



**ONTARIO
SOCCER.**

EST. 1901

Game Organization Guide



January 2018

Play. Inspire. Unite.

Introduction

This booklet has been designed to help District Associations, Clubs, Academies and Coaches understand the game formats and the various seasonal requirements for the games that they organize and play.

The event formats follow the Canadian Soccer and Ontario Soccer Long-Term Player Development principles and age appropriate guidelines for competition at the various ages and stages of development.

In the Physical Literacy stages of development, up to 12 years old, it is important that the correct training-to-playing ratios are followed and that the correct balance of events and/or competitions are adhered to. You will also notice that a travel time to games has been outlined. There are very good reasons that our young players limit their travel time to appropriate times and distances. It's important in these development stages that the young players have time available to participate in other sports and activities. By following the guidelines in this document, our young players will have time to get involved in other community sports and school activities and as they develop, start to dedicate more time to soccer.

The purpose of players participating in the Physical Literacy stages of development should be an introduction in a setting where children that want to play, have the opportunity to do so, in a challenging, yet fun, environment developing skills and learning to play the game.

A supportive environment should be created where the children are allowed to learn from their mistakes without undue pressure and anxiety. It's an opportunity to develop a culture of practice, appropriate challenge, fun and enjoyment.

This document is supported by other Ontario Soccer Documents:

- **Recreation and Development Matrices**
- **Field Organization Guide**
- **A Guide to Festivals in Ontario**
- **Retreat Line Presentation, Game Leader Presentation, FUNdamentals Document**

Balance
+ Age appropriate competition
+ Appropriate challenge
= Age appropriate FUN!



The chart indicates the various elements that have to be managed in a physical literacy program over the course of a week, month, season or year

Physical Literacy Balance



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	Development Stage	Age	Event Types	Game Format (includes GK)
	Active Start "First Kicks"	U4	Interactive games with family member.	Parent and Child
		U5	Interactive games with family member.	Parent and Child
	FUNdamentals "Fun with the ball"	U6	Club Festival Indoor Skills Sessions	up to 3v3 (no GK)
		U7	Club Festival Indoor Skills Sessions	5v5 or 4v4 with no goalkeeper
		U8	Festival* Exhibition Futsal Beach Soccer Indoor Skills Sessions	5v5 or 4v4 with no goalkeeper
	Learn to Train "The golden age"	U9	Festival* Exhibition Futsal Beach Soccer Indoor Skills Sessions	7v7
		U10	Festival* Exhibition Futsal Beach Soccer Indoor Skills Sessions	7v7
		U11	Festival* Exhibition Indoor League Outdoor League Futsal Beach Soccer Indoor Skills Sessions	9v9
		U12	Festival* Exhibition Indoor League Outdoor League Futsal Beach Soccer Indoor Skills Session	9v9

***Festival* - Includes; Club Festival - District Festival - Skills Festival - Season Festival
Indoor Festival - Fixture Festival - Futsal Festival - Beach Soccer Festival.
(see next)**



