



**BC SOCCER**

GLOBAL GAME. UNIVERSAL PASSION.

**Small Sided Soccer Club Development Manual**

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The Small-Sided Soccer Club Development Manual has been created to provide a roadmap for BC Soccer members to administer small sided soccer programs and leagues, which are built around the principles of Long Term Player Development (LTPD).

All changes to this document shall be forwarded by BC Soccer to the Membership within 15 days of receiving Board Approval.

This manual shall be subject to review by the membership at any General Meeting of BC Soccer.

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**Long Term Player Development Stage 1 & 2:**

*Active Start - Fundamentals*

**Under 4 to Under 8's**

**Small Sided Soccer Club Development Manual**

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The Active Start and Fundamentals Club Development Manual has been created to provide member clubs within British Columbia a roadmap to responsible and beneficial age appropriate development programming for stage one “Active Start” and stage two “FUNdamentals”

The following are key components and guidelines to the implementation of these responsible and effective development practices within this stage of development.

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### Wellness to World Cup Long Term Player Development

As coaches, teachers, administrators and parents, we need to look at the big picture for Canadian soccer. We want to develop “star” players who can play on the big stage, but we also want to encourage recreational players who can benefit from the health aspects of soccer and give back to the game for years to come as coaches, officials, and administrators.

Long-Term Player Development (LTPD) is the Canadian Soccer Association’s pathway to success on both fronts. LTPD is a player-centred approach that provides guidelines for correct training, competition, and recovery based on scientific principles of human development and athlete training, combined with the knowledge of expert coaches.

Player-centred means we respect the developmental needs of our players first and foremost. We ensure that our young players have fun while they learn so they want to continue playing. It also means we provide challenging opportunities for special talents so they can develop their abilities and pursue excellence. All of these needs are addressed in the seven stages of LTPD.

LTPD is designed to promote lifelong wellness for all soccer participants and optimal performances for elite players, particular in growth and development years when performances can become instable and lead to drop out. LTPD encourages players to enjoy the game and improve their performances through:

- ❖ Logical and integrated training and practice programs
- ❖ Application of scientific principals in growth, development and maturation
- ❖ Provision of an optimal structure for competition at all stages of LTPD



# STAGE 1 ACTIVE START

'First Kicks' U4-U6 Female and Male

## Overview: Stage 1 - Active Start

At this stage, players should participate in stimulating practices and games that develop basic technical skills in a FUN atmosphere. The emphasis should be movement exercises and games that promote a feel for the ball while teaching basic principles of play within a fun but structured setting. Informal games can be set up at the end of practices or as part of a jamboree mixing exercising and games. Play equal time and try all team positions, including goalkeeper, and equal time should be allotted to practices and games.

**GOAL:** Encourage child activity and develop basic motor skills.

**TECHNICAL:** Introduce individual skills. Dribbling with all parts of the foot, combined with simple techniques for changing direction (turns, drag backs). Basic shooting where players experience success and the thrill of a goal!

**TACTICAL:** No tactical instructions. Emphasis on the individual.

**PHYSICAL:** Provide a fun setting and simple mode of play that develops basic movement skills in running, jumping, kicking, throwing and catching.

**MENTAL:** Fun and passion for play. Experience success and build confidence by receiving positive recognition.

**LIFESTYLE:** Enjoy a variety of sports and physical activities.

**PERSONAL:** Positive attitude and self-esteem.

**GOALKEEPING:** No goalkeepers at this age. All players should learn the basic techniques of ball handling at different heights (not high balls) and throwing with one and two hands on the ground and in the air. Footwork is introduced including side-skip to get in line with the ball. Introduce diving from a kneeling position.





# STAGE 2 FUNdamentals

'Fun with the Ball' U6-U8 Female/U6-U9 Male

## Overview: Stage 2 - FUNdamentals

At this stage, players should participate in stimulating practices and games that develop basic technical skills in a FUN atmosphere. The emphasis should be movement exercises and games that promote a feel for the ball while teaching basic principles of play within a fun but structured setting. Mini game formats are used, ranging from 3v3 to 5v5 and a basic league schedule can be created but no standings should be kept. All players should play equal time and try all team positions, including goalkeeper, and equal time should be allotted to practices and games.

**GOAL:** Technique development through fun. Emphasize skills and ABCs, not tactics.

**TECHNICAL:** Continue to develop dribbling, and introduce dribbling with sole, inside and outside of foot. Continue to introduce and develop techniques for turning and changing direction, including more advanced techniques such as inside and outside hooks, even step overs and scissors. Develop short passing with side foot and laces, and develop concept of passing to feet. Introduce receiving with inside and outside of foot and instep, and introduce "crossing" and shooting while dribbling.

**TACTICAL:** Basic game concepts and rules. Introduction to team cooperation through small-sided games, but emphasis is still primarily on the individual. Finding space is important.

**PHYSICAL:** Develop the ABCs of movement: agility, balance, coordination and speed. Speed training should focus on quickness and agility. Continue general development of running, jumping, kicking, throwing and catching. Develop flexibility and suppleness.

**MENTAL:** Basic game awareness and situations/formats to develop decision making. Experience success and receive positive recognition.

