

U6 Coaching Manual

Powhatan Fury FC

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PART I - THE LAWS OF THE GAME

Law 1 - The Field of Play

- The field for U6 is 15 yards x 25 yards. We use goals that measure 4 feet x 6 feet.

Law 2 - The Ball

- U6 teams will play with a size 3 ball.

Law 3 - The Players

- Games will be played 3 v 3 (no goalkeepers)
- Substitutions can be made by both teams at any stoppage of play; however, it is preferred that all substitutions be made at the quarter breaks.
- While playing, everyone should participate a minimum of 50% of the time.

Law 4 - The Players' Equipment

- **All jewelry MUST be removed to play.** (Jewelry is defined as any ornamental object or device, including necklaces, rings, bracelets, earrings, leather bands, rubber bands, etc.) Soft hair ties or headbands are permitted.
- All players must wear the following equipment:
 - Red or black Fury jersey
 - Shorts
 - Socks
 - Appropriate shin guards worn UNDER the socks
 - Soccer-specific cleats

Law 5 - The referee[s]

- None.

Law 6 - Other Match Officials

- None.

Law 7 - The Duration of the Match

- Games will consist of four 8 minute quarters
- 2 minute breaks in between quarters
- 5 minute halftime

Law 8 - The Start and Restart of Play

- Kickoff
 - All players except the player taking the kick must be in their own half of the field
 - All opponents must be outside the center circle
 - After a goal is scored, the non-scoring team will restart with a kickoff
 - The player taking the kickoff may not touch the ball again until it has touched another player
 - No team can score directly from any restart: all restarts are considered indirect kicks.
- Dropped ball
 - **Heading of the ball is prohibited in U6 division play. Unintentional contact between head and ball will result in a dropped ball**
 - The ball must hit the ground before it is kicked
 - All other players must be at least five yards from the ball until it touches the ground
 - A dropped ball must touch at least two players before a goal can be scored

Law 9 - The Ball In and Out of Play

- The ball is out of play when it has wholly passed over a boundary line on the ground or in the air

Law 10 - Determining the Outcome of a Match

- A goal is scored when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, between the goal posts, and under the crossbar
- There will be no overtime.
- Score is not kept.

Law 11 - Offside

- Does not apply.

Law 12 - Fouls and Misconduct

- All fouls result in a direct free kick.
- The coach must explain all infringements to the offending player.
- No cards are shown.
- A direct free kick may be awarded if a player commits the following against an opponent in a manner considered by the coach to be careless, reckless, or with excessive force.
 - Charges
 - Jumps at
 - Kicks or attempts to kick
 - Pushes
 - Strikes or attempts to strike
 - Tackles or challenges
 - Trips or attempts to trip
 - Commits a handball offense
 - Holds an opponent
 - Impedes an opponent with contact
 - Moves into the path of an opponent when the ball is not in playing distance (usually 3-6')
 - Bites or spits at someone

- Throws an object at the ball or hits the ball with a held object
- Plays in a dangerous manner
 - Defined as play which threatens injury to the player himself or any other player, or which prevents an opponent from playing the ball due to threat of injury
 - **Included is a player intentionally heading the ball**
- Impedes an opponent without contact
- Is guilty of dissent (arguing with the ref) or using offensive, insulting, or abusive language or actions
- Commonly misunderstood foul situations
 - Charging
 - Soccer is a contact sport. Not all contact is a charging offense
 - Legal charges are shoulder to shoulder and are designed to move a player off the ball. They are not careless, reckless, or using excessive force
 - Any contact deemed by the referee to be other than shoulder to shoulder (eg. shoulder to chest or center of back or a “hip check”) may be deemed an illegal charge
 - Handball offenses
 - Not all contact with hand or arm is a handball offense
 - There are many things that the coach will consider before blowing a whistle for a handball, including
 - Was the action deliberate or reflexive
 - Did the player’s arms make their silhouette larger
 - What part of the hand or arm was struck by the ball
 - Was the position of the hand or arm a natural position for the player’s movement
 - Officials must remember that there is no need to stop play for technical violations that do not interrupt the flow of the game. It's a players game and not a game of how many infractions can be identified, so keep the fun going and let them play.

Law 13 - Free Kicks

- All free kicks are direct kicks.
- All free kicks are taken from the location where the offense occurred.
- The ball must be stationary when kicked and is in play when it is kicked and clearly moved
- All opponents must be at least 4 yards from the ball until it is in play
- The kicker may not touch the ball again until it is touched by another player

Law 14 - The Penalty Kick

- None.

Law 15 - The Throw-in

- None. The ball is to be played from the point where it went out by a pass or dribble, which is treated as an indirect restart. If the team chooses to restart play with a pass, the defensive team is not allowed to intercept until the first pass has been put in play. The opposing team must be 4 yards away from the ball until it is back in play.