Exhibition Game		
<p>An Exhibition Game (also known as an exhibition match, preparation match or friendly) is a game in which there is no competitive value of any significant kind to any competitor, regardless of the outcome of the game. The games can be held between separate club teams or between teams in the same club. Quality of play is generally valued over the result. Exhibition games also take the form of a handful of pre-season games that are intended to familiarize teammates with each other and prepare for an upcoming season. Exhibition games will count towards the 20 competition days per season.</p>		
Season Festival	Fixture Festival	Club Festival
<p>Festivals where local Club/Academy or District Association member teams play a regular schedule, same teams at a central location over the course of a season. These festivals would be arranged for preferably a Saturday or Sunday. Typically involving 20-30 teams playing 2 games each during the festival</p>	<p>A one-off festival where local Club/Academy or District Association member teams come together for one day of activity on either a Saturday or Sunday. Typically involving 20-30 teams playing 2 games each during the festival.</p>	<p>A festival that only teams from within the same Club/Academy participate in. This Club Festival would take place on a Saturday or Sunday.</p>
Futsal / Futsal Festival	Indoor Skills Sessions	Beach Soccer / Festival
<p>Futsal is a 5v5 indoor soccer game that is typically played in school gymnasiums. It takes the form of Futsal Festivals and leagues. Futsal leagues are usually managed by a Club or league. Festivals may be organized by Clubs, Districts or Leagues.</p>	<p>These are regularly scheduled practice or training sessions that take place in an indoor facility, typically during the indoor months. These sessions take the place of a competition or game.</p>	<p>Beach Soccer is a 5v5 game played on sand. It can take the form of a festival or league. These games could be organized by Club/academy, district association or facility managers.</p>
Outdoor Leagues	Indoor Leagues	Skills Festival
<p>A schedule of games over the course of an outdoor season, where Club or District based teams play at a variety of venues throughout the area. Teams play an equal number of home and away games over the course of a season. Leagues are scheduled and managed by the District Association or league operators on behalf of Ontario Soccer (no league tables or standings U12 and below). Leagues will follow development matrix.</p>	<p>As above, a schedule of games scheduled typically over a indoor period. Teams in the schedule would typically all play in the same facility. There are no home and away games. Games are scheduled and managed by the facility owners, club or league operators. These leagues usually involve teams from neighbouring Clubs. (No league tables or standings U12 and below). As per Recreational and development matrix as off 2015/2016 indoor season.</p>	<p>One-off festival for local Club/Academy or District Association member teams. This is a mixture of skill activities, coaching sessions and games on a Saturday or Sunday. Typically involving 20-30 teams playing 2 games each during the festival plus the various fun activities taking place.</p>
<p>For More information on Festivals, see our Festival Organization Guide</p>		





Active Start Under 4 and Under 5

Purpose

This section has been produced to help District Association, Clubs, Academies and coaches understand what the best soccer environment is for our youngest players. Allowing these young players to be active, creative and to have fun in a positive, safe environment will allow them to grow, and fall in love with our game.

In support of Long-Term Player Development, interactive physical literacy activities will be the underlying form of competition for players 4 and 5 years of age.

Please use this document and other associated resources to help educate coaches and parents so they clearly understand that these improvements are in the best interests of their children.

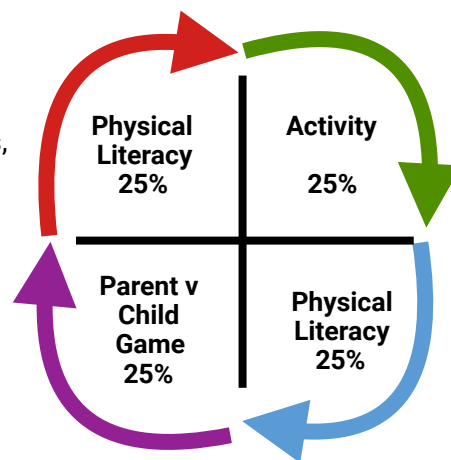
Philosophy

“First steps, first kicks” At this introductory level the objective is to get children moving and to keep them active. No competitive games should be played – the objective is for adults and children to play together informally. The children being active together with a well-known family member will give them a sense of security and safety to enhance their first group soccer experience.

The physical literacy curriculum provides for learning basic fundamental movement skills such as running-jumping, twisting-throwing-catching. [See our webinar on Incorporating Physical Literacy.](#)

The technical requirements are not about teaching the techniques of soccer. They are to encourage children to enjoy becoming friends with the ball. Players can experience the following through fun and imaginative games: running with the ball, stopping and changing direction with the ball, dribbling, kicking and shooting.

At this stage, players should participate in a variety of additional activities. Swimming and well-structured gymnastics programs are recommended to enhance the full range of basic movement skills and physical literacy.



Active Start

U4 - U5



Format

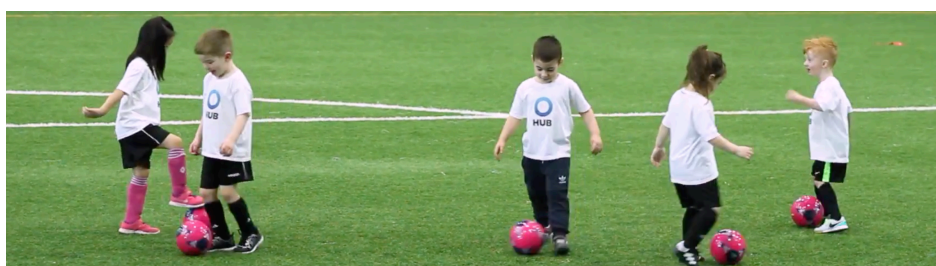
No team games are played at this development stage. Players are involved in interactive competitions with parents, grandparents, older siblings etc. Practice should be once a week and 30 to 45 minutes in length to cater for the attention span of the child.

