



U6 JUNIOR DRIBBLERS

QUICK NAVIGATION

Use this page like a menu.

Ages 5-6 | Ball mastery, independence, and early team play

PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

45-60 minute sessions | developmental 4v4-6v6 play | no standard goalkeepers or refereed weekly matches

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

FORMATION / TEAM SHAPE

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8-WEEK CURRICULUM

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Tip: open your PDF viewer's Bookmarks/Outline panel for a collapsible list of every week and activity. External SoccerXpert and SoccerDrive links remain live throughout the guide.



U6 JUNIOR DRIBBLERS

ACTIVITY LIBRARY INDEX

Click an activity to jump directly to its field-ready reference page.

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QUICK NAV

WEEK 1

OVERVIEW

Junior Dribblers

More independence, more ball mastery and the first building blocks of team play.

Junior Dribblers is the next step in NSFC's player development pathway. Players begin a more independent and structured soccer experience while fun remains central. Training introduces dribbling, passing, shooting, basic defending, movement and game flow.

Program structure

Typical session	45-60 minutes
Practice structure	Skill instruction followed by small-sided play
Small-sided format	Approximately 4v4 to 6v6, depending on attendance
Goalkeepers	Not used in standard U6 lineups
Goalkeeper concepts	May be introduced during practice
Formation	Guided formation may be used at coach discretion

U6 coaching lens

- Individual ball control and dribbling
- Introduction to passing and shooting
- Basic soccer rules and game flow
- Teamwork, sharing and sportsmanship
- Confidence and independence

NO STANDARD WEEKLY REFEREED GAMES
U6 uses practices, scrimmages and small-sided games as the primary learning environment. There are no standings or playoffs, and the emphasis remains effort, learning and enjoyment.

4v4 GUIDED SHAPE

A simple reference - not a rigid tactical system.



HOW NSFC USES FORMATION AT U6

Coaches may introduce a simple forward / left / right / defender shape to help players recognize spacing and basic responsibilities. Do not continually stop play to force exact positions. Players should rotate and experience the game from different areas. Standard U6 play does not use a goalkeeper.

U6 JUNIOR DRIBBLERS | WEEK 1

MY BALL & ME

PRIMARY FOCUS Ball familiarity and dribbling	SECONDARY FOCUS Listening, movement and spatial awareness
WEEK'S COACHING MESSAGE Keep the ball close and have fun with it.	

1. Free Dribbling | 5 min

Every player has a ball. Use go/stop, fast/slow, turn, right/left foot and big/little touches.

2. Ball Mastery | 8 min

Toe taps, ball shuffles, pull-backs and inside/outside touches.

3. Grid Dribbling | 10 min

Players dribble inside a marked grid with scattered cones, changing speed and direction.

4. Red Light, Green Light | 8-10 min

Use familiar commands to reinforce control. Nobody is eliminated.

5. Small-Sided Soccer | 15-20 min

Finish with 4v4, 5v5 or 6v6. Introduce a guided shape only as helpful.

U6 JUNIOR DRIBBLERS | WEEK 2

CONTROL & CHANGE DIRECTION

PRIMARY FOCUS Dribbling and turning	SECONDARY FOCUS Recognizing open space
WEEK'S COACHING MESSAGE Find the open space.	

- 1. Free Dribbling | 5 min
Repeat familiar arrival routine.
- 2. Ball Mastery + Inside Cut | 8 min
Review touches and introduce a simple inside cut.
- 3. Dribbling Gates | 10 min
Players dribble through randomly scattered gates and immediately find another.
- 4. Sharks & Minnows | 10 min
Minnows dribble across while sharks apply pressure. Use quick re-entry rather than elimination.
- 5. Small-Sided Soccer | 15-20 min
Ask players to find open grass rather than constantly directing them.

U6 JUNIOR DRIBBLERS | WEEK 3

INTRODUCTION TO PASSING

PRIMARY FOCUS Inside-foot passing	SECONDARY FOCUS Receiving and teammate awareness
WEEK'S COACHING MESSAGE Pass to your teammate, then find space.	

- 1. Partner Passing | 5 min**
Pairs pass from roughly 5-7 yards.
- 2. Dribble & Find a Partner | 8 min**
Players dribble; on command they find a teammate and make a pass.
- 3. Passing Through Gates | 10 min**
Pairs pass through cone gates to a teammate positioned on the opposite side.
- 4. Partner Gate Challenge | 10 min**
Pairs count successful passes through different gates.
- 5. Small-Sided Soccer | 15-20 min**
Praise successful passing decisions without requiring a pass every possession.

U6 JUNIOR DRIBBLERS | WEEK 4

1V1 ATTACKING & DEFENDING

PRIMARY FOCUS Confidence against an opponent	SECONDARY FOCUS Basic defending
WEEK'S COACHING MESSAGE Attack when we have it. Help defend when we don't.	

1. Grid Dribbling | 5 min

Review turns and changes of direction.

2. Mirror Moves | 8 min

Partners mirror movement; add balls if appropriate.

3. 1v1 Gate Game | 10-12 min

Attack one gate, defend the other. If possession changes, direction changes.

4. Protect Your Ball | 8 min

Players protect their own ball while safely challenging others.

5. Small-Sided Soccer | 15-20 min

Introduce: when they have the ball, get between the ball and our goal.

U6 JUNIOR DRIBBLERS | WEEK 5

SHOOTING

PRIMARY FOCUS Shooting technique	SECONDARY FOCUS Dribbling toward goal
WEEK'S COACHING MESSAGE See the goal - take your chance.	

1. Dribble & Shoot | 5 min
- Players arrive and immediately get repetitions toward goal.
2. Ball Mastery Review | 5-8 min
- Quick familiar touches.
3. Dribble, Turn & Shoot | 10 min
- Navigate cones, turn toward goal and shoot.
4. Attack the Goal | 10 min
- Multiple small goals create many scoring opportunities.
5. Small-Sided Soccer | 15-20 min
- Encourage players to recognize when they are close enough to shoot.

U6 JUNIOR DRIBBLERS | WEEK 6

PASSING & TEAMWORK

PRIMARY FOCUS Combining with teammates	SECONDARY FOCUS Movement after passing
WEEK'S COACHING MESSAGE Pass it - then move.	

- 1. Partner Passing | 5 min
Review inside-foot passing.
- 2. Passing Through Gates | 8 min
Pairs move through random gates.
- 3. Pass & Move Triangle | 10 min
Pass to a teammate, then move toward the open cone.
- 4. 2v1 to Goal | 10 min
Two attackers decide whether to dribble or pass against one defender.
- 5. Small-Sided Soccer | 15-20 min
Praise passing, movement and helping teammates.

U6 JUNIOR DRIBBLERS | WEEK 7

ATTACK, DEFEND & TRANSITION

PRIMARY FOCUS Changing roles quickly	SECONDARY FOCUS Understanding game flow
WEEK'S COACHING MESSAGE When the ball changes teams, our job changes too.	

1. Free Play | 5 min

Players dribble, pass or shoot as teammates arrive.

2. Direction Changes | 8 min

Grid dribbling with forward, turn, left, right, fast and slow commands.

3. Attack Then Defend | 10-12 min

After attacking goal, the player immediately becomes the defender against the next attacker.

4. 2v2 Transition | 10 min

Short 2v2 rounds with rapid restarts.

5. Small-Sided Soccer | 15-20 min

Use questions: Who has the ball? What should we do now? Where can you help?

U6 JUNIOR DRIBBLERS | WEEK 8

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

PRIMARY FOCUS Applying skills through play	SECONDARY FOCUS Confidence, teamwork and enjoyment
WEEK'S COACHING MESSAGE Look how much you've learned.	

1. Player's Choice | 5 min

Players choose a familiar ball activity.

2. Favorite Skills | 5-8 min

Players demonstrate skills remembered from the season.

3. Coach's Choice Game | 10 min

Repeat a favorite activity such as Sharks & Minnows, Dribbling Gates or Passing Through Gates.

4. Team Challenge | 8-10 min

Combine dribbling, passing and shooting.

5. Extended Small-Sided Soccer | 20-25 min

Rotate positions, allow decisions and keep interruptions minimal.

COACH RESOURCE - SEE A SIMILAR ACTIVITY

[SoccerXpert - U4-U8 Drill Library](#)

External examples are supplemental. Use the NSFC setup, age adaptations and coaching expectations above.

Ball Mastery

PURPOSE

Develop comfort and confidence manipulating the ball.

Setup

Every player has a Size 3 ball with adequate personal space.

How It Works

Use toe taps, ball shuffles, pull-backs, inside/outside touches and simple cuts. Demonstrate briefly, then let players repeat.

Coach Watches For

- Balance and control.
- Both feet are involved.
- Players stay active rather than waiting.

Easy Progressions / Variations

- Add movement after stationary touches.
- Use 20-30 second challenges.

COACH RESOURCE - SEE A SIMILAR ACTIVITY

[SoccerDrive - U6 Big vs. Little Touches Practice](#)

External examples are supplemental. Use the NSFC setup, age adaptations and coaching expectations above.

Grid Dribbling

PURPOSE

Develop ball control, awareness and changes of direction.

Setup

Create roughly a 15x20-yard grid and scatter cones. One ball per player.

How It Works

Players dribble freely while avoiding cones and teammates. Add big/little touches, right/left foot, pull-backs and speed changes.

Coach Watches For

- Appropriate touch size.
- Head comes up periodically.
- Ball stays inside the grid.

Easy Progressions / Variations

- Reduce or expand space.
- Add a turn at selected cones.

COACH RESOURCE - SEE A SIMILAR ACTIVITY

[SoccerXpert - Dribbling Through Gates](#)

[SoccerDrive - Improve Your Dribbling](#)

External examples are supplemental. Use the NSFC setup, age adaptations and coaching expectations above.

Dribbling Gates

PURPOSE

Encourage controlled dribbling toward targets and scanning.

Setup

Scatter many two-cone gates throughout the field.

How It Works

Players dribble through a gate and immediately search for another.

Coach Watches For

- Players look for open gates.
- Control through the gate.
- Direction changes after each gate.

Easy Progressions / Variations

- Count gates in 30 seconds.
- Challenge players to improve their own score.

COACH RESOURCE - SEE A SIMILAR ACTIVITY

[SoccerXpert - Dribbling Through Gates](#)

[SoccerDrive - Gatekeepers Dribbling Activity](#)

External examples are supplemental. Use the NSFC setup, age adaptations and coaching expectations above.

Sharks & Minnows

PURPOSE

Practice dribbling under pressure and protecting the ball.

Setup

Mark two end lines. Most players have balls; one or two are sharks.

How It Works

Minnows dribble across while sharks try to knock balls away. NSFC recommends quick reset/re-entry rather than long elimination.

Coach Watches For

- Changes of speed and direction.
- Ball protection.
- Defenders approach safely.

Easy Progressions / Variations

- A skill move can temporarily freeze a shark.
- Use narrower or wider space.

COACH RESOURCE - SEE A SIMILAR ACTIVITY

[SoccerXpert - Sharks & Minnows](#)

[SoccerDrive - British Bulldog / Sharks & Minnows variation](#)

External examples are supplemental. Use the NSFC setup, age adaptations and coaching expectations above.

Passing Through Gates

PURPOSE

Teach passing accuracy, receiving and communication.

Setup

Scatter cone gates. Players work in pairs with one player on each side of a gate.

How It Works

Pass the ball between the two cones to the partner. After a successful pass, both players move to a new gate.

Coach Watches For

- Inside of foot for the pass.
- Plant foot beside the ball.
- Receiver prepares for the ball.
- Players move to the next target.

Easy Progressions / Variations

- Count different gates completed.
- Make gates smaller as accuracy improves.

COACH RESOURCE - SEE A SIMILAR ACTIVITY

[SoccerDrive - Gates drill library / passing ideas](#)

External examples are supplemental. Use the NSFC setup, age adaptations and coaching expectations above.

1v1 Gate Game

PURPOSE

Introduce attacking and defending through a simple directional game.

Setup

Small rectangle with a cone gate at each end.

How It Works

One attacker and one defender compete. Score by dribbling through the opponent's gate under control. If the defender wins it, roles reverse instantly.

Coach Watches For

- Attacker changes speed/direction.
- Defender stays goal-side.
- Fast reaction to possession change.

Easy Progressions / Variations

- Limit rounds to 20-30 seconds.
- Widen gates for beginners.

COACH RESOURCE - SEE A SIMILAR ACTIVITY

[SoccerDrive - 1v1 With Gates](#)

[SoccerXpert - U4-U8 Drill Library](#)

External examples are supplemental. Use the NSFC setup, age adaptations and coaching expectations above.

Protect Your Ball

PURPOSE

Teach shielding, awareness and persistence.

Setup

Every player has a ball in a marked grid.

How It Works

Players protect their own ball while safely trying to knock another ball outside. Anyone losing a ball retrieves it and returns immediately.

Coach Watches For

- Body between opponent and ball.
- Head up when possible.
- Safe, controlled challenges.

Easy Progressions / Variations

- Make the grid smaller.
- Use a 30-second round.

COACH RESOURCE - SEE A SIMILAR ACTIVITY

[SoccerXpert - Sharks & Minnows \(shielding / ball protection\)](#)

External examples are supplemental. Use the NSFC setup, age adaptations and coaching expectations above.

Dribble, Turn & Shoot

PURPOSE

Connect dribbling and turning to a controlled finish.

Setup

Set cones leading toward one or more goals. Keep lines short by using multiple stations.

How It Works

Players dribble through/around cones, make a turn toward goal and shoot.

Coach Watches For

- Controlled final touch.
- Plant foot beside the ball.
- Accuracy before power.

Easy Progressions / Variations

- Use different turns.
- Add light passive pressure.

COACH RESOURCE - SEE A SIMILAR ACTIVITY

[SoccerDrive - Pass, Receive, Dribble U8 \(dribble/turn/shoot ideas\)](#)

External examples are supplemental. Use the NSFC setup, age adaptations and coaching expectations above.

Attack the Goal

PURPOSE

Create many shooting opportunities while encouraging players to scan.

Setup

Place several small goals around a playing area.

How It Works

Players dribble freely and may score in any available goal, then immediately find another.

Coach Watches For

- Players look up for targets.
- Approach under control.
- Quick transition after scoring.

Easy Progressions / Variations

- Require a turn before scoring.
- Add one passive defender.

COACH RESOURCE - SEE A SIMILAR ACTIVITY

[SoccerDrive - 1v1 to 4 Goals & 4 Gates](#)

External examples are supplemental. Use the NSFC setup, age adaptations and coaching expectations above.

Pass & Move Triangle

PURPOSE

Introduce movement after passing.

Setup

Three cones form a triangle. Use groups of three when possible.

How It Works

Player passes to a teammate and then moves toward the open cone. Keep the distances short and the rhythm continuous.

Coach Watches For

- Pass then move.
- Receiver gets ready before the ball arrives.
- Players do not stand after passing.

Easy Progressions / Variations

- Reverse direction.
- Add a second ball for advanced groups only.

COACH RESOURCE - SEE A SIMILAR ACTIVITY

[SoccerXpert - U4-U8 Drill Library](#)

External examples are supplemental. Use the NSFC setup, age adaptations and coaching expectations above.

2v1 to Goal

PURPOSE

Teach the basic decision: dribble or pass.

Setup

Small area with a goal. Two attackers face one defender.

How It Works

Coach starts the ball. Attackers try to score. Allow players to solve the situation before giving the answer.

Coach Watches For

- Ball carrier recognizes pressure.
- Teammate moves into space.
- Defender delays and protects goal.

Easy Progressions / Variations

- Make field wider/easier or narrower/harder.
- Rotate defender often.

COACH RESOURCE - SEE A SIMILAR ACTIVITY

[SoccerDrive - U10 Practice Plan with Direct 2v1s](#)

External examples are supplemental. Use the NSFC setup, age adaptations and coaching expectations above.

Attack Then Defend

PURPOSE

Introduce transition from offense to defense.

Setup

Use one goal and two starting lines with balls.

How It Works

Player A attacks and shoots. Immediately Player B attacks with a new ball while Player A becomes defender. Continue the rotation.

Coach Watches For

- Quick mental transition.
- Attacker plays with purpose.
- Defender applies pressure without reckless contact.

Easy Progressions / Variations

- Start from different angles.
- Use cone goals if no full goal is available.

COACH RESOURCE - SEE A SIMILAR ACTIVITY

[SoccerXpert - 1v1 Transition Game \(similar transition concept\)](#)

External examples are supplemental. Use the NSFC setup, age adaptations and coaching expectations above.

2v2 Transition

PURPOSE

Develop teamwork in realistic small-number situations.

Setup

Small field with two goals and quick rotation groups.

How It Works

Play short 2v2 rounds. When the ball exits or a goal is scored, restart or rotate quickly.

Coach Watches For

- Support for the ball.
- Recovery when possession is lost.
- Communication and spacing.

Easy Progressions / Variations

- Use 3v3 if numbers require.
- Award no bonus points; keep the game natural.

COACH RESOURCE - SEE A SIMILAR ACTIVITY

[SoccerXpert - U4-U8 Drill Library](#)

External examples are supplemental. Use the NSFC setup, age adaptations and coaching expectations above.

Coach Quick Reference

The page to revisit when practice gets busy.

PRACTICE

Purpose → ball-based warm-up → develop one theme → play soccer.

AFTER SMALL-SIDED PLAY

What worked? What repeated? What should we teach next time?

Keep these habits

- Bring enough balls and cones to keep players active.
- Demonstrate more than you lecture.
- Use questions and simple cues rather than constant commands.
- At U4, parents are active helpers on the field.
- At U6, encourage independence while keeping the environment supportive.
- U4: 3v3, no goalkeeper, referee or scorekeeping.
- U6: generally 4v4-6v6, no standard goalkeeper; guided formation is optional and developmental.
- Finish with soccer.

Additional activity references

External links are optional supplemental resources. NSFC curriculum, safety requirements, age-group rules and coaching expectations remain the governing guidance. External activities should be adapted to the age, ability and needs of the players.

[SoccerXpert - U4/U5/U6/U7/U8 Soccer Drills](#)

[SoccerDrive - Soccer Drill & Practice Library](#)

NSFC curriculum structure was also informed by Northern United FC material previously supplied to NSFC. The activity links above focus on SoccerXpert and SoccerDrive for coach-facing supplemental resources.

USE OUTSIDE RESOURCES AS IDEAS

NSFC coaches may use quality outside exercises that fit the age group and the team's needs. The weekly themes provide direction; they do not prevent a coach from adapting practice based on what players need most.