

# Know Your Players

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## General Observations For Players From The Ages Of Six To Ten

1. Children of the same age may differ a good deal in motor skill development. A child's motor skills develop in a particular sequence: first they learn to crawl, then to walk, and then to run, jump and hop, in that order. There is a developmental sequence in learning a single technique too. As players practice a particular technique such as kicking they use their bodies more effectively each time and reach a higher level of development in that technique.
2. Children progress through motor development sequences at their own rate. Players of the same age may be at different development levels because of differences in motor ability and in the amount of time they have practiced the technique. The important thing is that each player shows continued progress.
3. Children of the same age will differ in physiological development (bone growth and muscular strength). Stars within their sport are often more advanced physiologically than others their own age.
4. They are loaded with energy and must be given rest periods.
5. Compared to other periods in a child's life these are the slow years in physical growth, making it the best time to learn new techniques.
6. Children like to play with others but side by side, rather than together – "Me first..." rather than "Let's both do this..." It's a difficult time to teach tactics. Indeed the focus should be on teaching ball skills.
7. Children have not yet learned the skills of compromise and team play. Expect frequent argument. Do not interfere with their arguments, as it is a part of their learning process.
8. You should not expect the children to play a team game the way adults would.

9. You should bend the rules to fit their physical and mental maturity. Fewer players result in more touches with the ball. Equipment suitable to their age and size results in better play.
10. Team games call for social and mental skills that they are just starting to develop.
11. They have not learned to accept mistakes – their own or others.
12. They lack the ability to make quick decisions.
13. Adult reactions to their efforts are often mistaken and become a blow to their self-confidence.
14. They are in need of understanding and encouragement.

## *Know Your Players – The Six Year Old*

### **Physical**

- ◆ Large muscles are lengthening
- ◆ Bones have little resistance to pressure
- ◆ Flexibility is great
- ◆ Extremely active; sitting still for any length of time is very difficult
- ◆ Short attention span; difficulty in listening
- ◆ Girls usually are taller and more mature

### **Social**

- ⇒ Boys and girls play together readily
- ⇒ Enjoy group play but show preference for small groups
- ⇒ Group members continuously changing because of quarrels
- ⇒ Boys will fight and wrestle – demonstrating masculinity
- ⇒ Expect sudden shifts in behavior from good to bad

### **Intellectual**

- Can learn to kick a ball on the run, jump, skip, hop, chase and dodge
- Ball should be of a small size (#3)
- Want to move about; need to provide full participation for everyone
- Game should not be too complex nor too long in duration because of their lack of interest and skills
- Review such skills as running at various speeds in various directions
- Explore new skills such as dodging, ducking, twisting and turning while running
- Could be introduced, gradually, to play in larger groups
- Play games in which the number of players is increased without affecting the essentials of the game

## CHARACTERISTICS OF U6 CHILDREN

- ☺ Short attention span
- ☺ Most are individually orientated (me, my, mine)
- ☺ Constantly in motion
- ☺ Psychologically easily bruised
- ☺ Little or no concern for team activities
- ☺ Parallel play...like to play next to each other, but not cooperatively
- ☺ Do believe in Santa Claus
- ☺ Physical and psychological development of boys and girls is quite similar
- ☺ Physical co-ordination is suspect
- ☺ Eye hand and/or eye foot coordination is most primitive at best
- ☺ Love to run and jump
- ☺ Like to roll on the ground – that's in good dress-up clothes, not their team uniforms
- ☺ Enjoy climbing
- ☺ Prefer large soft balls and nerf balls
- ☺ The ball should be a size # 3
- ☺ Catching skills are not developed
- ☺ Can balance on their dominant foot
- ☺ No sense of pace – go flat out
- ☺ 3 v 3 or 4 v 4, without goalkeepers, is the most complex game environment they should play



## CHARACTERISTICS OF U8 CHILDREN

- ☆ Attention span longer than U6
- ☆ Inclined more toward group activities
- ☆ Still in motion
- ☆ Still very sensitive (dislike personal failure in front of peers)
- ☆ Santa is becoming less real
- ☆ Still quite similar in their physical and psychological development
- ☆ Beginning to develop physical co-ordination (most can ride a two wheeler at this point)
- ☆ Still into running, jumping, climbing and rolling
- ☆ More into the real balls through imitation of the big kids (sports heroes and heroines are important)
- ☆ Still lack a sense of pace and play flat out
- ☆ Will intentionally pass to their best friend, so working in pairs is becoming possible
- ☆ They still need lots of individual time with the ball
- ☆ The ball should be a size # 3
- ☆ 4 v 4, without goalkeepers, is the most complex game environment for them to play



## CHARACTERISTICS OF U10 CHILDREN

- ⇔ Lengthened attention span
- ⇔ Now they are team orientated
- ⇔ Still in motion but not as busy --- will hold long enough for a short explanation
- ⇔ Psychologically becoming more firm
- ⇔ Santa Claus is something they are telling younger children about
- ⇔ Boys and girls beginning to develop separately
- ⇔ Gross and small motor skills becoming much more refined
- ⇔ Prefer team type balls and equipment
- ⇔ The ball should be a size # 4
- ⇔ Their pace factor is becoming developed – do think ahead
- ⇔ They will intentionally play in groups of three or four
- ⇔ Can solve problems together
- ⇔ 6 v 6, with goalkeepers, should be their most complex game environment



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