

Managing the U7 (1st grade) Game: Make it Fun!!

Characteristics of U7 (1st grade) Players

- Short attention span
- Hand-eye coordination and foot-eye coordination is just beginning to develop
- Kids are in constant motion, crash, recover, and back to constant motion
- Kids are very individual focused (me, my, mine)
- Psychologically impressionable and delicate

Program Format:

- 15 min practice
 - o Consist of 2-3 activities focused upon the players having fun and mastering the ball
 - o Pick 2-3 activities from U6-U8 Coaches Practice Guide; activities should have the same theme i.e. Dribbling, Passing, Shooting
- 33 min game/scrimmage Four 7 minute quarters with a 5 min half time.
 - o Play 4v4
 - o Coaches toss a ball into the game every time it goes out of bounds to ensure that everyone has chances to receive the ball and dribble during the game
 - o **No Goalies**

Focus for U7 (1st grade) Players: Mastery of the Ball

- The foundation for all future development is built upon players being comfortable with the ball at their feet.
- Players must mastery this ability first before things like attacking, defending, team shape, and tactics are learned.
- If mastery of the ball does not take place, players will be limited in their ability to successfully execute more complex aspects of the game.

Things to say to players during the game:

- Dribble!
- Move the ball, don't stop it
- Don't panic, keep possession of the ball
- Great effort!
- Good idea!
- Can you pick your head up when dribbling so you can see what is around you?
- Can you use the inside of your foot or your laces rather than use your toe?

Things to avoid saying during the game:

- Kick it!
- Smash it!
- Get it out of there!
- Stop dribbling or don't dribble there!
- Be careful about the tone of voice and volume of your voice when coaching. We don't want players to panic when they get the ball because you are communicating to them in a very aggressive tone of voice and volume.

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