



Methodology: Characteristics of U6's

- **Focused on themselves**
- **“The world according to me”** - Unable to see the world from another's perspective. Asking them to understand how someone else is seeing something or feels is unrealistic
- **Everything is in the here and now -they live in the moment**
- **Unable to think abstractly.** Asking them to think about spatial relationships or runs off the ball is unrealistic



Methodology: Characteristics of U6's

- **Enjoy playing, not watching.** They feel no enjoyment from watching others play when they could be playing too...
- **Active imaginations.** If we utilize their imaginations in practice activities, they will love practice!
- **Look for adult approval.** Watch how often players look to you for approval or to see if you are looking



Methodology: Characteristics of U6's

- "Coach, look what I can do!" Be encouraging...
- **2 speeds: extremely fast and stopped.** Their heating and cooling systems are less efficient than adults.
- **Give frequent water breaks** (every 8-10 minutes) or they may just run until they cannot run anymore



Methodology: Characteristic's of U6's

- **Usually unaware of game scores.** We should keep it that way
- **Limited attention span** (on average 10-15 seconds for listening, 10-15 minutes when engaged in a task)
- **Please keep your directions clear, concise and to the point.** When in an open environment, such as a park, their attention span will dwindle towards 10 seconds



Methodology: Characteristics of U8's

- Tend to play well in pairs.
- Are now able to take others' perspective. They now have a sense of how other people are feeling
- Still unable to think abstractly. Be patient
- Still many prefer playing to watching. Keep everyone active during practice and remember - no lines



Methodology: Characteristics of U8's

- **Limited attention span** (on average 15 seconds for listening, up to 20 minutes when engaged in a task).
- **Begin to understand “if I do this, then that happens.”** Have an understanding of time and sequence.
- **Many have incorporated a third or fourth speed into play;** not all players, but many players now have incorporated a speed or two between stopped and as fast as possible.
- **Some will keep score,** the competitive motors churn faster in some than others. Surely some parents are fueling the motors with their own



Methodology: Characteristics of U8's

- We do not need to stress winning and losing at this age. Results should not be important at this age
- Be very aware of your verbal and nonverbal reactions, as they look for your reaction frequently
- Seek out adult approval. Be supportive when they ask about their performance or try to show you their skills.
- Build their confidence and encourage them to try new things. They need reassurance



Methodology: Characteristics of U8's

- **Wide range of abilities** between children at this age. Children all develop at varying paces.
- **Beginning to develop motor memories;** by attempting to perform technical skills, they are training their bodies to remember certain movements.
- **A social order is beginning to develop.** Becoming aware of peer perception. Be sensitive to this.
- **Still have active imaginations** - Less active imaginations than U6 players.



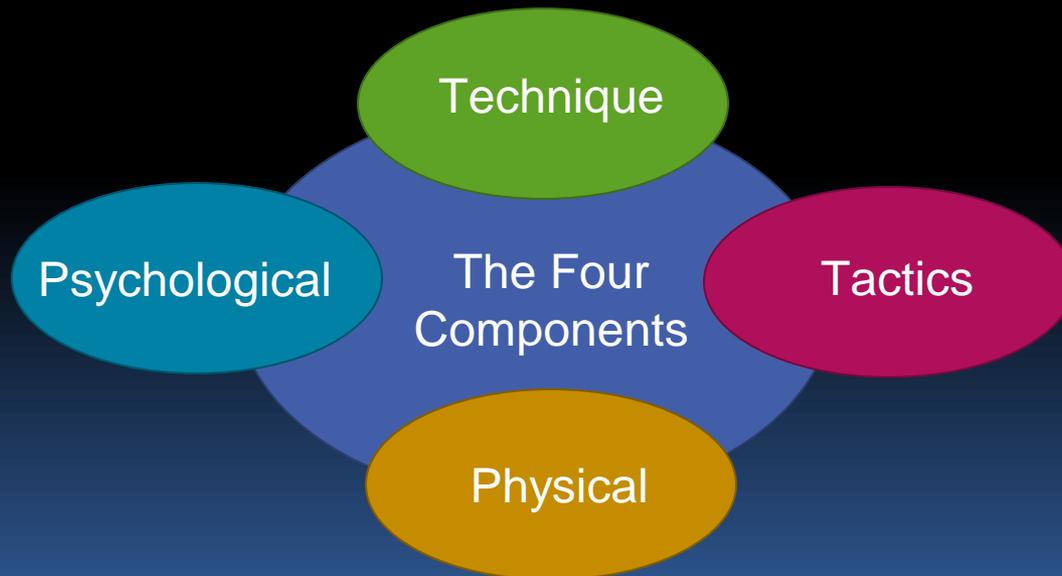
Methodology: Game as the Greatest Teacher