Small-sided games can be 1v1, e.g. Mom or Dad vs. Child. During practice each player should have a ball, lots of touches, left and right foot. Just let them play with lots of movement. Encourage the use of both feet, different parts of foot and body.

Fun activities with a theme that the children can relate to and involves games with a ball each. Running, jumping, twisting, rolling, hopping, moving backwards, etc. Concentrate on dribbling in all directions.

Outdoor season length should be a maximum of 16 sessions, indoor a maximum of 16 sessions.

It is recommended that a qualified Active Start Coach (minimum qualification) lead the group in the activities. Parents, along with their child, would then follow the coach's lead and direction in the various physical literacy activities and games. Outdoor sessions would be outdoors, indoor activities could be in a gymnasium or indoor soccer facility. Boys and girls play together.



Age	Event Format	Events Per Week	Maximum Duration	Ball Size	Field Size	Goal Size	Rules	Max # of Sessions	Coach Minimum Qualifications
U4	Parent & Child	1	45 Minutes	3	n/a	n/a	No rules just fun	16 Indoor 16 Outdoor	Active Start MED & RiS
U5	Parent & Child	1	45 Minutes	3	n/a	n/a	No rules just fun	16 Indoor 16 Outdoor	Active Start MED & RiS





FUNdamentals

Under 6, Under 7, Under 8

Purpose

This document has been produced to help District Associations, Academies, Clubs and coaches in understanding what the best soccer environment is for our young players. Allowing these young players to be active, creative and to have fun in a positive, safe environment will allow them to grow and fall in love with the game.

In support of Long-Term Player Development, interactive physical literacy activities will be the underlying form of competition for male and female players at U6, U7 and U8.

Please use this document and other associated resources to help educate coaches and parents so they clearly understand that these improvements are in the best interests of their children active in soccer.

Philosophy

“Fun with the ball”

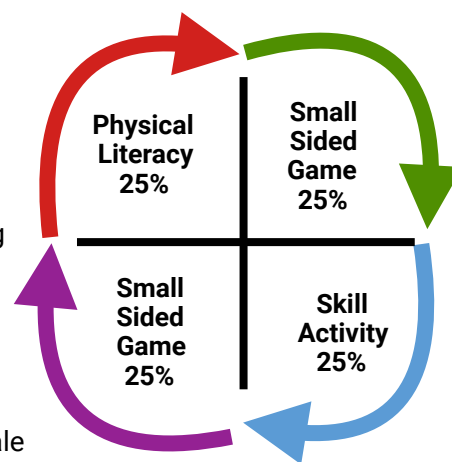
Skill development at this stage should be well structured, positive and FUN; and should concentrate on developing the ABC’s of Agility, Balance and Coordination plus Speed. Coaches should create a stimulating learning environment where the atmosphere is about freedom and fun.

Encourage your players to take part in unstructured play every day, with their friends.

Learning to understand the movements going on around them is a critical skill to be developed at this age. Playing small-sided games, 3v3, 4v4 etc. can develop a player’s ability to read what others are going to do (the play) based on their movements.

