

Session #1

U6

Total time: ~50 minutes

Movement Work (Serves as a Warm Up) (15 - 20 minutes.)

With U6s, it's important to remember that they get bored very easily. You have to have a lot of energy as a coach if you want to keep them engaged. It also helps to move reasonably quickly from one challenge to the next. You can always come back to something again.

Try to have interaction and humour also. Kids that age love being asked questions (Who knows how to.....?).

Lay out lines of 5 evenly spaced cones, with a 6th cone a bit further out. Have enough lines so that there are only 3 or 4 children per line.

- Start with a couple of sprints around the 6th cone and back to the end of the line
- After a couple of these, introduce a side to side movement between each of the first 5 cones and then back to the end of the line (The emphasis is on footwork and pushing off of the hip. It's not a race. Get them using quick footwork)
- Next, get them to bunny hop over each of the cones then run to the back of the line
- 3 Hops forward, 1 back, 3 hops forward then run to the back of the line (It's amazing how many will find the back hop difficult!)
- All players in a line. On the whistle run forward, then (on the whistle) sideways to the left, then (on the whistle) sideways to the right, then (on the whistle) backwards
 - o This practices reaction times (to the whistle), as well as lateral and backward movement
- Walk the dog
 - o Each player holds the hurley in their hurley hand. Place the heel of the hurley on the ground. As if walking a dog, guide the hurley around each of the cones and back to the start. It's important the feet go around the cones too. This exercise builds up strength and flexibility in the wrists

Ground Strike (15 to 20 minutes)

This is an essential skill, and probably the most basic skill in hurling. Everything else rests on it, so it's important at this age to work ground strikes into pretty much every session. There are a variety of ways to do this:

Tyres:

Use the tyres if possible. Kids love the feel and excitement of hitting the tyres.

Get 2 lines of kids (a line on either side of the tyres). The first kid in each line walks to the first tyre and strikes. When they get to the end they turn around and strike the tyres on the way back to the line. This is important as it gets them striking off of both sides.

Sliotar Rope:

Use 2 sliotar ropes. Have 1 line of kids. Get them to walk alongside one of the ropes, striking off their left side, and walk back along the other rope striking off their right side.

Pole Trainers:

You will need 2 coaches/parents for this. Holding a pole trainer each, have the two coaches facing each other but staggered a few feet apart (i.e. 1 coach is a few feet further from the children than the other). The kids run to the first coach and strike 3 times (ground strike), before moving to the other coach and striking 3 times off of the other side.

When they've done this a few times, you can have a competition to see who can hit it correctly the most times in 10 seconds.

It's crucial to instill the correct striking motion from the start. Ensure the child bends their knees (if the hurley is too big this won't be possible). At the start of the swing, the hurley should be across the front of the forehead, pointing in the direction the sliotar will be hit and parallel to the ground. The elbow of the arm furthest from the sliotar should be head height. Making a large C shape, the hurley should be whipped around using shoulders and wrists with a good follow through

Here's a video that may help: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1DkHK0lopU>

To help perfect the swing, it's also useful to use pole trainers (i.e. Sliotars on a stick).

Beat the Coach (10 minutes)

Have 3 players line up together with 1 sliotar. The coach is facing them with the goals behind him/her. The 3 players have to solo around the coach working as a team, and try to score.

This exercise promotes ground strokes and team play....and every kid likes to beat the coach!

Mini Game (10 to 15 minutes)

Mark out a "pitch". Try to keep the game to between 5 and 7 a side. If there are more players than this, then make 2 games out of it. Various rules can apply, depending on what you're trying to teach.

Main emphasis here is to make sure each child gets a puck of the sliotar and has fun. Encourage good sings on the sliotar.

Homework

For next week, homework is 10 minutes of hitting the sliotar preferably with mammy/daddy/older brother or sister, but if not, then up against a wall. Tell them that next week, we'll be seeing who has the most improved swing.

C.L.G.