



Muskoka United Football Club

Playing Time Policy

Issued: June 29, 2024

Approved: August 9, 2024

Purpose and Applicability

Policies on player playing time across MUFC programs are based on Ontario Soccer Standards. Please keep in mind that factors like injuries, continuous run of play preventing substitutions, and the flow of the game may slightly impact the coach's ability to fully adhere to the following guidelines in any specific game. Coaches may adjust playing time over the season to provide more opportunities for equitable playing time.

Development Programs (U9-U12)

Playing time in the development program is focused on providing all players an opportunity to play and develop their skills, regardless of their initial skill level, as described below.

Coaches are expected to afford all players FAIR* and relatively equal* playing time in all team games, including league games, exhibition games, festival games, and organized scrimmages, as determined by the coaching staff or Technical Committee. Coaches may reduce playing time, at their discretion, for individual players due to any of the following persistent reasons:

- a. Poor attendance and/or punctuality at practices and/or games (*2 practice to 1 game ratio is considered good attendance*)
- b. Poor effort, focus, attitude and/or behavior during practices and/or games
- c. Poor fitness level
- d. Health concerns, including injuries and illness
- e. Inability to work/play well with teammates

Playing time as a goalkeeper (GK) may be exempt from the rule, at the discretion of the coach, if the player is voluntarily agreeing to play as a goalkeeper. For example, the GK may play the entire first half, and then play out during the second half of the game.

Competitive Programs (U13+)

The competitive program is focused on performing at the highest levels at which our teams and players can compete. Players must continue to play to develop; however, at the competitive level team goals and team results are also critical considerations. Playing time is performance-based and at the discretion of the coach.

Coaches are expected to afford all players playing time as determined by skill, ability, commitment and/or other factors determined by the coach.

Coaches may reduce playing time, at their discretion, for individual players due to any of the following

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persistent reasons:

- a. Poor attendance and/or punctuality at practices and/or games
- b. Poor effort, focus, attitude and/or behavior during practices and/or games
- c. Poor fitness level, inability to keep up with the play or flow of the game
- d. Health concerns, including injuries and illness
- e. Inability to work/play well with teammates
- f. Lack of technical and/or tactical abilities
- g. Occasionally players have an "off" day where they underperform for a variety of personal or social/emotional reasons.

Process

MUFC expects its coaches to be available to communicate decisions to limit/reduce playing time to the players/families who are affected by those decisions. Coaches should communicate the factors in their decisions, as well as any steps that the player(s) can take to receive more playing time in the future.

MUFC expects its coaches to consider what is best for individual players and what is best for the team in determining how much playing time individual players receive. This is often a difficult balance to strike, and team officials should be given some leeway in their decisions.

Parents with questions or concerns about playing time should follow the 24-hour rule and address their concerns to the Team Manager or designated Team official

* Fair playing time: time is based on the conduct of the player while participating in the sport, including unconditional respect for opponents, teammates, referees; following the rules of the sport; and the level of engagement of the player

*Equal playing time: everyone gets equal time on the field regardless of ability, attendance, commitment, attitude