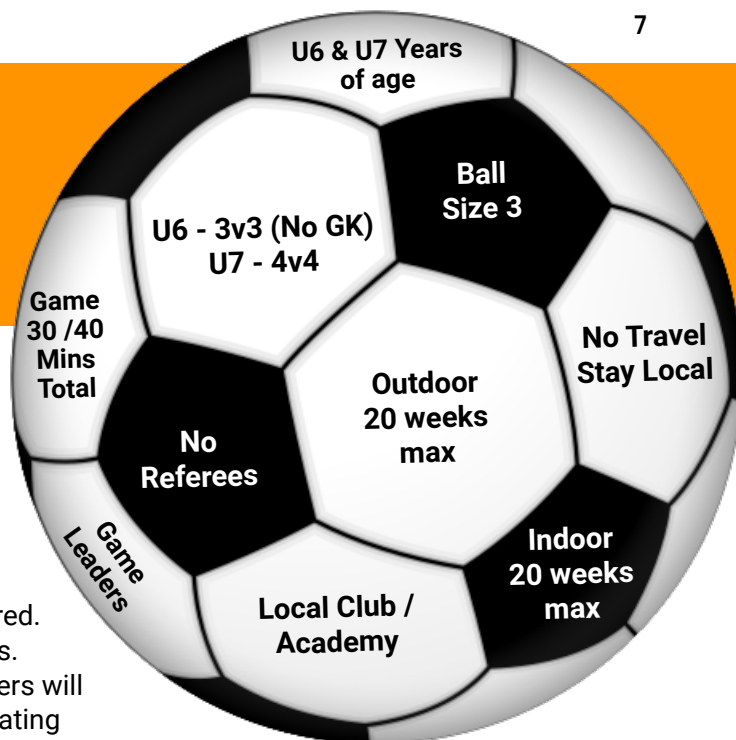
Let your players make decisions, expose them to working out problems and finding their own solutions. (Take a look at our [webinars](#) or [weekly session plans](#) or [videos](#) for examples)

The philosophy underlying the Festival format is to focus on FUNdamentals and to emphasize skill development and movement through games and activities. These activities must promote a feel for the ball while teaching basic principles of play within a fun but structured setting.



FUNdamentals

U6 & U7



Under 6

Under 6 players will play in a 3v3 environment with no goalkeepers. There will be no league standings or scores recorded. Players will play in their Club environment playing against teams from within their own Club or Academy. No inter-Club play is to take place. Referees are not required. Coaches/Game Leaders act as game supervisors. Boys and girls can play on the same teams. Players will play a fair amount of time in each position by rotating through each spot on the field.

Games are organized following the Festival format, having multiple teams playing at the same location on the same day. This gathering of players, coaches and parents gives the games more of an event feel. Other soccer activities can be organized, e.g., skill competitions, dribbling contests, passing contests, shooting contests, etc., to promote the enjoyment of the festival even more. Games are a total of 30 minutes, this could be organized as 3x10 minute periods, to allow breaks, player changes and the coach speaking with the players in a controlled, friendly environment.

Under 7

Under 7 players are to play in a 4v4 format with no goalkeepers or a 5v5 environment with goalkeepers. There are no league standings or scores recorded. Players are to play in their Club environment against teams from within their own Club. No inter-Club play is to take place. Game Leaders are recommended. Boys and girls can play on the same teams. Players will play a fair amount of time in each position by rotating around each position including goalkeeper, when used. Games are a total of 40 minutes. This could be organized as 4 x10 minute periods, to allow breaks, player changes and the coach speaking with the players in a controlled, friendly environment. No U6 players are permitted to play in an older age group.

Games should take on the "Festival" format, having multiple teams playing at the same location on the same day. This gathering of players, coaches and parents gives the games more of an event feeling. Other soccer activities can be organized, e.g., skill competitions, dribbling contests, passing contests, shooting contests, etc., to promote the enjoyment of the event even more.

Age	Event Format	Events Per Week	Practice Per Week	Maximum Duration	Ball Size	Field Size	Goal Size	Rules	Max # of Sessions	Coach Minimum Qualifications
U6	3v3	1 / Festival	2	30 min Total	3	12m-30m x 20m-36m	Pugg or 5'x8'	FUNdamentals Game Leaders	12- 20 Outdoor 12- 20 Indoor	FUNdamentals MED & RiS
U7	4v4	1 / Festival	2	40 min Total	3	12m-20m x 20m-25m	5'x8'	FUNdamentals Game Leaders	12- 20 Outdoor 12- 20 Indoor	FUNdamentals MED & RiS



FUNdamentals

U8



Under 8

Under 8 players will play in a 5v5 or 4v4 without goalkeepers environment. At this age goalkeepers can be introduced although players should play in all positions including goalkeeper. Again no scores or standings are maintained. Players can participate in their Club/Academy environment or participate in District Festivals on a weekend. District Festivals involve Club teams from within the District.