**LIFESTYLE:** Enjoy a variety of sports and physical activities.

**PERSONAL:** Positive attitude and self-esteem. Fair play and ethics. Promote group interaction skills.

**GOALKEEPING:** All players take turns in goal. Continue development of ball handling at all heights and above balls (simple service/no opposition). Introduce simple communication ("Keeper!" "Away!"). Continue with basic diving technique from a "Gorilla" stance. Develop correct body shape. Introduce the concept of the keeper as the rear defender (Sweeper/Keeper).



## Stage Appropriate Player Development Programming

As found within all seven stages of development within LTPD, stage one “Active Start” and stage two “FUNdamentals” are based on the findings that the greater the quality of a players preparation and environment the greater likelihood of remaining active in the ‘game’ throughout their lives, regardless of their level of ability.

In addition it is found that the player’s performance peaks will be higher and be maintained longer due the quality and the environment which they exist within.

### Canada Soccer recommends the following for players within these stages of development:

- ✓ No league standings - emphasis on FUN (See **Appendix A**)
- ✓ All players play equal time and try all team positions
- ✓ Children should participate in many additional activities.
  - ❖ Swimming, well-structured gymnastics programs and ball sports are recommended.

See appendix B and appendix C for a summary of key development priorities for stage 1 “Active Start” and appendix C for a summary of key development priorities for Stage 2 “Fundamentals”

## Technical Leadership

It is paramount to the process of development within Stage One - “Active Start” and Stage Two “FUNdamentals” that all member clubs have a key **TECHNICAL LEAD** to oversee best practices for Mini Soccer - Club Development Programming.

This Technical lead is an individual who knows the “game” and the “player” and who has a strong understanding of the key messages that need to be communicated. This person will have past experience and appropriate certification standards to design, communicate and implement evaluation and assessment process within a member club.

The technical lead must provide direction and authority as it relates to the following areas of the programming:

- ❖ Evaluation and assessment environment and coaching selections
- ❖ Oversight as it relates to placement of players within team(s)
- ❖ Oversight as it relates to individual players playing up an age group (See BC Soccer Playing Up Policy)

## Coaching Standards

“A coach’s mission is essentially to convey knowledge and social skills to young players. To achieve this, the coach must understand children’s characteristics and take into account age and skills. In short, the coach must teach through encouragement and achievement. “Play” is children’s main activity, an essential need and innate in all children. Thus the main objectives of soccer at these ages are to introduce children to the practices of soccer through play”

**FIFA GRASSROOTS**





BC Soccer's player development programming is built upon a "PLAYER FIRST" mentality. There is an essential requirement for BC Soccer to identify appropriate coaching standards within all stages of development, which is supported by Long Term Player Development Plan (LTPD). Please see below the chart for coaching course recommendations from 2012 beyond.

Age Group	LTPD Stage*	Coaching Courses
U9-U12	Learn To Train	Learn To Train + NCCP Making Ethical Decisions

\*These courses are part the new Community Sport Stream Courses (Active Start, FUNdamentals, Learn to Train, Soccer for Life) launched in 2012 based on the CSA's Long Term Player Development initiative.

\*\* BC Soccer Board of Directors proposed that age specific coach education for all coaches be mandated for its membership by June 1, 2016. The membership passed this proposal by a significant majority at the BC Soccer AGM on June 14, 2014

#### BC Soccer Mandatory Coaching Rule:

TEAM AGE GROUP	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10	U11	U12	U13-U18 Grassroots	U13-U18 High Performance
COACHING COURSES	ACTIVE START	FUNDAMENTALS		LEARN TO TRAIN			SOCCER FOR LIFE (or higher)	B NATIONAL	

#### Forming of Teams

District Associations and their Member Clubs are expected to form teams from all registrants each year in a manner that is equal and respects the developmental needs of children at the following age groups: Under 6, Under 7, Under 8, Under 9 and Under 10.

No teams should retain all players from the previous year, thereby making a select team.

#### Playing Up Policy:

The BC Soccer, Soccer Development department supports the philosophy of continuing to challenge players. Any player being considered for potentially playing up an age group should meet the following criteria from the BC Soccer Playing Up Policy found on BC Soccer's website under About Us - Bylaws: <https://bcsoccer.net/bylaws>

#### Small Sided Rules of the Game:

Please reference the BC Soccer SMALL-SIDED REFEREE RULES document found on BC Soccer's website Under Referee - Continuing Education: <https://bcsoccer.net/continuing-education>



### Game Structures:

Mini Soccer leagues and programs shall be administered according to this Mini Soccer - Club Development Manual, as outlined in BC Soccer Association Rule 26.

\*\* NO Standings are to be recorded or posted at these age groups as per LTPD, please see appendix A. \*\*

### Mini Soccer Games are played according to the following principles:

- Districts and clubs shall form teams from all registrants each year in a manner that follows a responsible player evaluation, ongoing assessment and placement program as specified in *the Small-Sided Soccer - Club Development Manual*.
- All games are to be played with an emphasis on enjoyment, sportsmanship, responsible player development and talent identification practice, education and respect for teammates, opponents, and referees.
- Small-sided soccer leagues may be provided; but no standings should be kept – the emphasis is on FUN. All players play equal time and try all team positions, including goalkeeping.

### Active Start:

For children participating in soccer programs within the Active Start stage of development, the CSA and BC Soccer recognize the following game structures for both genders at the following age groups.

