

# Outline progression for teaching/coaching soccer from U6 to U19.

By, Sam Snow

US Youth Soccer Director of Coaching Education

Every aspect of play coached at one age must be reinforced at the next age. Aspects taught at U6 must be taught again at U8, U10, and U12 and so on. What was learned at a previous age group or groups must be refined at the next age group.

U6—Technique: dribbling; shooting

Psychology: sharing; fair play; parental involvement; “how to play”; emotional management

Fitness: balance; running; jumping; introduce the idea of how to warm-up; movement education

Tactics: where is the field; which goal to kick at

U8—Technique: ball lifting & juggling; block tackle; receiving ground balls with the inside & sole of the foot; shoot with inside of the foot; toe pass & shot; introduce the push pass & throw-in

Psychology: working in pairs; sportsmanship; parental involvement; “how to play”; emotional management

Fitness: agility; eye/foot & eye/hand coordination; introduce the idea of cool-down; movement education

Tactics: being exposed to all positions; 1 v 1 attack; introduce the names of positions

U10—Technique: running with the ball; passing; instep drive; receiving ground balls with the instep & outside of foot; receiving bouncing balls with the instep (cushion) and sole-inside-outside of foot (wedge); throw-in; fakes in dribbling; introduce heading & crossing. For goalkeepers ready stance; how to hold a ball after a save; W grip; catching shots at the keeper; punting & introduction to goal kicks & throwing

Psychology: working in-groups of 3, 4 or 5; stay focused for one entire half; sensitivity; how to win or lose gracefully; sportsmanship; parental involvement; “how to play”; communication; emotional management

Fitness: endurance; range of motion-flexibility; proper warm-up & cool-down are mandatory now

Tactics: 1 v 1 defending; roles of 1<sup>st</sup> attacker & defender; 2 v 1 attacking; man-to-man defense; introduction to set plays

U12—Technique: feints with the ball; receiving ground, bouncing & air balls with the heel, shins, thigh, abdomen, chest & head; heading to score goals & for clearances-standing & jumping; chipping to score; outside of foot pass; bending shots; crossing to near post & penalty spot space; heel pass; kicking & receiving with inside of the instep; introduce half volley & volley shooting; introduce slide tackle. For goalkeepers footwork; bowling; low dives & forward diving; angle play; near post play; saving penalty kicks; introduce parrying & boxing  
Psychology: teamwork; confidence; desire; mental rehearsal; intrinsic motivation; handling distress; how to learn from each match; sportsmanship; parental involvement; emotional management

Fitness: speed; strength; aerobic exercise

Tactics: 2 v 1 defending; 2 v 2 attacking & defending; roles of 2<sup>nd</sup> attacker & defender; combination passing; verbal & visual communication for all positions; commanding the goalmouth for the goalkeeper; half-time analysis; corner kick plays-defending & attacking; kick-off play; wall pass; beginning to identify potential roles for players-goalskeeper, defender, midfielder &/or forward; introduce the principles of defense

U14—Technique: chipping to pass; bending passes; crossing to the far post & top of the penalty area; half volley & volley shooting; slide tackles; heading to pass; heading backwards; diving headers; kicking & receiving with outside of the instep; outside of foot shot; dummy the ball; shoulder charge. For goalkeepers far post play; medium & high diving; parrying over the crossbar & around the posts; boxing & catching crosses; half volley (drop kick); kick saves; long over arm throws  
Fitness: power; acceleration; anaerobic exercise; cardio respiratory & cardiovascular training  
Psychology: assertiveness; tension control; self & team discipline; stay focused for an entire match; sportsmanship; parental involvement; “how to play”; mental focusing

techniques; emotional management; self-regulation  
Tactics: individual & group tactics; compactness; command the goal area for the goalkeeper; role of 3<sup>rd</sup> defender; how to make recovery & tracking runs; throw-in, penalty kick & free kick plays defending & attacking; defending the defensive third-center & flanks; playing in the attacking third center & flanks; post match analysis; checking runs; take-overs; switching positions during the flow of play; provide offensive support out to the penalty spot for the goalkeeper; zone defense; introduce the principles of attack

U16—Technique: airborne kicking-forward volley, scissors volley, Bicycle kick. For the goalkeeper backwards diving; saving the breakaway; all forms of distribution  
Fitness: vertical jump; body composition; plyometric exercise; Weight training; interval training; S.A.I.D. principle  
Tactics: group tactics; role of the 3<sup>rd</sup> attacker; principles of attack & defense; diagonal passing; dribbling & off the ball runs; wing play; overlapping runs; defending in the midfield & attacking thirds; all possible set plays; match analysis; switching the point of attack; should be developing the ability to adapt tactics during the flow of play; key players should be able to dictate the rhythm of the game; command out to the penalty spot for the goalkeeper; provide offensive support to the top of the penalty area for the goalkeeper  
Psychology: personal accountability; drive; courage; sacrifice in order to achieve one's best; sportsmanship; parental involvement; "how to play"; emotional management

U19—Tactics: team tactics; tactical/technical functional training; specialized tactics for a particular opponent; midfield play; attacking out of the back third; should be able to adapt tactics & change team formation during the flow of play; playing a role; command beyond the penalty area for the goalkeeper; support the attack from the defensive third for the goalkeeper; combination zone & man-to-man marking defense; tactical functional training; creativity on the attack; total soccer concept  
Fitness: overload principal; fitness tests; follow the U.S. Soccer Olympic Team concept

Technique: technical/tactical functional training; all techniques rehearsed at match speed & at match related & match condition levels; technical functional training

Psychology: reduce mental mistakes; control emotions during a match; dedication; commitment; take personal responsibility for actions on & off the field; sportsmanship; emotional management; “how to play”; parental involvement; selfless-team comes first

Even players in their twenties must continuously refine the techniques and tactics learned earlier in their careers. Players have a personal responsibility to maintain and improve their physical fitness. Social and emotional growth is a life long process.

Please note that the priority of the four components of soccer changes according to the age group being coached.

