

SASA U5–6 Coaching Guide

Philosophy: Why U5–6 Matters

The U5–6 age group builds on the joy and comfort players developed in U4, or introduces new players to the sport in a positive way. This is where SASA helps players begin to form a love of the game and develop strong foundations in both soccer skills and teamwork. Success at this stage means players look forward to coming to soccer each week, feel part of the team, and start to understand the basics of play.

The primary goals at U5–6 are:

- Foster enjoyment and curiosity about the game.
- Strengthen comfort with the ball and introduce fundamental skills.
- Encourage teamwork and good sportsmanship.

Practice Framework: Play–Practice–Play (PPP)

At U5–6, players can focus for longer than U4 players but still need activities that are fast-paced and fun. The Play–Practice–Play (PPP) format remains the most effective way to keep them engaged and learning.

Recommended Session Length

- 40–50 minutes total.
- One session per week is recommended.
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Example Session Outline

Phase	Time	Purpose
Play 1: Free Play	5–10 min	Let players play freely in a small-sided game. Observe how they interact with the ball and each other.
Practice: Focused Activity	20–30 min	Work on one skill (like dribbling or passing) through an age-appropriate activity or game. Keep it fun and engaging.
Play 2: Guided Play	10–15 min	End with a small-sided game that allows players to try the skill they practiced. Provide encouragement and light guidance.

Skills & Competencies

At U5–6, players are ready for slightly more structured learning but still need a focus on basic technical and personal skills:

Technical Skills

- Dribbling with control and changing direction
- Short passes to teammates
- Kicking toward specific targets
- Stopping and controlling the ball
- Basic understanding of team shape and field boundaries

People Skills

- Sharing the ball and working with teammates
 - Building confidence to try new things
 - Listening and responding to instructions
 - Beginning to show leadership (helping teammates, setting up games)
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Coach Prompts

At U5–6, players respond well to clear, positive, and simple prompts:

- “Who can dribble to that cone the fastest while keeping control?”
 - “How can you help your teammate when they have the ball?”
 - “What’s the best way to stop the ball when it comes to you?”
 - “Where could you be to help your team?”
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For additional guidance or support, contact the SASA Coaching Coordinator or visit <https://www.ntxsoccer.org/coaching-resources/>.