Law 16 - The Goal Kick

- Dribble in or pass in anywhere within the goal area. Opposing players must be in their half of the field until the ball is in play.

Law 17 - The Corner Kick

- None.

PART II - U6 AGE GROUP CHARACTERISTICS & SKILL PRIORITIES

Although sometimes we may mistake 5-6 year-olds for little adults, they are clearly not little adults. They have many years of childhood and development to enjoy before they are able to look at life in a similar fashion to adults. The reason for this is that they need time to intellectually, emotionally, and physically develop.

Dribbling should be the primary focus of our efforts, and practices should strive to give each player as many touches on the ball as possible. In order to fully understand this wonderful age group and to make practices run as smoothly as possible, it is extremely important for us to understand the following characteristics about U6 children.

Skills to learn: dribbling; shooting; balance; running; jumping; movement education.

Typical Characteristics of U6 Players

- Ego-centric - focused on themselves – reality to them is solely based on what they see and feel
- Unable to see the world from another's perspective – it is “the world according to me” time. Asking them to understand how someone else is seeing something or how they feel is unrealistic
- Everything is in the here and now – forget about the past and future, they live in the moment.

- Heating and cooling systems are less efficient than adults – we need to give frequent water breaks (every 8-10 minutes) or they may just run until they cannot run anymore
- Enjoy playing, not watching – they feel no enjoyment from watching others play when they could be playing too. Make sure every player has a ball in practice so every player is always playing
- Limited attention span - (on average 15 seconds for listening, 10-15 minutes when engaged in a task) – keep your directions concise and to the point.
- Effort is synonymous with performance – if they have tried hard, they believe they have done well. This is a wonderful quality and we should be supportive of their enthusiasm
- 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. Also be encouraging when they say “Coach, look what I can do!”
- Unable to think abstractly - asking them to think about spatial relations or runs off the ball is unrealistic
- Typically have 2 speeds - extremely fast and stopped
- Usually unaware of game scores – we should keep it that way
- Often like to fall down just because it is fun – they are just children having fun ☺

- Often cannot identify left foot vs. right foot – they know which foot they use most and if they point to their feet you can help teach them left and right

Skill Coaching Priorities

EMPHASIZE - Dribbling with all sides & surfaces of both feet (Inside, outside, sole, etc)

Dribble out of trouble rather than just kick

Dribble past someone to penetrate

Receiving - Soft first touch for control

Basic Kicking

Movement Education – Running, Jumping, backwards, turning, falling down, etc.

Basic coordination and motor skills

Keep it active and FUN! – No laps, lines, lectures!

PART III - COACHING TIPS

- Winning is not the objective. The objective is player development!
- Generally, players should be given the opportunity to play all positions

- As a rule, every player should expect to play at least 50% of each game, with playing time spread evenly across players regardless of skill or ability.
- We play small-sided with no keepers to promote movement and creativity for our younger players. With fewer players on the pitch, it is easier for every kid to get more touches on the ball. It also allows more space for each child to foster their creativity by giving them more time on the ball to make decisions.
- The club recommends a diamond shape to better incorporate basic concepts of offense and defense by creating multiple layered triangles. Players should be encouraged to attack and defend together. For example, a “defensive” player shouldn’t only hang out on the back half of the field and wait for the ball to come to them.
- Realistically, if you can keep players spread out around the field instead of clumped around the ball you’re doing just fine!
- “Joysticking” players is the practice of shouting instructions to your players throughout the game. Generally, this should not happen as the players cannot process a coach’s instructions and play the game at the same time. A better coaching concept is to substitute the player you need to talk to out of the game, give them instructions on the sideline, and then put them back into the game.
 - Reliance on “joysticking” creates soccer players with low soccer IQ who don’t know what to do if the coach isn’t shouting at them
 - Avoidance of “joysticking” creates thinking, innovative soccer players with high soccer IQ. They may fail more often at first, but the soccer IQ they will develop through trial and error is highly desirable for the players’ long-term development!
- Make sure to plan practice sessions out beforehand
 - Planned activities addressing particular skills or topics
 - A sample 60 minute practice plan is:
 - Warm up and individual ball handling - 15 minutes
 - Small sided games or activities, set piece practices, scrimmages - 30 minutes
 - Cool down and reinforcement of skills taught - 15 minutes
 - Players should be standing still as little as possible during practices
 - Instructions should be given in a minute or two at the most and then all players should participate together with nobody waiting in line to participate.
- **Head injuries are a serious concern. Know the signs of concussion and bench any player suspected of head injury until they are cleared by a physician.**
 - Club staff have the right to prevent any player suspected of having a head injury from returning to the game