



# MHSA MINI SOCCER

## U4, U5 & U7

Developmentally Appropriate Soccer  
for players U4-U7



### Key Features of Developmentally Appropriate Soccer Programs:

#### Participants

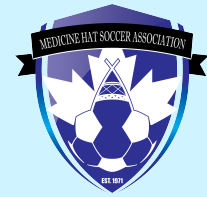
- Are active and get lots of ball contact.
- Taught age appropriate skills and basic team play.
- ALL players receive their own soccer ball.

#### Coaches

- Receive training, mentorship and support. Can access free technical resources when they need them.
- ALL coaches receive Canada Soccer Pathway Coach's Tool Kit.

#### Program

- Focus is on FUN!
- Developmentally appropriate games played based on educational research.
- Models the Canadian Soccer Association's Long Term Player Development plan.
- Endorsed by MHSA and Sanctioned by the Alberta Soccer Association.
- Children, Parents and Coaches protected by comprehensive liability insurance through Alberta Soccer Association.



**Who we are:**

#### Mission

The Medicine Hat Soccer Association exists to enable boys, girls and adults in the District of Medicine Hat to play the game of soccer at a level corresponding to their age and ability level.

#### Vision – Minor Soccer

The MHSA Minor Soccer Program provides safe, enjoyable and developmentally appropriate soccer for boys/girls in U4-U7 age groups.

#### Board of Directors

The MHSA is overseen by a 10-member Board of Directors responsible for governing all aspects of soccer in Medicine Hat.

Each program has a director responsible for overseeing its smooth running.

Devin Simon is the point of contact for the Mini Soccer Program. He can be reached at [minidirector@medicinehatsoccer.com](mailto:minidirector@medicinehatsoccer.com)

#### Staff

The MHSA is staffed by an Executive Director, an Office Assistant and Player Development Coach.

Association staff are responsible for the day to day running of the MHSA.

**MEDICINE HAT SOCCER  
ASSOCIATION**

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## **Under 4 – Active Start (First Kicks)**

At this introductory level, the objective is to get children moving and active.

### **Research tells us 3-4 year olds...**

- are not ready for competition
- need to experience success
  - understand idea of pairs
- are cautious around strangers
  - have short attention spans
- can handle bursts of focussed activity
- run well, can balance better, start to skip on one foot and throw ball over head

### **That's why we...**

- only play 45 minutes one time per week
  - have no competitive games scheduled
  - give each child their own ball
- encourage adult and child play together as teammates (one with one)
  - teach fundamental movement skills of running, hopping, kicking and throwing
    - play basic games of 2 vs 2
- allow adults to leave when their child has lost interest

### **Program Goals...**

- to have FUN
- to introduce parents and children to the game of soccer in a non-threatening environment
- to help parents learn some games they can play with their child at home
  - to introduce basic soccer rules
- to give potential coaches a 'head start' for working with young children
- to introduce parents to the MHSA's focus on Long Term Player Development

## **Under 6 – Active Start (First Kicks/Fun with the Ball)**

At this introductory level, the objective is to get children moving and active.

### **Research tells us 5-6 year olds...**

- are egocentric
- are more comfortable around strangers
- can hop, skip, balance and have smoother muscle action when running
  - do not catch well
  - have short attention spans
- work better in small groups of friends
  - ask lots of questions

### **That's why we...**

- have scheduled games, but no league standings
- play basic games of 3 vs 3 (no goalie) in U5 and 4 vs 4 (no goalie) in U6
  - give each child their own ball
- continue to teach fundamental movement skills of running, hopping, kicking, throwing and add in stopping the ball
- encourage relay races with or without ball, basic kicking games and overall body awareness

### **Program Goals...**

- to have FUN
- to introduce parents and children to the game of soccer
  - to introduce basic soccer rules
- to teach coaches the basics for working with young children
  - to introduce concept of triangulation
- to remind parents of the MHSA's Long Term Player Development focus

## **Under 8 – FUNdamentals (Fun with the Ball)**

At this level, the objective is to provide a stimulating learning environment that focuses on freedom and fun with the ball.

### **Research tells us 7-8 year olds...**

- are still egocentric and learning to be better teammates
- have greater control of their body and can learn to do basic techniques well
  - better at catching
- have improvements in attention span
- better understand groups of 4s & 5s
  - have a competitive spirit
- continue to ask lots of questions

### **That's why we...**

- have scheduled games, but no league standings
  - play basic games of 5 vs 5 (with goalie)
    - place low priority on winning
- give each child their own ball so that they can do soccer homework
  - continue to teach fundamental movement skills of running, hopping, kicking, throwing, catching and dribbling
- encourage relay races with or without ball, basic passing and receiving games, shooting and overall body awareness

### **Program Goals...**

- to have FUN
- to introduce parents and children to Fair Play and following the rules of soccer
  - to teach coaches how to manage playing time within a larger team
- to introduce concept of diamond with width, depth and support
  - to introduce parents and child to MHSA's on field Skill Development Program