No inter-district play is allowed unless neighbouring districts are unable to offer their own Festivals. Travel times should be kept in mind. Game Leaders will supervise games. Typically, no more than 2 games can be played on a festival day, Saturday or Sunday. Boys and girls can play on the same teams. Players will play a fair amount of time in each position. U7 players are permitted to play with an older age group on a U8 Game Day Roster providing the player has been evaluated using the appropriate [Ontario Soccer Fast Tracking & Player Development document](#) by both the Club Technical Director and District Association.

Adjusted mini soccer 5v5 Festival rules

- All free kicks are indirect.
- After the scoring of a goal the game is restarted at the centre.
- When the Goalkeeper has the ball, in their hands, or at a goal kick, the opposition players are to retreat to approximately the half way line until the ball is touched by another player other than the goalkeeper. [See retreat line document.](#)
- To encourage play from the back, the goalkeeper can either throw the ball or pass the ball from the ground. No drop kicks/punts.
- Players, including goalkeepers, can be substituted at any time in the game on the fly.
- When the ball leaves the field of play, along the sideline, the game is restarted by passing or dribbling the ball into play. A goal cannot be scored directly from the ball being passed in.
- For more information please refer to the [Retreat Line](#) and [Game Leader](#) Presentations.

Age	Event Format	Events Per Week	Practice Per Week	Maximum Duration	Ball Size	Field Size	Goal Size	Rules	Max # of Sessions	Coach Minimum Qualifications	Retreat Line
U8	5 vs 5 incl' GK's or 4v4 without GK's	2 / Festival	2	40 min Total	3/4	20m - 30m x 30m - 35m	5'x8'	FUNdamentals Game Leaders	20 Outdoor 20 Indoor	FUNdamentals MED & RiS	YES Half Way Line





Learn To Train

U9, U10, U11, U12

Purpose

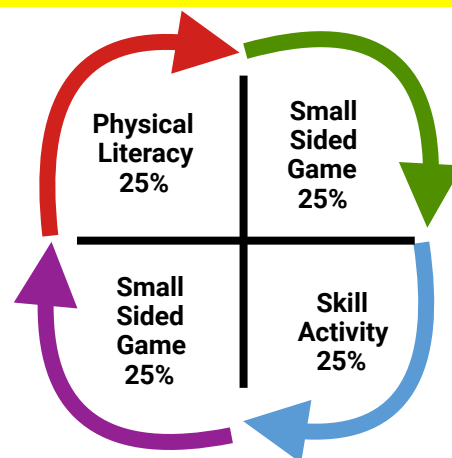
This document has been produced to help District Associations, Academies, Clubs and Coaches in understanding what the best soccer environment is for our players. Allowing these players to be active, creative and to have fun in a positive, safe environment will allow them to develop while continuing to play the game.

Philosophy

“The golden age of learning”

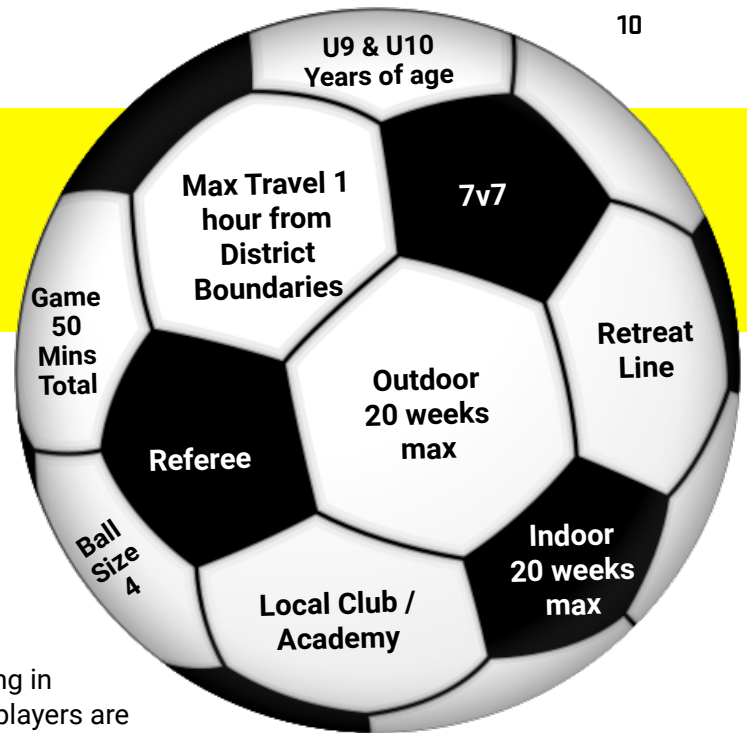
The effect of the role model is very important at this stage. The coach’s role becomes even more important as he or she becomes one of the player’s role models, along with famous players and teams. At these ages players want to learn creative skills. Skill demonstration from the coach is very important as the players learn best by doing. Players are now moving from self-centred to self-critical, and they have a high stimulation level during basic skills training.

