



Bambinos & Micros

Active Start for kids U4-U6

Active Start is all about ensuring the kids have the most enjoyable time on the soccer pitch, to learn a love for the sport, so beyond all else.....make it FUN!"



For Bambinos and Micros we play games, games, games while carrying a ball at our feet: Tag, chase, evade, directional games! You might work on shooting or passing technique by sending a ball to space while playing these various games. Themes are an easy way to change the same old game ... tired of playing tag? How about Pirate tag, or Toilet tag, or tag while running around or through obstacles?

To help yourself and your players/kids, sign up for the next Active Start and FUNDamentals coaching course. You'll have fun, make friends, get to know other CVUSC coaches, and gain leaps of confidence in running your own sessions!

Technical Focus

The technical focus for development for the Bambinos and Micros is familiarity and control over the ball. Specifically we aim to develop the individual players technical ability to receive, carry and shoot the ball. Success is literally measured in micro-steps as their motor control is developing and tends to be characterized by large motor movements around major joints like the hip rather than the knee and ankle.

In terms of priority focus on:

1. Young players should **learn to carry the ball at their feet** maintaining control and keeping the ball at a playing distance. We need to develop their ability to control the ball as they change their direction of travel and the pace at which they are traveling. Super skills such as step overs, pull backs, and scissors can be taught at this age with great success and prepare these players well for the one on one battles that are so very prevalent in the game of soccer. They should be introduced to the many control surfaces of the feet: inside, instep, laces, outside, heel and sole of the foot.

2. Receiving the ball or collecting the ball. **This is the basic development of first touch.** Technical focus should be on maintaining control of the ball as it comes to their feet. They may be introduced to receiving or collecting the ball with many surfaces of the feet: inside, instep, laces, outside, heel, and sole of the foot.

3. **Shooting the ball at a specified target** should be introduced in Bambinos and encouraged in Micros. The players should be introduced to the fun of shooting! Basic shooting is the focus with the technical aim of improving control and accuracy while maintaining dynamic balance while shooting. The inside of the foot is the main control focus at this stage though laces and instep can be introduced with varied levels of success.

4. Tactically, we develop the player's individual control over the ball through setting up **one on one scenarios**. The game is a beehive at this level, let it be a beehive but limit the number of kids in the hive. Set up multiple battles with limited numbers of players all over your field and you will end up with kids who can take on other players with confidence and joy. During your mini-games, we should not hear "Pass the ball! Pass the ball!" at this stage of development. Rather we should hear, "Speed up! Slow down! Go Right! Go Left! Take her on!" and, "Stay in her way!" from coaches. From parents, we should only be hearing, "Well done!" and, "Keep going!"

Suggested Practice Format

Session Length: 40 - 60 minutes 1/week

Start with a warm-up that gets the kids going and naturally introduces your training theme for the session

Example: Simon Says followed by Ship to Shore introducing the idea of quickly changing direction with the ball using the sole of the foot. (5 - 10 minutes)

Go into a soccer like game with targets, directions, and conditions.

Example: Kids get points if they dribble the ball into a specified space on the field and then quickly pull back to run back out of the area while keeping control of their ball. (10 - 15 minutes)

Work on a specific technique or skill.

Example: Set up paired cones, one kid at each cone with a ball. When you say go they run towards another cone with their ball at their feet and pull back to return to their original cone. Increase the difficulty by calling "switch" while they are on their way to the cone. On "switch" the kids pull back and turn towards their original cone and then immediately pull back to continue to their new cone, pull back and turn to see if they can dribble back to their original cone before you call "switch" again. A final progression might have kids dribble beside their parents and pull back to head towards their original cone, then pull back again quickly to head to the new cone trying to trick their parent as to which cone they are actually trying to get to. (15-20 minutes)

Finish with your small sided game.

Example: Play 3v3 but give them a "Special Point" every time they perform a pull back to change direction. (20 min)

Game Format

For Bambinos and Micros we play 1v1, 2v2, and 3v3. We strongly discourage the use of goalies at this stage as the aim is to encourage kids to carry the ball, take shots, and put the ball in the net all of which are discouraged when we have the added obstacle of a keeper.

Mercy Rule:

When your team is up 3 or more goals on the other team you now have an opportunity to coach and teach something new about the game with your players. In no particular order ...

1. The team that is down might add another player: your team is learning how to play numbers down and under pressure.
2. Winning team can hold players back and send them in one at a time: your team is learning individual skill and the players who are being sent in later are learning to read the field - send them in to where they think the ball will go rather than where the ball is.
3. Winning team can move to own end and face their own goal as the team that is down restarts play at centre. Winning team turns when coach says "Go": your team is learning to quickly read the field - you can add to this by having one player go to challenge and others to set up in support.
4. Winning team can change focus to "Secret goals" like turns, cuts, feints, carrying the ball to a certain location and trying to pass to another: secret goals are all about reinforcing skills and tactical habits that you have been coaching all along.
5. Winning team's stronger players must play with a certain foot, or certain part of the foot: stronger players are being challenged to develop their own skill set.

Field Size:

You can set up small fields for these divisions under 20m x 30m and you will use Pugs for nets with a size 2 ball for Bambinos and a size 3 ball for Micros

Special Note:

Games and sessions always work best when we invite the parents to join in the action. Club policy for Bambinos is for parents to interact with and support their children while you run your session. So plan your sessions to include the grown members of your squads. Finally, above all else, plan for FUN!