Game Format	Age Group	Game Duration	Field Dimensions	Max Goal Dimensions	Ball Size
No Competitive Games*	Under the age of 5	N/A	N/A	N/A	3/4

\*As per LTPD recommendations, adult and child play together informally

\*Informal games can be set up at the end of practices.

### Fundamentals:

For children participating in soccer programs within the Fundamentals stage of development, the CSA and BC Soccer recognize the following game structures for both genders at the following age groups.

Game Format	Age Groups	Squad Size	Game Duration	Field Dimensions	Max Goal Dimensions	Ball Size
3v3*	Under 6, 7 & 8	Max 6	2 x 15 min. Half Time: 5 min	Min: 18x25m Max: 22x30m	1.52 x 2.44m (5' x 8')	3/4
4v4*	Under 7 & 8	Max 8	2 x 15 min. Half Time: 5 min	Min: 20x30m Max: 25x36m	1.52 x 2.44m (5' x 8')	3/4
5v5*	Under 8	Max 10	2 x 15 min. Half Time: 5 min	Min: 25x30m Max: 30x36m	1.52 x 2.44m (5' x 8')	3/4

\*With or without goalkeeper - when no goalkeeper reduce the goal size.



## Retreat Line Development Tool - Active Start + Fundamentals

To further assist with developing social/ emotional, technical, physical and decision making abilities the retreat line initiative is recognized for assisting with player development.

As soccer continues to evolve, it's important that Canada's young players change with it so that they too can maintain possession of the ball and move it up the field with controlled, precise build up starting from the goalkeeper. Because of this, players must understand the right time to play forward and/or backwards.

The concept of the retreat line has been introduced in small sided soccer to allow our young players learn and gain confidence with playing the ball out from the back and moving it up the field, as opposed to players aimlessly kicking the ball up the field.

BC Soccer's player development programming is built upon a "PLAYER FIRST" mentality. It is important for BC Soccer to identify and introduce development tools, which enables players to develop stage capacities identified by Long Term Player Development (LTPD). Please see below the chart for implementing the retreat line from 2015 beyond.

Season	LTPD Stage	Age Group	Game Format	Retreat Line	Status
Pre - 2014/15	Active Start + Fundamentals	Under 6, 7 & 8	3v3, 4v4, 5v5	Half way line	Recognized
2015/16	Active Start + Fundamentals	Under 6, 7 & 8	3v3, 4v4, 5v5	Half way line	Recommended
2016/17 + Beyond	Active Start + Fundamentals	Under 6, 7 & 8	3v3, 4v4, 5v5	Half way line	Required

Please Note \*\* During the 2015/16 season players require consistency to develop. It is not advised for coaches to implement a retreat line on an ad-hoc basis.

## Retreat Line Procedure - Active Start + Fundamentals

The following age groups use the half way line as the retreat line: Under 6, Under 7, and Under 8.

The retreat line is initiated when the ball has gone out for a goal kick. All opposing players will 'retreat' to half field and cannot pursue the ball until:

- The ball is received by a teammate OR,
- The ball travels over the retreat line OR,
- The ball leaves the field of play

### Encroachment of retreat line:

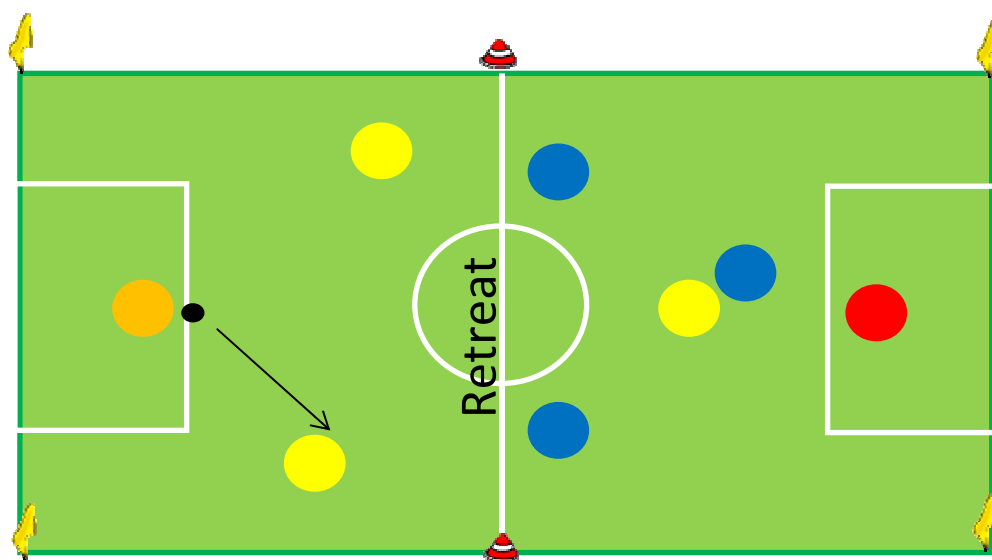
If the defending team encroaches across the retreat line before an opposition player touches the ball then the referee blows the play stopped and issues a re-take of the goal kick.

If the opposing team repeatedly infringes the retreat line, an indirect free kick shall be awarded from the place where the offence occurred for not respecting the restart.



### Making the Right Decision:

Teams are always able to play quickly; the ball would be in play as soon as it leaves the penalty area regardless of the opposing team's position.