This is an important time to teach basic principles of play and to establish training ethics and discipline. Repetitions in training are important to develop skills, but allowing players to make decisions and creating a fun and challenging environment is essential for stimulating learning.



Learn To Train

U9 & U10



Under 9

Under 9 players play in a 7v7, including goalkeepers, environment. Maximum game day roster is 12. This allows all players to get a good amount of playing time in each game. Players should continue to play in all positions including goalkeeper to get exposure and experience playing in various areas of the field with differing roles. U8 players are permitted to play with an older age group on a U9 game day roster providing the player has been evaluated using the appropriate Ontario Soccer Fast Tracking & Player Development document by both the Club Technical Director and District Association. Please see "Evaluation process" for more details. Games are a maximum time of 50 minutes and can be broken in to halves, thirds or quarters. These periods are designed for player changes, hydration, and coaching information to be passed along in an environment more conducive to educating the players.

Under 10

Under 10 players will play in a 7v7, including goalkeepers, environment. Maximum Game day roster is 12. This allows all players to get a good amount of playing time in each game. Players should continue to play in all positions, including goalkeeper, to get exposure and experience playing in the various areas of the field with differing roles. Games are a maximum time of 50 minutes and can be broken in to halves, thirds or quarters. These periods are designed for player changes, hydration and coaching information to be completed along in an environment more conducive to educating the players. U9 players are permitted to play with an older age group on a U10 game day roster providing the player has been evaluated using the appropriate Ontario Soccer Fast Tracking & Player Development document by both the Club Technical Director and District Association. Please see "Evaluation process" for more details.

Age	Event Format	Games Per Week	Practice Per Week	Maximum Duration	Ball Size	Field Size	Goal Size	Rules	Max # of Sessions	Coach Minimum Qualification	Retreat Line	Restart
U9	7v7	1	2-3	50 min Total	4	30m -35m x 45 m -55m	6' x 16'	Ontario Soccer Grassroots	20 Outdoor 20 Indoor	Learn to Train MED & RIS	Yes 1/3rd	Pass/ Dribble in
U10												



