



GRASSROOTS COMMUNITY SOCCER

2013 GAME FORMATS





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Technical Department Contacts:



Mission Statement:

The ASA Technical Department seeks to promote personal development and well-being through the provision of soccer participation opportunities for all within Alberta. The sport of soccer provides a lifetime of opportunities for players, parents, coaches, officials and administrators: the ASA Technical Department seeks to provide guidance and support to all those wishing to embrace the sport that has become the World's Game.

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SOCCER
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INTRODUCTION

So you have signed your young child up for a grassroots soccer program, but what are you in store for?

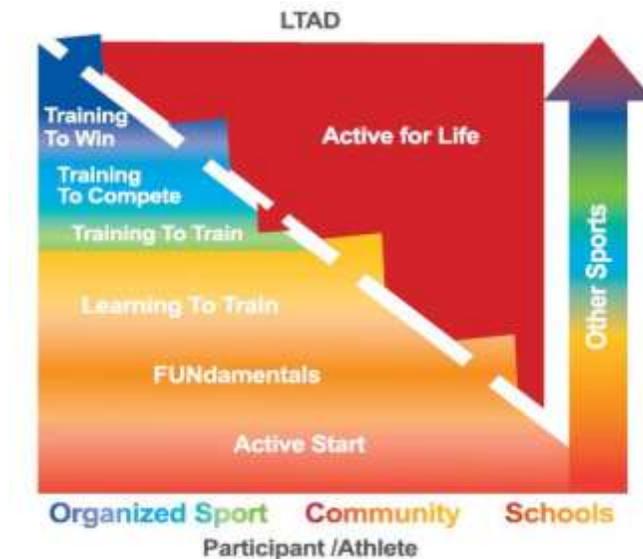
The implementation of all ASA Grassroots Soccer Programs has been aligned with the virtues of Canadian Soccer Association's Long Term Player Development model, where the focus is upon promoting physical literacy (in the initial stages) and player participation and retention (Soccer for Life). The Canadian Soccer Association's model is titled Wellness to World Cup and incorporates Canadian Sport's Long term Athlete Development model; further information should be sought by visiting: www.canadasoccer.com/wellness-to-world-cup.

In order to support and promote the virtues of the Long Term Player Development model, it is important that soccer organizations and participants recognize the need to adapt the game format to comply with these virtues. It is not sufficient to let the initial game be the master, but to adapt the game and environment to meet the needs of the players and their development. Therefore the enclosed game formats present recommendations on behalf of the Alberta Soccer Association, for the continued development of the game.



WHAT IS GRASSROOTS SOCCER IN ALBERTA?

The majority of soccer is played within a grassroots context, where players develop and compete for their pleasure. Players who aspire to higher levels of participation and competition will gravitate to the excellence stream at the Training to Train stage of the presented LTPD model (see below).



The Alberta Soccer Association has developed the following definitions of grassroots soccer for guidance, in terms of development and delivery of soccer programs within the Province.

GRASSROOTS COMMUNITY: Soccer programs that promote active participation opportunities and programs that do not lead to Provincial competitions.

The LTPD focus within this stream ranges through: Active Start (U4-U6), FUNdamentals (U7-U8), Learning to Train (U9-U12) and Soccer for Life (U13+), dependent upon the age of the participants.

GRASSROOTS COMPETITIVE: Clubs, associations and districts that introduce players to competitive opportunities that may lead to provincial representative competitions.

This competitive stream focuses upon Learning to Train (U9-U12), and Soccer for Life (U13+) components of the LTPD Framework.

The most important consideration within all programming is that players choose to participate for fun and through choice. Therefore programs should seek to present a positive and supportive environment for all the players to experience success in their participation and development.



THE GAME: OVERVIEW

Soccer is a true World Game because of the simplicity, low cost, fun and the challenge it generates in us all. There are only 17 official rules in soccer where the objective is to score more goals than your opposition. If only the game was that simple.

This document essentially provides soccer organizations with recommendations on the development and delivery of competitive game formats, to comply and support the virtues of the Long Term Player Development model. It should be recognized that some exceptions to the presented formats may be evident, for specific tournaments and competitions. However in order to promote a coherent developmental pathway within the province, the enclosed guidelines are strongly recommended.

THE MODIFIED GAME AND LONG TERM PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

Like many sports, grassroots development has evolved away from the BIG game to accommodate age appropriate formats for children coming into the game. Although some sports specialize in early (age) entry (typically gymnastics and swimming) soccer has universal attraction for players of all ages and abilities. So although examples may be given in terms of what skills may be developed within respective stages of development, further considerations should be made of:

- Age and physical literacy (ABC's of movement development)
- Experience in sports (some motor skills will be transferable and complimentary amongst different sports (running, jumping and leaping)
- Time spent practicing and developing soccer skills
- Knowledge of the game and technical expectations





SMALL SIDED GAMES

Small Sided (modified) Games embrace the concept of fun and enjoyment, which is vital if children are to develop a lifelong passion for soccer. The principles and rules of Small Sided Games are similar to those in 11 aside Soccer, except that the field sizes are smaller and there are fewer rules and players on each team.