### Summary

Long Term Player Development and its principles are predicated on the idea a properly integrated player development pathway can achieve two objectives for Canadian soccer;

- ✓ Optimized development of players of ALL levels
- ✓ Increased retention within the game.

It is BC Soccer's hope that the use of this document will encourage all member clubs to train and develop the appropriate skills and capacities at the right time so to offer all players an opportunity to flourish within the game regardless the level they are deemed to be component within at any one time.



### Competition in the Early Stages of LTPD

One element of Long-Term Player Development (LTPD) that frequently stirs controversy is the recommendation to eliminate league standings below U12. The controversy arises from the popular claim that standings, as well as league championships and trophies at these early ages, are essential to motivating young players to “compete”.

The elimination of standings in children’s leagues is not intended to reduce the intensity of competition among players in a game situation. LTPD recognizes that playing with competitive commitment and intensity is necessary to advance player development in ball technique, decision-making, mental concentration, and other skills and capacities.

However, experience shows us that young children will compete even in the absences of league standings. All young players understand that soccer is a game for scoring goals and “winning.” Simple observation of children’s soccer around the world shows that the absence of a trophy or league title does nothing to diminish each player’s desire to compete each time they step onto the soccer pitch for a match.

The important difference is that the elimination of standings below U12 diminishes the incentive for coaches at these levels to play to “win the league” because they are chasing a trophy and a league title at the end of the season. It also reduces pressure from parents to win, to perform, and to avoid mistakes.

#### **Why is this distinction important?**

When coaches in children’s leagues chase trophies and titles, and when parents criticize and pressure their children, poor player development is the most frequent result. Coaches tend to play only their strongest players, leave their “weak” players on the bench, specialize players in positions prematurely, use game tactics aimed solely at guaranteeing a win (e.g. kicking the ball down the field, not trying to create controlled buildup), and promoting a general attitude of “don’t take chances – don’t experiment with your skills or decisions – just play safe by kicking the ball far and away.”

These problems are more easily addressed in the absence of league standings. Coaches of children’s teams are easily able to justify equal playing time for all players, experiment with positions and field alignments, and promote a general willingness among players to try their skills in a game setting without being preoccupied with failing their teammates and the overall effort to “win the league.”

When standings are eliminated in children’s soccer below U12, games are still won and lost, and competition still takes place among the players. However, it is now far easier for coaches to pursue a broad-based approach to player development rather than a narrow view of “we must win three points today or we cannot challenge for the league title.”

In this light, it should be clear that competition remains at the centre of the LTPD approach. Less skilled players are assured more playing time in the competitive environment so they can develop their competition skills, and all players gain experience in a variety of positions. Most importantly, and far more subtly, all players are encouraged to practice and experiment with their skills in a competition environment without fear of making a mistake that could cost a league result.



Measured in the context of the physiological, emotional and mental developments that take place during childhood, it is essential that players be permitted and even encouraged to make mistakes. This is the only way they can achieve the practice required to refine their ball control and decision-making skills in a competitive setting.

Some coaches will always want to win at all costs, regardless of whether or not there are league standings. This is an unfortunate reality of community children's sport. However, the LTPD approach to competition below U12 provides the best overall incentive for coaches and players to focus on broad-based player development instead of a "win at all costs" approach.



## Appendix B: Summary of Key Development Priorities for Stage One: “Active Start”

*Soccer contributes to the well-being of children by engaging them in sport while teaching basic movements. At the introductory level, the objective is to get moving and keep active.*

### PHYSICAL

- Providing the environment for learning proper fundamental movement skills such as running, jumping, twisting, throwing and catching

### TECHNICAL

- The player and the ball: Running with ball, dribbling, controlling, kicking and shooting

### TACTICAL

- None

### EMOTIONAL

- Fun, fascination, and Passion for play

#### GOAL:

Encourage child activity and develop basic movement skills.



## Appendix C: Summary of Key Development Priorities for Stage Two: “FUNdamentals”

*At this stage, individual player development is paramount. Coaches and teachers should create a stimulating learning environment where the atmosphere is ‘Freedom and Fun’*

### PHYSICAL

- Develop the ABCs of movement; agility, balance, co-ordination and speed, as well as running, jumping, twisting, throwing and catching

### TECHNICAL

- Movement exercises/games designed to promote a feel for the ball; gaining ball control in receiving passes, dribbling, passing over short distances and shooting with both feet.

### TACTICAL

- Children at this stage are self-centered. Introducing cooperation between players and ensuring they play with the ball are important objectives.

### EMOTIONAL

- Basic awareness of environment to build game intelligence and decision making

#### **GOAL:**

**Develop technique through fun activities.  
Emphasize skills and fundamental movement skills, not tactics.**







**BC SOCCER**

GLOBAL GAME. UNIVERSAL PASSION.

**Long Term Player Development**

*Learning to Train*

**Under 9 to Under 12's**

**Small Sided Soccer Club Development Manual**

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## Small-Sided Soccer - Club Development Manual

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The Learn to Train Club Development Manual has been created to provide member clubs within British Columbia a roadmap to responsible and beneficial age appropriate development programming for stage three “Learning to Train”.

The following are key components and guidelines to the implementation of these responsible and effective development practices within this stage of development.

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### Wellness to World Cup Long Term Player Development

As coaches, teachers, administrators and parents, we need to look at the big picture for Canadian soccer. We want to develop “star” players who can play on the big stage, but we also want to encourage recreational players who can benefit from the health aspects of soccer and give back to the game for years to come as coaches, officials, and administrators.

