

Player Development by Age Group

U5 and U6

Situation – 3v3 game with no goalkeeper. Most players are not ready for teamwork concepts such as passing.

Objectives – Ball skills and agility. Do not teach passing yet. If players figure it out themselves, that's great.

Practice Content:

- *Agility* – Begin with games that develop agility, mobility, and creativity. A ball is not necessary.
- *Skills* - Games with one ball per player to develop dribbling and a soft first touch rather than random kicking. Kicking is not soccer!
- *Scrimmage Game* – At the end of practice.

U7 and U8

Situation – 4v4 game with no goalkeeper. Players are still self-oriented, but ready to learn very basic teamwork.

Objectives – Continue to teach ball skills. Introduce very basic teamwork ideas.

Practice Content:

- *Skills* – Begin with games with one ball per player to develop dribbling and a **soft** first touch on the ball.
- *Basic Teamwork* – Games with two players working together such as 2v1 to a designated space.
- *Scrimmage Game* – At the end of practice.

U9 and U10

Situation – 6v6 game including goalkeeper. Players start to pass, have playing positions, and are more physical.

Objectives – Continue to teach ball skills. Encourage 1v1 play as well as teamwork. Introduce positional play as part of teamwork, including goalkeeper. It is too early to specialize, so encourage players to try multiple positions. Individual skill is still vital.

Practice Content:

- *Skills* – Begin with games with one to three players per ball.
- *Positions and Teamwork* – Games that progress from simple to complex.
- *Scrimmage Game* – At the end of practice. Rotate players through multiple positions.

U11 and U12

Situation – 8v8 game. Players are growing in skills, teamwork, and positional play. They are beginning to understand the value of communication and starting to specialize in playing positions.

Objectives – Continue to teach individual play, teamwork, and positional play. Encourage communication and leadership.

Practice Content:

- *Progression* – Players are able to learn more, so activities should progress from simple to complex.
- *Skills* – Begin with games with one to three players per ball. All players should be able to juggle.
- *Positions and Teamwork* – Games that progress from simple to complex. Emphasize communication.
- *Scrimmage Game* – At the end of practice, rotating players through multiple positions.

U13 and Older

Situation – For the first time, the game is 11v11 on a full-size field. As a result, players must know each others' capabilities and work together to be successful, while still polishing their technical abilities.

Objectives – Continue to teach individual play, teamwork, positional play, and communication. Introduce tactics as needed, such as switching the point of attack, systems of play, and adjustments to game situations.

Practice Content:

- *Progression* – Players are able to learn more, so activities should progress from simple to complex. Began unrestricted with respect to time/space/pressure of opponent. Add pressure with success.
- *Skills* – Begin with games with one to three players per ball. Individual skill is still vital. Players should be able to juggle successfully.
- *Positions and Teamwork* – Games that teach positions and teamwork. Communication and leadership are vital for the team to succeed.
- *Scrimmage Game* – At the end of practice, rotating players through primary and secondary positions.