

BASIC INFORMATION & TIPS FOR U5 / U6 COACHES

1. **Rules.** Soccer rules are published annually by FIFA, the world soccer governing body, but we have a few exceptions, so read on.

2. Player Equipment.

- All players should wear shinguards to every practice and game. Hard surfaces of shinguards must be covered with socks.
- Running shoes or soccer shoes – no sandals, flip-flops or clogs. No jewelry, metal devices, or hazardous equipment may be worn. (Casts can be allowed if they are padded & the Coaches approve them before the game).
- Each player should bring a plastic water bottle to games and practices. Coaches should allow adequate water breaks during practice & bring extra water (some players will always forget to bring water).
- Soccer balls come in 3 different sizes: 3, 4, & 5. The ball size is shown on the ball. Test the ball to see if it's round & will fly straight by tossing it into the air with a lot of spin on it to see if it wobbles. U-5 to U-8 use a size 3; U-10 & U-12 use a size 4; and U-13 & older use a size 5 ball.
- Goalkeepers must wear colors that distinguish them from the other players. Pinnies are provided.

3. U5 / U6 Games & Formations.

Start times - Central: 6:30pm

East: 6:15pm

- Practice and skill development – 25 minutes
- 2 x 15 minute halves. In extreme heat, coaches may elect to shorten the halves
- 5 minute break
- 4 players on the field including the goalie (cross field)
- One Coach from each team on field with players during game
- No slide tackle rule in effect
- Kick-ins only / no throw-ins
- Pass back to the goalie rule not enforced
- Handball rule very lax

4. **Team Equipment.** You should have:

- Complete uniform for each player
- Ball bag
- U5 – ball per player (player keeps)
- U6 - 14 balls to be returned at the end of the season
- cones
- ball pump
- basic First Aid Kit including cold pack

5. **Playing Time.** Make every attempt to ensure that each child plays at least 50% of every game he or she attends.

6. **When You Can Substitute.** (aka "Subbing"). After a goal kick is called for either team, after a goal by either team, after a kick-in is called for your team, at halftime, and at an injury. You usually cannot sub on corners, or free kicks but this is also permitted at the U6 age group. Players entering & leaving the field should only do so at the halfway line.

7. **Goalkeepers.** (aka Goalie, Keeper or GK) You should encourage everyone to take a try at playing goalkeeper. You will be surprised who is good & you really can't tell until they actually play the position. At the very least, it will give all the players respect for how tough the position is & they will be less likely to blame the goalkeeper when goals are scored. However, do not make a child play goalkeeper if he or she doesn't want to.

8. **Injuries.** Go immediately to any child injured on the field. A basic First Aid Kit is supplied for minor cuts, scrapes and bruises. Encourage parents to attend to their child.

9. **Be a Good Role Model.** To a large degree, your players & parents will follow your lead. Be a good sport. After the game, seek out the other coaches and shake their hand and thank them.

10. **Things You Are Not Allowed To Do:**

- Coaches & spectators must stand on the sidelines & cannot stand behind the end lines.

- During a game only one coach from each team is permitted on the field as an “Acting Referee”: one to watch the one side of the field, the other team, the opposite side.

11. Things You Should And Things You Should Not Do:

Make it fun & try to have fun yourself. Whether your players continue to play soccer will depend on whether it's fun.

Don't run up the score. It's not good for either team if the game is a mismatch, but sometimes it happens. If your team gets 5 goals ahead, you should be a good sport & do one of the following:

- Put your weakest scorers up front (use this as an opportunity to let them be forwards).
- Try someone new in goal & at fullback
- Tell your players they must complete 5 consecutive passes before shooting
- Tell them they can only take shots from outside the Penalty Box.

12. Keeping Children & Parents Under Control.

1. Everyone must follow all directions given by the coaches & assistant coaches
2. "When I talk you must be still & listen"
3. Expect everyone to be a good sport whether they win or lose (this includes parents)
4. "No cursing or name calling".
5. Disruptive or disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated.