

Training & Game day tips – Under 6 & 7's

Communication

- Make sure they are all in front of you when you speak. If not you will lose them immediately. My favourite saying was " if you can't see my eyes you won't here me" .
- Speak slowly & keep the words/ instructions simple.
- Keep the sun out of the children's' eyes when you address them.

Equipment

- **Trugs/ Buckets** - bring a trug/bucket to training so they can all put their bottles into it. Keeps them in the one area & they won't lose the bottle if you get them from day one to place their bottle into the trug.
- **Water bottles** - take an extra bottle in case someone forgets their bottle . Even a large bottle to refill if you are organised. Kids these days drink a lot of water.
- **Tarp** - maybe not necessary for training but a must for games (see below)
- **Vests** - there are some small size fluoro vests in the shed, the kids love to wear them . When you are playing games that involve two teams it makes it easier to work out who is who. Also remember to use them when playing against Clovelly teams.
- **Agility poles / mini hurdles** - these are located in the shed.Don't use them every week but you will find they a helpful tool especially if you have players with short attention spans
- **Tackle bags/pads** - I think we can teach the U6's to tackle & the earlier the better. I'd suggest you use them in the second half of the season.

Discipline - Time out / sin bin - from your 1st session with your team I suggest that you introduce them to a "sin bin" if they misbehave. If you don't have a sin bin you will lose the groups' attention. Firstly I suggest that you clear it with all the parents but in my experience everyone was on board with the idea if you play up you go to the bin. This is how you may set it up:

- 1) Allocate a spot on the sideline, mark it with a cone(s) away from their bags & balls etc, show the kids where it is.
- 2) Explain to the kids that if they play up they will be given a warning then if they offend again they go to the bin.
- 3) If they offend issue the usual warning "that behaviour is not acceptable, if you continue or do it again you are in the bin"
- 4) If they offend again " Scotty I've given you warning, you are now in the bin for 1 minute" . Try to remember to release them from the bin in a minute or two,maybe an extra set of eyes at training will help you to manage this.

Training Drills

- There are a lot of good training drills in the ARU manual, use them or modify them to suit your players abilities.
- Have at least 3 or 4 drills to use in the session. 5 to 10 minutes per drill is all you need.
- If using a drill where it's one player racing against another try & match them with ability.
- Use drink breaks to set up the next drill, if you do have an extra parent at the session get them to help you so that it can be done in a minute.

- If you do have an extra parent on the sideline who is physically capable use them in your drills.

Training rewards

I used snakes a reward for a good session. I didn't bring them every week but made it known that if the session was a good one their may be a reward. Bring enough for the siblings , they come out of the woodwork for snakes.

Game Day

Pre game

- Be at the ground at least 20 mins before kickoff.
- **Boundaries of the playing field**- always difficult to get an under 6 to stay within the field or to know what is touchline or try line. Walk the field before the game, get them to see where they can run to score a try. I tell the players that the footy field is like a giant swimming pool, you can't swim outside the pool so stay inside the boundaries.
- Warm up 10min before game time with drills/ game against the parents. The kids love it when dad or mum is opposed to them especially if the parent can't make it to training. Of course for most parents it's a good chance to relive their long lost rugby career.
- Have a different captain every week. Their job is to run the team on & of course be involved with the toss. Try & educate the captain what to do / where to run ie. to the centre of the field. I suggest you think about who the captain will be before you get to the ground but don't announce it to the player until they have settled & are ready to play. Sometimes you may need to switch to another player if you see that one child needs some encouragement to play that day.
- Make sure the rest of the team is lined up behind the captain when they run on. Also get the parents to form a **tunnel** (see image) I have found the tunnel to be the best way to get an under 6 to concentrate on the task ahead. Once the tunnel was formed the kids tuned in and knew they were about to play rugby.
- Get the coach to stand on the half way line & aim the tunnel at him/her, the captains job is then to run to the coach.
- The coach or another parent can take the weekly photos of the captain leading out their team.(see attached pic)

During the game

- Before the kickoff get the players to tell you where the try line is for that half.
- Try and get all the players involved in the game. It may be necessary to hold the hand of the shy ones but make sure they all get the ball in their hands.
- Encourage your players from game #1 to run in a forward direction.
- Passing is a difficult concept for under 6s but try to get then passing during the second half of the season
- In defence the coach should stand near the referee & encourage the team to **"come back to me"** when a tag has been made.
- Help the referee during the game, if your players are offside in defence call out their names & tell them not to make a tag. If the opposition is offside use your players name & tell them to keep running until a legal tag is made.
- Make sure all of your players score a try during the season. If need be have a chat to the other coach before the game especially when it gets to the last few games & organise a try for yours or their player who may struggle to score. I have done this a few times & it makes the child's (& parents) season. There is always a friendly Clovelly team to help you achieve this goal.

Half time

- Make sure all the players are sitting on the tarp (see below) with drinks / oranges & facing the coach (keep the sun out of their eyes)
- Keep the half time talk short, compliment everyone if you can for the good things they have done & give them all one goal for the next half.

End of match

- Keep your players together on the field for the three cheers. The manager should send out all the bench as soon as the game finishes so that they are all on the field.
- Full time speech should be short but mention all the players in your match review.
- Snakes / trophy & or & certificate are a must. I also used a player of the week Tshirt that I had printed with Clovelly logo. The shirt was handed back every week with the trophy. I believe that shirt was usually worn all weekend by the recipient including to bed & of course ended up at school for that week's news. If anyone wants a shirt I have the screens & can have these printed at a small cost .I actually made shirts for the whole squad so that when they finish the last game of the season they all received a shirt as they handed in their jersey.

Tarp - the tarp does a few things

- 1) It keeps bags etc off the wet ground on a Saturday am
- 2) The kids can sit on it at half time, they stay dry plus it keeps them in the one spot.
- 3) In really bad weather especially at half time if it's raining the tarp can become a shelter or as we called it the CAVE. (see pic)

The TUNNEL

Formed simply by all the supporters joining hands the minute before the team runs on. This is a great way to get the players focussed on the game rather than coming onto the field like a bunch of cows. Try it !

Good luck I hope these tips are helpful ,enjoy your season with your under 6s.

Cheers

Bruce Jones

0414626348