BENEFITS OF SMALL SIDED SOCCER

- The opportunity for more touches on the ball
- The game is easier to understand
- Due to more active participation general health and fitness increases
- Players experience personal growth within and outside of the game due to enjoyment, as a result of smaller fields and simplified rules
- Increased opportunity to actively participate, we know players develop quicker when they enjoy themselves
- Player retention is increased due to more playing time which is a key priority of all youth coaches
- Tactical awareness from a positioning point of view is easily communicated on smaller fields
- By playing small sided games, players are encouraged to use freedom of expression
- By playing and exploring the game, children will gravitate to positions they prefer and feel comfortable with
- The focus is on the PLAYER and PLAYER DEVELOPMENT, not team success.
- The so called “dominant” player is inhibited from holding onto the ball due to the smaller area of play
- Contrary to belief, Small Sided Games increase participation numbers, by forming more teams and games
- The shift to small sided games is based on educational research with regards to the way children learn best





SMALL SIDED GAMES

NUMBER OF PLAYERS IN GAMES

From the age of U8 up the game should commence with two teams with an equal number of players, one of which must be a goal-keeper. It is recommended that all players are encouraged and provided with an opportunity to play as a goal-keeper in the younger stages of their development.

RECOMMENDED TEAM SIZES BY AGE

| Age | # Players per Team | Squad Size | Level of performance |
|------|-------------------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| U4 | 1 with 1 (1 child, 1 parent) | N/A | Community |
| U6 | 3 V 3 no GK | 6 Maximum | Community |
| U7 | 5 v 5 (*+GK) | 10 Maximum | Community |
| U8 | 5 v 5 (*+GK) | 10 Maximum | Community |
| U9 | 7 V 7 (includes goalkeeper) | 14 Maximum | Community |
| U10 | 7 V 7 (includes goalkeeper) | 14 Maximum | Community or Competitive |
| U11 | 8 V 8 (includes goalkeeper) | 16 Maximum | Community or Competitive |
| U12 | 8 V 8 (includes goalkeeper) | 16 Maximum | Community or Competitive |
| U13> | 11 V 11 (includes goalkeeper) | 18 Maximum | Community or Competitive |

RECOMMENDED FIELD DIMENSIONS: OUTDOORS

Field sizes should conform to the table as set out below:

Wherever possible the outdoor game should be played on a grass or artificial field grass in accordance to the following measurements

| Age Group | Min Length | Min Width | Max Length | Max Width |
|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| U6 | 25 metres | 18 metres | 30 metres | 22 metres |
| U7/U8 | 30 metres | 20 metres | 36 metres | 25 metres |
| U9/U10 | 40 metres | 30 metres | 55 metres | 36 metres |
| U11/U12 | 60 metres | 42 metres | 75 metres | 55 metres |





SMALL SIDED GAMES

INDOOR DIMENSIONS:

Wherever possible, all competitive indoor fields should comply with the following competition dimensions. These dimensions are used for competitions from U10+ age groups. It is recommended that smaller dimensions (as those used outdoors) be adapted with younger age groups.

| | Min Length | Min Width | Max Length | Max Width |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| Indoor field | 45.7 meters | 22.8 meters | 64 meters | 30.4 meters |

GOAL SIZE

Goal sizes should conform to the table as set out below:

Please also note goal safety is an important consideration; ensure all goal posts are pegged into place securely and made to withstand soccer 'play'.

| Age Group | Goal Height | Goal Length | Option |
|-----------|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| U6 | 5 ft / 1.524m | 8 ft / 2.438m | Anything smaller |
| U7/U8 | 5 ft / 1.524m | 8 ft / 2.438m | Anything smaller |
| U9/U10 | 6 ft / 1.83m | 12 ft / 3.657m | none |
| U11/U12 | 6 ft / 1.83m | 18 ft / 5.486m | none |

BALL SIZE

In the interest of the players' development, ball sizes for competition must conform to the table as set out below:

This is an important consideration, especially for younger children who are still physically developing. Seek a reputable supplier who understands the needs of developing players when purchasing soccer equipment. The ball should be manufactured of approved synthetic materials in accordance to the competition rules.

| Age Group | U4 | U5/U6 | U7/U8 | U9/U10 | U11/U12 | U13+ |
|-----------|----|-------|-------|--------|---------|------|
| Ball Size | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 |





PLAYER EQUIPMENT

Players should participate with appropriate soccer uniform (shirt, shorts and socks); these should match the colors of the registered club's uniform within competitive games.

