers: ready stance, getting the feet set, how to hold a ball after a save,

diamond grip, catching shots at the keeper, punting, recover from down to the ground and up to set position and footwork exercises.

Psychology: Keep soccer enjoyable to foster a desire to play using self-motivation. Increase in responsibility, sensitivity, awareness of how to win or lose gracefully, fair play, parental involvement, how to play, communication and emotional management.

Tactics: Defending – role of first and second attacker and defender, what it means to be goal-side. Playing a variety of position to develop the complete player. Introduce the principles of attack and set plays.

Play should not exceed 1 hour and 15 minutes.

End of season competencies:

Receiving the ball (trap) on the ground using inside of foot/outside of foot

Receiving the ball (trap) on the bounce using inside of foot

Understand/demonstrate proper throw-in technique (not lifting back foot)

Shoots using inside of the foot/instep/bent with inside of the foot/half volley/volley

Able to display proper throw-in technique (not lifting back foot)

Avoids kicking ball away without a purpose

Understands difference between corner kick and goal kick

Understands proper field position

Starting to be able to react to the need to switch quickly from offense to defense

Starting to be able to work with teammates to advance the ball by passing

Starting to look for targets to pass to in front of the goal

Starting to display techniques for faking out other team

Understands defensive body positioning

Understands methods to get past defenders

Understands man-to-man “marking up” defense

Beginning to understand ways to support teammates with the ball

U12

Physical capabilities: Understanding that strength can be improved with body resistance and aerobic exercises. Focus on agility at speed (sharp turns), acceleration, deceleration, reaction speed, range of motion exercises, proper warm-up and cool-down (including static stretching)

Technique: moving throw-in; experiment with flighted balls, fakes with the ball, receiving bouncing and air balls with the thigh and chest, first touch receiving, heading to redirect/pass/score, outside of the foot passing, receiving with either foot, short passing with both feet, bending shots, crossing to near post and penalty spot space and heel and flick passing. Introduce half volley and volley shooting, chipping to pass. For goalkeepers: W grip, footwork, underarm bowling, side-arm throwing to targets, taking own goal kicks, low and forward diving and angle and near post play.

Tactics: Roles of first and second attacker and defender, man-to-man defense, combination passing, playing on and around the ball as a group with purpose, verbal and visual communication for all positions, halftime analysis, general work on all restarts, wall pass at a variety of angles, passing combinations on the move and rotation of all players through the team – everyone plays in each position. Reinforce the principles of defense. Goalkeepers: positional play, angle play, communication.

Psychology: keep in fun and enjoyable to foster a desire to play, self-motivation. Focus on teamwork, confidence, desire, mental skills, handling distress, how to learn from each match, fair play, parental involvement and emotional management.

Training session should not exceed 1 hour 30 minutes

End of season competencies:

Receiving the ball (trap) on the ground using inside of foot/outside of foot

Receiving the ball (trap) on the bounce using inside of foot

Receiving the ball out of the air using instep/thigh/chest

Consistently uses proper throw-in technique

Shoots using inside of the foot/instep/bent with inside of the foot/chip/half volley/volley

Understands proper heading techniques redirect/move ball forward

Reacts to the need to switch quickly from offense to defense

Able to work with teammates to advance the ball by passing

Sees targets to pass to in front of the goal

Displays techniques for faking out other team

Understands roles of first and second defender and attackers

Able to cross ball to near post

Starting to understand off the ball movement

Starting to use both feet for passes/shots

Starting to watch game to find opportunities to take advantage

Understands defensive body positioning and can push attackers to outside

Regularly utilizes methods to get past defenders

Continually stays goal side of marks

Understands ways to support teammates with the ball

U14 and up

Fitness: Acceleration, speed, anaerobic exercise, cardiovascular training. Static stretching.

Technique: Experiment with the qualities of a flighted ball (chipping to pass, bending passes and driving crosses to the far post and top of the penalty area. Also, practice half-volley and volley shooting, heading to pass/redirect/flick/score. Receiving with the outside of the instep, outside of the foot shot, receiving bouncing and air balls with head, dummy the ball. Chipping to shoot. For goalkeepers: far post play, collapse save, save/reaction save/recover save, medium and high diving, deflecting over the crossbar and around the posts, drop kick and punt.

Psychology: assertiveness, tension control, self and team discipline, able to focus for entire match, sportsmanship, parental involvement, how to play, mental focusing techniques and emotional management.

Tactics: Delay, depth and balance in defense. Role of third defender. How to make recovery and tracking runs. Responding to restart situations. How to defend in each part of the field. How to play in the attacking half. Checking runs, take-overs, switching positions during the flow of play, zone defense and post-match analysis. Goal keepers: taking command of the goal area, support on the attack out to the back line, organization during a corner kick, setting the wall at free kicks, communication.

Training should not exceed 1 hour 30 minutes.

End of season competencies:

Receiving the ball (trap) on the ground using inside of foot/outside of foot

Receiving the ball (trap) on the bounce using inside of foot

Receiving the ball out of the air using instep/thigh/chest

Consistently uses proper throw-in technique

Shoots using inside of the foot/instep/bent with inside of the foot/chip/half volley/volley

Understands proper heading techniques redirect/move ball forward/score

Reacts to the need to switch quickly from offense to defense

Able to work with teammates to advance the ball by passing

Sees targets to pass to in front of the goal

Displays techniques for faking out other team

Understands roles of first and second defender and attackers

Displays off the ball movement

Uses both feet for passes/shots

Able to cross to the far post

While on sideline almost always watches game to find opportunities to take advantage.

Routinely looks for open players to pass to and makes well-timed & well-placed passes.

Routinely dribbles the ball to a field location that strengthens his/her team's position.

Routinely moves to field location without the ball that strengthens team's position.

Routinely anticipates opponents' counter-attacking opportunities and prevents them.

Routinely moves ball to spot that entices opponent to over-commit to defensive move.

Routinely expends extra energy in key situations & finds ways to save energy safely.

Routinely supports teammates with the ball with off the ball runs

General Goal Keeping competencies

Basic positioning

Feet should width apart

Knees bent, weight forward

Arms bent, hands up, fingers spread

Hands ready

Catching (low balls)

Arms attacking ball, elbows together

Protect ball, collapse on receive

Catching (high balls)

Meet ball at highest point

Catches in front or above head

Catching (crosses)

Ability to hold balls

Timing

Range

Punching

Diving (ground shots)

Footwork to ball

Dives at positive angle

Hands (1 behind, 1 on)

Diving (shots in air)

Footwork to ball

Ability to hold ball

Ability to extent

Dives at positive angle

Distribution (punts/drop kicks)

Kicking foot through the ball

Distance

Accuracy

Distribution (goal kicks)

Kicking foot through the ball

Distance accuracy

Distribution (throwing)

Quick, fluid motion

Distance accuracy

Field skills

Passing

Receiving

Tactical

Positional play to ball

Helps build attack

Organization of defense

Control of box

Decisions on distribution

Involved in play

Physical

Endurance

Quickness

Agility/balance

Strength & power

Speed

Psycho-social

Composure with ball

Concentration/focus

Leadership

Training mentality

Game mentality