

Player Development Guideline

Pre-K & K (U6) Co-Ed Soccer

www.holdenyouthsoccer.org





Holden Youth Soccer

Holden Youth Soccer Mission

Our Mission is to promote the game of soccer as a means of improving the physical, psychological, and social well-being of children while allowing every player an opportunity to play at a level that considers their ability.

Our Core Values include sportsmanship, fair play, and to educate:

1. our community on the benefits of soccer,
2. coaches as the cornerstone of player development, and
3. players to develop competence in the sport of soccer.

We strive to create an environment that develops respect, promotes leadership, and instills confidence while making the game of soccer available to all who desire to participate. We aim to be progressive and innovative in program, coach, and player development

Holden Youth Soccer Goals

Our goal as a group of volunteers on the HYS board, volunteer coaches, parents of our kids, our kids, and referees is to **BRING KIDS BACK YEAR ON YEAR!** This is our measure of success. We will accomplish this with three fundamental principles of coaching!!

Maximize Enjoyment!



Providing an enjoyable experience for players is far and away our top priority, want them to come back.

Maximize Repetition!



We look to provide players with a high number of repetitions of key technical skills—particularly foot work, juggling, shooting, and passing/receiving.

Maximize Empowerment!



We look to empower players to take risks on the field, contribute thoughts and ideas, take on responsibilities, and generally have a sense of ownership.



Player Development Guideline Objective

The goal of this document is to:

- Establish clear and age-appropriate goals and objectives so our coaches, players, and parents know what we are working toward.
- Establish objectives so coaches have a collective understanding of which skills players should have when they proceed to the next age group.
- Establish age-appropriate priorities and focus areas in the four elements of the game (technical, tactical, psychological, and physical).
- Ensure consistency among our programs, so we are all teaching the same way and using the same vocabulary.
- Create confident coaches that are better prepared for the season ahead.



Pre-K & K (U6) Player Development Overview

The primary focus of Pre-k & K soccer is to introduce the fundamentals of dribbling the ball and for the players to have fun.

Transition Considerations

This, for many or all your players, is the first exposure to both soccer and organized sports. They may have no frame of reference or comparative experiences.

For most Pre-K or K Players:

- They will have never played on a bounded field
- They are used to playing with their own ball
- May be aware of positions (Wing, Center, Defender, Goalie) but still lack the discipline to play any type of formation
- Soccer is about scoring goals, not defending

Typical Characteristics of Pre-K & K (U6) Players

1. **Focused on themselves** – reality to them is solely based on what they see and feel - it is “the world according to me” time. Asking them to understand how someone else is seeing something or feels is unrealistic.
2. **Everything is in the here and now** – forget about the past and future, they live in the moment. 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. They have a 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.
3. **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. If we utilize their imaginations in practice activities, they will love practice!
4. **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!” They are usually unaware of game scores – we should keep it that way.
5. **Their bodies are not conditioned for soccer yet** – They often like to fall just because it is fun – they are just children having fun. They typically have two speeds -- extremely fast and stopped. They often cannot identify left foot vs. right foot. Their 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.



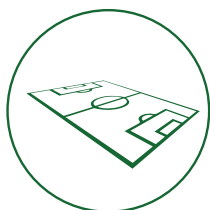
General Player Development Objectives

This document will help to identify key objectives within the four key areas of player development. The priority areas will evolve for each age group progression. The key areas of player development across all age groups and levels are:



Technical Development– These are the skills used to play the game, i.e., the “fundamentals”. This includes things like dribbling, passing, shooting, receiving, tackling, juggling, heading, etc.

Along with making sure players have fun, technical skills are probably the most important area for youth players to focus on.



Tactical Development – Tactics for youth soccer focuses largely on decision making, i.e., how players can make the correct decision given a particular situation. We should try to understand the progression of tactics and develop the players in the proper sequence, so that players are comfortable solving easier problems (1v1, 2v1) before they move on to solve more complex ones (4v4).



Psychological Development – For youth soccer, this relates to whether the player is having fun playing soccer, and other aspects such as how they deal with winning and losing, their level of motivation, and how they interact with teammates, coaches, officials, and their parents.



Physical Development – Fitness for youth soccer players can be largely achieved by just letting them play soccer, although some of the older age groups (U14 and maybe U12) may start incorporating speed and conditioning into practice games and activities.

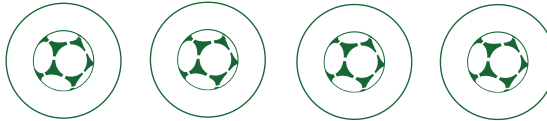


Pre-K & K (U6) Player Development Objectives

The following key training priorities are recommended by US Youth Soccer and Mass Youth Soccer for coaches of Pre-K & K (U6) players. A focus on helping players develop these skills and very basic tactics is critical as it will serve as the foundation for skills and tactics that will be introduced when these players move on to the next age group.

The key focus is an introduction to the basic technical aspects of the game and ensure all the players are having fun.

Technical



Tactical



Psychological



Physical



Key

Low Importance







High Importance



Pre-K & K (U6) Player Development Objectives



In the table below, we will go into the specific elements within each area that players will be encouraged to learn before entering the next age level.

Priority Area	Primary Focus	Secondary Focus
Technical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dribble with all sides of both feet (inside, outside, sole) • Dribble out of trouble • Dribble past someone • Changes of speed/direction and turns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to shielding the ball from opponents • Introduction to shooting with both feet (with inside of foot and laces) • Introduction to passing with inside and outside of both feet
Tactical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NO focus on tactics!!! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 v 1 (attacking and defending) • When we have the ball move forward • When we don't have the ball try to win it back
Psychological 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep it fun and enjoyable!!! This will help foster a desire to play (intrinsic motivation) • Encourage imagination and creativity • Need constant positive coaching 	
Physical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just play soccer!!!! • Make sure every kid has a ball as much as possible at their feet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No laps • No lines • No Lectures



Pre-K & K (U6) Player Development Overview

At the introductory level of soccer, it is crucial that we do not overload our young players with too much information or try to teach them everything we know about soccer.

Just as in parenting, it is important to be consistent in coaching and we must make sure that we follow a progressive trend of development for young players. To this end, we need to continue to focus on technique during our practices, as we will in future years.

Creating environments in which players get maximum repetitions of technical skills is key. Keep it fun!

Player Development Web References and Resources:

- Mass Youth Soccer week by week practice plans offering proper coaching technique and example drills.

[Holden Youth Soccer – Pre-K & K Lesson Plans](#)

- Holden Youth Soccer has posted other coaching resources available for download at:

[Holden Youth Soccer - Blog](#)

Player Development Curriculum Updates

Holden Youth Soccer wishes to thank its Board of Directors for their work in contributing to this development curriculum.

Comments and Suggestions are always appreciated

Please forward all comments pertaining to the coach's handbook or players development handbook to the Director of Development who can be located at rhall@holdenyouthsoccer.org



Coaching Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes, spanning the width of the page.