Long-Term Player Development (LTPD) is the Canadian Soccer Association’s pathway to success on both fronts. LTPD is a player-centred approach that provides guidelines for correct training, competition, and recovery based on scientific principles of human development and athlete training, combined with the knowledge of expert coaches.

Player-centred means we respect the developmental needs of our players first and foremost. We ensure that our young players have fun while they learn so they want to continue playing. It also means we provide challenging opportunities for special talents so they can develop their abilities and pursue excellence. All of these needs are addressed in the seven stages of LTPD.

LTPD is designed to promote lifelong wellness for all soccer participants and optimal performances for elite players, particular in growth and development years when performances can become instable and lead to drop out. LTPD encourages players to enjoy the game and improve their performances through:

- ❖ Logical and integrated training and practice programs
- ❖ Application of scientific principals in growth, development and maturation
- ❖ Provision of an optimal structure for competition at all stages of LTPD



## STAGE 3 Learning To Train

'The Golden Age of Learning' U8-U11 Female/U9-U12 Male

### Overview: Stage 3 - Learning to Train

This stage introduces players to disciplined training and begins to develop their understanding of principles of play alongside their skills practice. Repetitions are important to develop technical proficiency, but creating a fun and challenging environment is still paramount to stimulate learning and promote a love of the game. Game formats can range from 6v6 to 8v8 as players advance through this stage, and again a simple league schedule can be created, but no standings should be kept – the emphasis is still FUN. All players play equal time and try all team positions, including goalkeeping, and the training to competition ratio should be 2 to 3 training sessions for every game.

**GOAL:** Focus on technique, skill development and introduce tactics. Talent identification is introduced but *FUN* is still paramount to this stage.

**TECHNICAL:** Golden age of skills learning. Teach more advanced skills and movements. Practice skills in games to encourage decision making. Develop and refine dribbling. Continue to develop turns, drag backs, shielding, and hooks, as well as fakes such as step overs and scissors. Refine short passing, develop passing with outside of foot and chips, and introduce medium and long passes. Introduce receiving with all parts of the body and shooting with volleys and half-volleys. Heading may be introduced towards the end of this stage.

**TACTICAL:** Continue small-sided games. Introduce attack and defense principles and basic team play with 2 and 3 player combinations. Introduce positional awareness in a variety of positions. Teach basic set pieces (free kicks, correct throw-ins).

**PHYSICAL:** Continue to develop ABCs. Maintain flexibility and suppleness. Introduce warm-up. Continue to develop quickness and agility.

**MENTAL:** Introduce basic mental preparation with goal-setting, determination and concentration. Experience success and receive positive recognition.

**LIFESTYLE:** Enjoy a variety of sports and physical activities. Identify complementary sports.

**PERSONAL:** Fair play and ethics. Accept training structure and discipline. Promote group interaction skills and internal motivation.

**GOALKEEPING:** Players still take turns in goal. Resist temptation to limit goalkeeping to a few. Continue developing ball handling, ball rolling and over-arm throws, footwork, goal kicks, drop kicks, moving back passes and punts. Introduce side-arm and javelin throws, deflecting. Introduce variety of new dives. Introduce catching and deflecting crosses from a simple thrown service.



## Age Appropriate Player Development Programming

As found within all seven stages of development within LTPD, stage three “Learning to Train” is based on the findings that the greater the quality of a player's preparation and environment the greater likelihood of remaining active in the ‘game’ throughout their lives, regardless of their level of ability.

In addition it is found that the player's performance peaks will be higher and be maintained longer due to the quality and the environment which they exist within.

### Canada Soccer recommends the following:

- ✓ Small leagues provide fixtures, but no league standings are recorded (See appendix A)
- ✓ All players play equal time and try all team positions
- ✓ Training : Competition ratio should be 2 to 3 training sessions for every game
- ✓ Other sports continue to be important, but the balance begins to shift in favor of soccer.

See appendix B for a summary of key development priorities for stage 3 “Learn to Train”

## Technical Leadership

It is paramount to the process of development within Stage Three - Learning to Train that all member clubs have a key **TECHNICAL LEAD** to oversee best practices for Small-Sided Soccer - Club Development Programming.

This Technical lead is an individual who knows the “game” and the “player” and who has a strong understanding of the key messages that need to be communicated. This person will have past experience and appropriate certification standards to design, communicate and implement evaluation and assessment process within a member club.

The technical lead must provide direction and authority as it relates to the following areas of the programming:

- ✓ **Evaluation and assessment environment and coaching selections**
- ✓ **Oversight as it relates to selection and placement of players within team(s) and programs**
- ✓ **Oversight as it relates to individual players playing up an age group**  
(See BC Soccer Playing Up Policy)

To enhance the overall commitment of member clubs to deliver on these recognized principles for a player's development, member clubs may group players with “SIMILAR ABILITIES” together within their programming and teams.

This will assist the club in providing a positive and beneficial learning environment for player's who possess the required competencies within the respective stage of development and address their current maturation status.

The oversight of such programming must always be implemented by the technical lead and be focused on the “PLAYER” and their individual development, as their level of competency, potential and joy should remain the main criteria. In doing this, the focus would be taken away from any one particular result(s) being the only measurement for success.