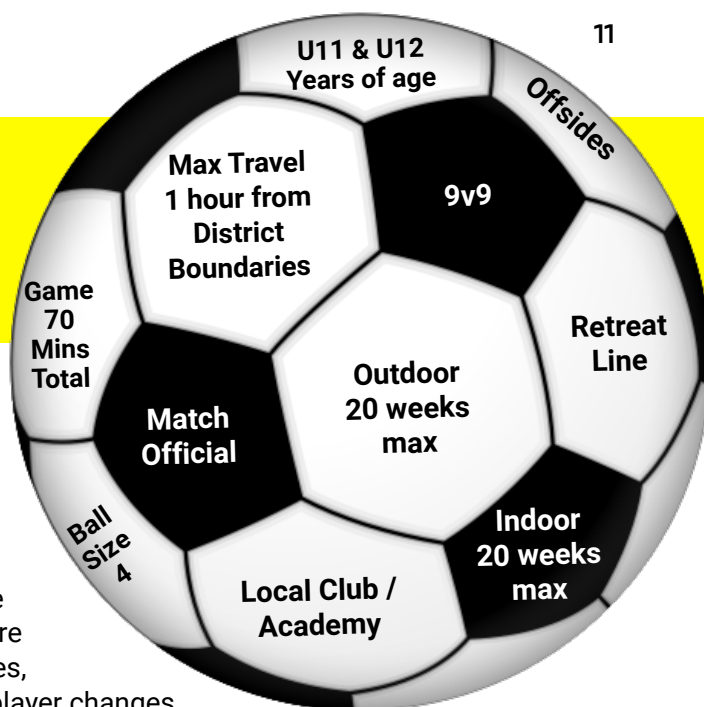
Learn To Train U11 & U12

Under 11

Under 11 players play in a 9v9, including goalkeepers, environment. Maximum Game day roster is 16. This allows all players to get a good amount of playing time in each game. Players should play in a variety positions to gain knowledge in the requirements of different positions. Games are 70 minutes maximum and can be broken in to halves, thirds or quarters. These periods are designed for player changes, hydration and coaching information to be passed along in an environment more conducive to educating the players. U10 players are permitted to play with an older age group on a U11 game day roster providing the player has been evaluated using the appropriate Ontario Soccer Fast Tracking & Player Development document by both the Club Technical Director and District Association. Please see "Evaluation process" for more details. Entire teams are not permitted to play up as often only a few players may dominate games, not every player. Therefore, players are evaluated on a case by case basis.




Under 12

Under 12 players play in a 9v9, including goalkeepers, environment. Maximum Game day roster is 16. This allows all players to get a good amount of playing time in each game. Players should play in a variety positions to gain knowledge in the requirements of different positions. Games are 70 minutes maximum and can be broken in to halves, thirds or quarters. These periods are designed for player changes, hydration and coaching information to be passed along in an environment more conducive to educating the players. U11 players are permitted to play with an older age group on a U12 game day roster providing the player has been evaluated using the appropriate Ontario Soccer Fast Tracking & Player Development document by both the Club Technical Director and District Association. Please see "Evaluation process" for more details. These players must have completed the evaluation by both the Club and the District Association. Please see the "Evaluation process" for more details. Entire teams are not permitted to play up as often only a few players may dominate games, not every player. Therefore, players are evaluated on a case by case basis.



Age	Event Format	Games Per Week	Practice Per Week	Maximum Duration	Ball Size	Field Size	Goal Size	Rules	Max # of Sessions	Coach Minimum Qualifications	Retreat Line	Restart
U11	9v9	1	2-3	70 min Total	4	42m -50m x 55m -70m	6' x 18'	Ontario Soccer Grassroots	20 Outdoor 20 Indoor	Learn to Train MED & RiS	Yes 1/3rd	Throw ins
U12												



Development Stage	Age	Registration	Rules	Competition Calendar	Travel
 Active Start "First Kicks"	U4	All players participating in the program must be registered with the Club/Academy and District Association.	No Rules just fun	Outdoor season length should be a maximum of 16 sessions, indoor should also be a maximum of 16 sessions.	At this stage of development U4 - U7 players are not to travel any further than their local Club park or school gymnasium to participate in their soccer event.
	U5			One "game" session per week during the season, duration of 45 minutes maximum.	
 FUNdamentals "Fun with the ball"	U6	All under 7 and under 8 players participating in their Club programs must be registered with the Club/Academy.	Teams will follow published OSA FUN-damentals rules	Players must be given a minimum of 2 months off from a structured soccer program.	
	U7			6 weeks of these 2 months should be consecutive.	
	U8			During this break no games or team practices are to be scheduled.	Within District Boundaries
 Learn to Train "The golden age"	U9	All players participating in their Club programs must be registered with the Club/Academy. At the discretion of the District, Grassroots players do not require player books.	Teams will follow The Ontario Soccer published Grassroots soccer rules for indoor and outdoor programs. If Futsal is adopted as the indoor program, FIFA Futsal rules are to be applied.	Players must be given a minimum of 2 months off from a structured soccer program.	60 mins from District Boundaries each way
	U10		6 weeks of these 2 months should be consecutive.		
	U11		From U11 onwards the Offside Rule is applied. This applies to both indoor and outdoor programs.	During this break no games or team practices are to be scheduled.	
	U12				





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