Players should also participate with suitable soccer footwear that offers support and comfort for the sport of soccer.

ALL Players **MUST** wear shin guards, this is a requirement of the game and protects the lower limbs from injuries.

In the summer, soccer is an outdoor game, so ensure the players are prepared for all weather conditions and dressed appropriately to meet these fluctuating conditions, with appropriate layers of clothing.





GAME RULES

As indicated there are 17 official FIFA rules to the 11 V 11 game, and these are adapted to meet the needs of particular competitions (please check and ensure you are conversant with local competition rules). Below is a synopsis of the main rules that govern soccer:

TEAMS: Two teams of equal numbers should commence the game, in which both teams must have a goal-keeper.

START GAME: The game commences with a kick-off from the center spot, from which the ball must travel in a forward motion and enter the opponent's side of the field.

BALL OUT OF PLAY: If the ball leaves the field of play, the game will re-commence with a throw-in awarded to the opposition team from the last player to make contact with the ball, from where the ball left the field of play, if this is on the side of the field.

If the ball leaves the field of play from one end of the field, the game re-commences with either a corner kick (if played off a defending player), or goal-kick (if played off an attacking player).

GOAL SCORED: A goal is awarded when in the opinion of the referee; the whole of the ball crosses the whole of the goal-line, between the goal-posts and under the cross-bar.

USE OF HANDS: Only goal-keepers are permitted to use their hands within their designated goal-area whilst the game is being played. All other use of hands to control the ball is penalized with the award of a free-kick against the offending player. The only exception is when a player takes a throw-in to re-start the game.

FOULS: There are various types of fouls (See below) in a game, however for physical foul play a free-kick is awarded against the team committing the foul. The official may in such circumstances further penalize the offending team by issuing disciplinary cards against the offending player.

Six types of foul play:

- Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent
- Trips or attempts to trip an opponent
- Jumps at an opponent
- Charges at an opponent
- Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent
- Pushes an opponent

FREE-KICKS:

All free kicks for U6, U8, U10 are indirect.

Direct free-kicks may be applied within play from U11 upwards.





The defending team should retreat from the ball during the taking of a free kick for the following distances:

| | |
|---------|----------|
| U6 | 5 metres |
| U7-U10 | 8 metres |
| U11-U14 | 9 metres |

KICK-IN OR THROW-IN:

The ball should be kicked in from the side of the field for all players up to U6 age groups. Players aged U7 and above should throw the ball in. Throw-ins should be taken from a position on the side of the field, close to where it left the field of play. When taking a throw-in players should ensure both feet are on or behind the sideline and that the ball is thrown in one action from behind the head. For players aged U7-U10, two attempts may be made to throw the ball in, in a correct manner. If the second attempt is incorrect then the throw-in is awarded to the opposition.

The FINAL RULE:

Apply safety and common sense in all rulings regarding youth soccer. The rules are in place to ensure fair and safe play and that is how they should be **applied**.





OTHER GAME FORMATS

FUTSAL

Many districts are now implementing Futsal as an alternative indoor game of choice. Futsal is a game without boards developed in South America.

In Futsal, the following rules are of particular note:

- 1) Each team comprises 12 players. Five players may take the field at any one time, usually four outfield players and a goalkeeper, although the use of a goalkeeper is not obligatory.
- 2) “Flying” substitutions are used. This means that the referee does not need to stop play before a substitution can be made. In some cases, four or even five players are substituted at once.
- 3) Two referees (one main referee and one assistant referee) are used. These referees supervise play by running along the touchline. If there is any doubt between the two referees about a decision, the main referee’s decision is final. In most international matches, an official timekeeper is also used.
- 4) When the ball leaves the pitch along one of the touchlines, it is kicked in, rather than thrown in. When the ball goes out of play behind the goal line after being touched last by one of the attacking team, the goalkeeper restarts play with a throw-in, rather than a goal kick.
- 5) The matches are played over two halves (2 x 20 minutes of actual time). Every time there is any stoppage in play (corner, kick-in, free-kick, penalty, goal kick, injury, etc.), the clock is stopped (as in ice hockey, basketball, etc.). A system of accumulated fouls is applied. Once a team has committed more than five fouls in one half of play, the opposing team is awarded a direct free kick. The offending team may not use a defensive wall at such free kicks.

OTHER GAME FORMATS:

As indicated there are many formats of soccer and these are developing all the time. Further formats include beach soccer and disability specific game formats. As indicated an important consideration players coaches and spectators is to recognize any differences and play within these and the spirit of the game.