In addition, any grouping of players of similar abilities (e.g. Club Team and Academy Programming) must encourage and should be focused on meeting the recommended training to play ratio set out within LTPD standards as it relates to stage three (3) which are two (2) to three (3) training sessions for every one (1) match played.

Programming should include ongoing evaluation and assessments of players and should provide opportunities for players to enter or be re allocated to another level of play.

This will address the varied maturing process (physically, technically, tactically and emotionally) within the development of players and will offer opportunities to those players who have displayed the required competencies.

It is BC Soccer's hope that the use of this document will encourage all member clubs to train and develop the appropriate skills and capacities at the right time so to offer all players an opportunity to flourish within the game regardless the level they are deemed to be component within at any one time.

### Coaching Standards

"A coach's mission is essentially to convey knowledge and social skills to young players. To achieve this, the coach must understand children's characteristics and take into account age and skills. In short, the coach must teach through encouragement and achievement. "Play" is children's main activity, an essential need and innate in all children. Thus the main objectives of soccer at these ages are to introduce children to the practices of soccer through play"

#### FIFA GRASSROOTS

BC Soccer's player development programming is built upon a "PLAYER FIRST" mentality. There is an essential requirement for BC Soccer to identify appropriate coaching standards within all stages of development, which is supported by Long Term Player Development Plan (LTPD). Please see below the chart for coaching course recommendations from 2012 beyond.

Age Group	LTPD Stage*	Coaching Courses
U9-U12	Learn To Train	Learn To Train + NCCP Making Ethical Decisions

\*These courses are part the new Community Sport Stream Courses (Active Start, FUNdamentals, Learn to Train, Soccer for Life) launched in 2012 based on the CSA's Long Term Player Development initiative.

\*\* BC Soccer Board of Directors proposed that age specific coach education for all coaches be mandated for its membership by June 1, 2016. The membership passed this proposal by a significant majority at the BC Soccer AGM on June 14, 2014

BC Soccer Mandatory Coaching Rule:

TEAM AGE GROUP	U6	U7	U8	U9	U10	U11	U12	U13-U18 Grassroots	U13-U18 High Performance
COACHING COURSES	ACTIVE START	FUNDAMENTALS		LEARN TO TRAIN			Soccer FOR LIFE (or higher)	B NATIONAL	



## Forming of Teams

District Associations and their Member Clubs are expected to form teams from all registrants each year in a manner that is equal and respects the developmental needs of children at the following age groups: Under 6, Under 7, Under 8, Under 9 and Under 10.

No teams should retain all players from the previous year, thereby making a select team.

### **Player Evaluations, Assessments, Selection and Placement Procedures for Under 11 & Under 12:**

BC Soccer recommends all member clubs commit to supporting and promoting a responsible, ongoing, progressive evaluation and assessment process as it relates to player identification, selection and placement.

This would include the removal of the reference and promotion of the “*TRY OUT*” mentality within their club and team atmosphere.

Evaluation camps are the preferred vehicle which should assist the coaching staff with the evaluation process of the player’s capabilities and potential. These evaluation camps should be held throughout the season to aid in selection and the placement of players for ongoing programming and as it relates to the following year’s program and/or teams.

In addition to the recommended ongoing evaluation and assessment of players there are four (4) recommendations from BC Soccer for the evaluation, selection and placement of players;

#### ***Match Play and Training Environments***

- ✓ *This provides the coaching staff the opportunity to evaluate and assess players in environments which present appropriate dilemma and problem solving requirements within the technical, tactical, physical and emotional categories*
- ✓ *It provides opportunities for coaches to receive an overall understanding of the player(s) within realistic and longer term environments*

#### ***Open***

- ✓ *These sessions should be open to any players who desire an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to participate within the proposed age group.*
- ✓ *A maximum number of players should be set at each session to provide for a more responsible evaluation process.*

#### ***Invitation Only***

- ✓ *A maximum number of players should be set at each session to provide for a more responsible evaluation process. It is recommended for the evaluation and assessment of players that the ratio of player to coach be set at the following;*
  - *One (1) coach to every sixteen (16) players being evaluated and assessed*



### Evaluation and Assessment Criteria

- ✓ All evaluations and assessments should be conducted under the direction and guidance of the technical lead and supported by experienced and trained coaches within the community stream of development.
- ✓ In addition evaluations and assessments should be implemented using a universal system which identifies player's competencies over a period of time and in multiple environments.
- ✓ This system should not be a numbering system to avoid subjectivity and focus on the overall age specific competencies. See Appendix C

### Playing Up Policy:

The BC Soccer, Soccer Development department supports the philosophy of continuing to challenge players. Any player being considered for potentially playing up an age group should meet the following criteria from the BC Soccer Playing Up Policy found on BC Soccer's website under About Us - Bylaws: <https://bcsoccer.net/bylaws>

### Small Sided Rules of the Game:

Please reference the BC Soccer SMALL-SIDED REFEREE RULES document found on BC Soccer's website Under Referee - Continuing Education: <https://bcsoccer.net/continuing-education>

### Game Structures:

#### Learning to Train:

For children participating in soccer programs within the Learning to Train stage of development, the CSA and BC Soccer recognize the following game structures for both genders at the following age groups.