- Through playing, trial and error, players learn what works and what does not work
- Our first task as a coach is to let the players play without too much intrusion
- Every practice should end with a scrimmage; after all, we are practicing for the game
- Other practice activities will always include a ball
- Activities are constructed to give all players many touches on the ball



4 Components of the Game

- Technical (Technique vs. Skill)
- Tactical (Decision Making)
- Psychological (Game Understanding)
- Physical (Fitness)





4 Components of the Game

Technical: mastery of the ball using various body parts. Skill is the application of that mastery during the course of a game.

-For U6's: we should concentrate on dribbling, dribbling, and more dribbling.

- touch a ball as much as possible

- little coaching

-For U8's: dribbling at speed, change direction to get away from a defender, dribble while keeping head up, passing, shooting.



4 Components of the Game

Tactical: parts of the game in which players have to make on and off the ball decisions based upon the position of teammates, opponents, where the ball is, where they are on the field, and where the goals are.

- **For U6's:** how to dribble into open space
- **For U8's:** basic support of the ball and each other, how and when to get out of pressure and defensive recovery



4 Components of the Game

Physical: Strength, speed, agility, size, quickness, and endurance.

-For U6's: balance, coordination, and loco motor movements such as skipping, jumping, galloping, change of direction, and side to side movement

-For U8's: hopping, running backwards, skipping backwards



4 Components of the Game

Psychological: Competitive mentality, optimism, leadership, and overall attitude. When working with U6 and U8 players, you need to be aware of:

- Their attention span is limited, so games need to be simple
- Instructions should take no more than 5-15 seconds
- Use concise and minimal coaching points
- Provide much encouragement and praise
- Kids this age are not very resilient when given negative feedback
- Providing positive reinforcement is a much better choice with these fragile egos
- Players are heavily affected by what they hear parents and coaches say with words and nonverbal actions, so please be careful and be positive
- Remember it is not only what you say but how you say it that impacts children

KEEP IT FUN!



Economical Training

- Inclusion of more than one of the four components.
- Ball tag is an economical activity
 - manipulation of the ball (technical work),
 - turning, stopping, and running (physical)
- Decision making (tactical)
- Confidence can be built by coach setting the environment for success (psychological).

With the little time we spend with players, economical training is a must.





Why Small Sided Games?

- Enjoyment
- Children enjoy participation more than observation
- Every player gets more exposure to the ball and more participation!
 - In 3 vs.3 equals 6 players per 1 ball
 - In 11 vs.11 equals 22 players per ball
 - In a 40 minute game, each player in 3 v 3 averages 6 minutes and 40 seconds on the ball
 - Each player in 11 v11 averages 1 minute and 48 seconds on the ball
- Research shows that seeing oneself improve is a large component of fun for youth players
- With increased time on the ball in small-sided games, children are more likely to see improvement



Why Small Sided Games?

- Technical Development...Repetition is the key! There is More dribbling! More Shooting! More Receiving! More Passing!
- Physically more appropriate for young players
- Children's legs are smaller; the field should be as well.
- Their cooling systems are less developed in that young players heat up faster and cool down slower than adults...Big fields make them overheat!
- Mentally more appropriate for young players
- Build confidence by problem solving more often
- Most importantly, players face reasonably difficult problems
- Learning is dependent on repeated exposure, so small-sided games are better for fostering learning

SUCCESS + CONFIDENCE = FUN!