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**Role of the FUNdementals Coach U6 – U9 Years old**

* Provide fun, safe and enjoyable activities
* Provide well organized practices and games
* Provide stimulating activities that promote fundamental skills and movement
* Communicate appropriately with children

The U6-U9 FUNdamental age group is the second stage of soccer development that our players go through.

However, we have to recognize that in this stage there are players who are participating in soccer for the first time.

The most important focus at this age is the continued development of physical literacy and the recognition that individual technique development is paramount. That being said, coaches in this stage have to create a learning environment that is stimulating and engaging where players learn in a fun-filled small-sized game environment.

The programs now start to move into a team format with head and assistant coaches. Teams will also now start to play games within their own organization.

**Four-Corner Approach**

The gradual progressive development of players is fundamental to the enjoyment, technical competency and retention in the game. The "four corner" approach places the player at the center of the development process with soccer experiences that meet the four key needs of the player.

***Create an environment of FUN and Freedom!***

**FUNdamental Coaches' Tips**

* Create a stimulating learning environment where the atmosphere is "Freedom and FUN".
* Ensure that you have enough soccer balls for every child.
* Are water bottles available
* Check your playing area, to ensure it's safe. No rocks or holes.
* Organize your practice to have all the children active, all of the time.
* Playing situations work best for teaching understanding and building basic game sense.
* Game formats can progress from 3v3 to 5v5 as the children grow.
* During games everyone should play equal time, in all positions.
* No scores or standings are kept.
* Be enthusiastic, have fun!
* "High fives", praise for everyone.
* 1-2 practice sessions to each game.
* Practice length 45-75 minutes.

**Model For Community Sport**

FUNdamentals Game Format

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Game** | **Team Size** | **Duration** | **Ball Size** | **Field** |
| **3v3** | **Max 6** | **2 x 15 mins** | **3**  | **18yds x 25yds** |
| **5v5** | **Max 8** | **2 x 15 mins** | **3** | **20yds x 30yds** |
| **7v7** | **Max 10** | **2 x 25 mins** | **4** | **35yds x 40yds** |

***We want players at this stage to have basic movement skills, be comfortable with a ball, be more confident and try new challenges.***

**FUN with the ball**

Skill development at this stage should be well structured, positive, FUN and should concentrate on developing the ABC's of Agility, Balance and Coordination plus speed.

Encourage your players to take part in unstructured play, every day, with their friends.

Learning to read the movements going on around them are critical skills to be developed at this age. Playing small-sided games, 3v3, 4v4 etc.

Can develop players' ability to read what others are going to do based on the movements.

Let your players make decisions, expose them to working out problems and coming up with solutions.

**Practice Focus**

Sessions should be structured for players in the FUNdamental development stage in the 4 phases outlined below.

**Small-sided games**

Can be 3v3, 4v4 or 5v5 as they grow. Small fields and small goals.

**Soccer Technique**

Fun activities and games with a ball each, concentrate on dribbling, passing, shooting.

**Soccer Coordination**

Ball each, lots of touches, left and right foot, different parts of foot and body.

**General Movements**

Running, jumping, twisting, rolling, hopping, moving backwards, etc.

All done in a positive, fun, safe, interactive environment.

Practice duration should be no more than 45-75 minutes.

No tournaments at this stage, but as they get older jamboree-type events and festivals can be planned.

**Resources**

For further information on Coaching clinics, practice sessions, game formats etc. please contact any of the resources listed below.

US Youth Soccer - www.usyouthsoccer.org

Wisconsin Youth Soccer Association - www.wysa.com

Your Club Director of Coaching