**\*\* NO Standings are to be recorded or posted at these age groups as per LTPD, please see appendix C \*\***

Game Format	Age Groups	Squad Size	Game Duration	Field Dimensions	Max Goal Dimensions	Ball Size
6v6	Under 9, 10, 11 & 12	Max 10	2 x 25 min. Half Time: 5 min	Min: 30x40m Max: 36x55m	1.83 x 4.27m (6' x 14')	3 or 4
7v7	Under 10, 11 & 12	Max 12	2 x 25 min. Half Time: 5 min	Min: 30x40m Max: 36x55m	1.83 x 4.88m (6' x 16')	4
8v8	Under 11 & 12	Max 14	2 x 30 min. Half Time: 5 min	Min: 42x60m Max: 55x75m	1.83 x 5.5m (6' x 18')	4





## Retreat Line Development Tool - Learning to Train

To further assist with developing social/ emotional, technical, physical and decision making abilities the retreat line initiative is recognized for assisting with player development.

As soccer continues to evolve, it's important that Canada's young players change with it so that they too can maintain possession of the ball and move it up the field with controlled, precise build up starting from the goalkeeper. Because of this, players must understand the right time to play forward and/or backwards.

The concept of the retreat line has been introduced in small sided soccer to allow our young players learn and gain confidence with playing the ball out from the back and moving it up the field, as opposed to players aimlessly kicking the ball up the field.

BC Soccer's player development programming is built upon a "PLAYER FIRST" mentality. It is important for BC Soccer to identify and introduce development tools, which enables players to develop stage capacities identified by Long Term Player Development (LTPD). Please see below the chart for implementing the retreat line from 2015 beyond.

Season	LTPD Stage	Age Group	Game Formats	Retreat Line	Status
Pre - 2014/15	Learning to Train	Under 9, 10, 11 & 12	6v6,7v7, 8v8	Middle 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Recognized
2015/16	Learning to Train	Under 9, 10, 11 & 12	6v6,7v7, 8v8	Middle 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Recommended
2016/17 + Beyond	Learning to Train	Under 9, 10, 11 & 12	6v6,7v7, 8v8	Middle 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Required

Please Note \*\* During the 2015/16 season players require a consistent platform to develop and it is not advised for coaches to implement a retreat line on an ad-hoc basis.

## Retreat Line Procedure - Learning to Train

The following age groups use the line across the middle 3rd as the retreat line: Under 9, Under 10, Under 11 and Under 12.

The retreat line is initiated when the ball has gone out for a goal kick. All opposing players will 'retreat' to the markers indicating the retreat line and cannot pursue the ball until:

- The ball is received by a teammate OR,
- The ball travels over the retreat line OR,
- The ball leaves the field of play

### Encroachment of retreat line:

If the defending team encroaches across the retreat line before an opposition player touches the ball then the referee blows the play stopped and issues a re-take of the goal kick.

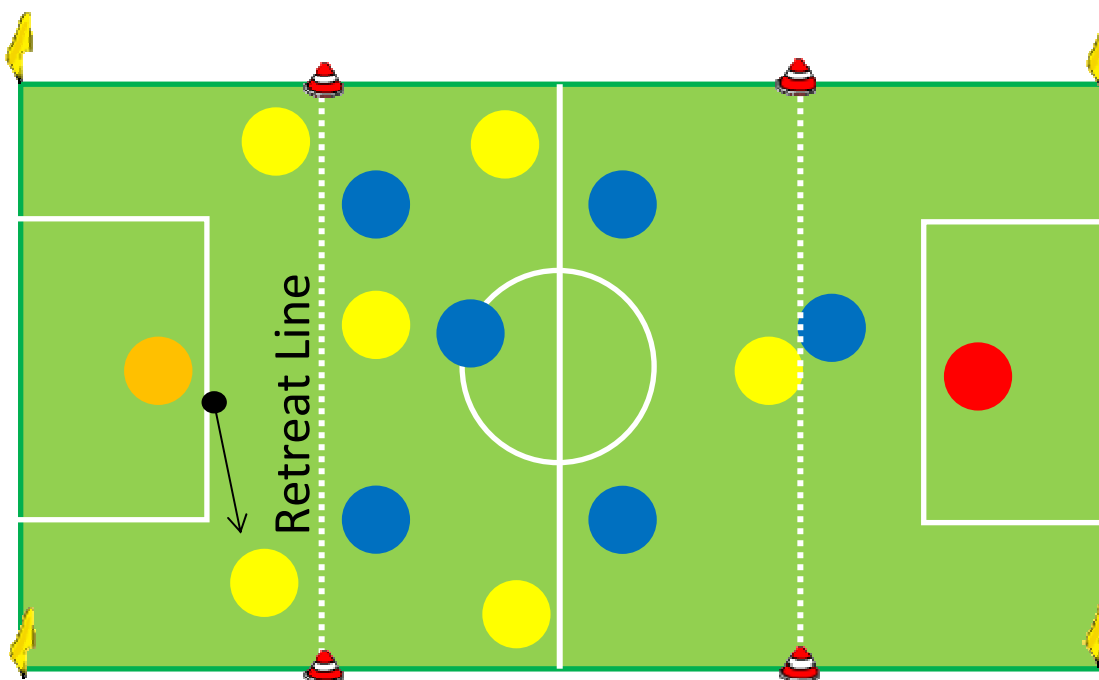
If the opposing team repeatedly infringes the retreat line, an indirect free kick shall be awarded from the place where the offence occurred for not respecting the restart.



### Making the Right Decision

Teams are always able to play quickly; the ball would be in play as soon as it leaves the penalty area regardless of the opposing team's position.

At times the correct decision is a quick or a long pass, players need to recognize the positions of the opposing team and act accordingly. If there is the opportunity to play quickly to create a counter attack or find a player in the middle third of the field - it should be encouraged!



### Summary

Long Term Player Development and its principles are predicated on the idea a properly integrated player development pathway can achieve two objectives for Canadian soccer;

- ✓ Optimized development of players of ALL levels
- ✓ Increased retention within the game.

It is BC Soccer's hope that the use of this document will encourage all member clubs to train and develop the appropriate skills and capacities at the right time so to offer all players an opportunity to flourish within the game regardless the level they are deemed to be component within at any one time.

## Appendix A - Competition in the Early Stages of LTPD

### Competition in the Early Stages of LTPD



One element of Long-Term Player Development (LTPD) that frequently stirs controversy is the recommendation to eliminate league standings below U12. The controversy arises from the popular claim that standings, as well as league championships and trophies at these early ages, are essential to motivating young players to “compete”.

The elimination of standings in children’s leagues is not intended to reduce the intensity of competition among players in a game situation. LTPD recognizes that playing with competitive commitment and intensity is necessary to advance player development in ball technique, decision-making, mental concentration, and other skills and capacities.

However, experience shows us that young children will compete even in the absences of league standings. All young players understand that soccer is a game for scoring goals and “winning.” Simple observation of children’s soccer around the world shows that the absence of a trophy or league title does nothing to diminish each player’s desire to compete each time they step onto the soccer pitch for a match.

The important difference is that the elimination of standings below U12 diminishes the incentive for coaches at these levels to play to “win the league” because they are chasing a trophy and a league title at the end of the season. It also reduces pressure from parents to win, to perform, and to avoid mistakes.

#### **Why is this distinction important?**

When coaches in children’s leagues chase trophies and titles, and when parents criticize and pressure their children, poor player development is the most frequent result. Coaches tend to play only their strongest players, leave their “weak” players on the bench, specialize players in positions prematurely, use game tactics aimed solely at guaranteeing a win (e.g. kicking the ball down the field, not trying to create controlled buildup), and promoting a general attitude of “don’t take chances – don’t experiment with your skills or decisions – just play safe by kicking the ball far and away.”

These problems are more easily addressed in the absence of league standings. Coaches of children’s teams are easily able to justify equal playing time for all players, experiment with positions and field alignments, and promote a general willingness among players to try their skills in a game setting without being preoccupied with failing their teammates and the overall effort to “win the league.”

When standings are eliminated in children’s soccer below U12, games are still won and lost, and competition still takes place among the players. However, it is now far easier for coaches to pursue a broad-based approach to player development rather than a narrow view of “we must win three points today or we cannot challenge for the league title.”

In this light, it should be clear that competition remains at the centre of the LTPD approach. Less skilled players are assured more playing time in the competitive environment so they can develop their competition skills, and all players gain experience in a variety of positions. Most importantly, and far more subtly, all players are encouraged to practice and experiment with their skills in a competition environment without fear of making a mistake that could cost a league result.



Measured in the context of the physiological, emotional and mental developments that take place during childhood, it is essential that players be permitted and even encouraged to make mistakes. This is the only way they can achieve the practice required to refine their ball control and decision-making skills in a competitive setting.

Some coaches will always want to win at all costs, regardless of whether or not there are league standings. This is an unfortunate reality of community children's sport. However, the LTPD approach to competition below U12 provides the best overall incentive for coaches and players to focus on broad-based player development instead of a "win at all costs" approach.



## Appendix B - Summary of Key Development Priorities

### Key Development Priorities for Stage Three: “Learning to Train”

*The effect of the role-model is very important at this stage. Children begin to identify with famous players and successful teams, and they want to learn imaginative skills. Skill demonstration is very important and players learn best by doing. Players move from self-centered to self-critical and they have a high stimulation level during basic skills training. Repetitions are important to develop technical excellence, but creating a fun and challenging environment is still essential for stimulating learning.*

### *PHYSICAL*

- Optimal training window for speed, flexibility and movement skills

### *TECHNICAL*

- Building a greater repertoire of soccer related skills, techniques and delivered through a structured training atmosphere

### *TACTICAL*

- Develop environmental awareness and execute simple combination and soccer specific movement patterns

### *EMOTIONAL*

- Provides for intrinsic motivation through the activity of play which promotes and fosters desire, demands and discipline

### GOAL

**Focus on technique and skill development and introduce tactics. FUN is still paramount.**

## Appendix C - Sample Player Evaluation Form for Under 11 through U12



# PLAYER EVALUATION FORM

### PLAYER INFORMATION

<b>PLAYERS NAME</b>	FIRST NAME		LAST NAME	
<b>PERSONAL INFORMATION</b>	DATE OF BIRTH (DD/MM/YY)	HEIGHT		WEIGHT
<b>PLAYING INFORMATION</b>	JERSEY #	POSITION	CLUB TEAM	

### PLAYER EVALUATION

TECHNIQUE / SKILL	RATING			DATE OBSERVED	COMMENTS
	☺	☹	⊗		
DRIBBLING	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
1 <sup>st</sup> TOUCH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
SHORT PASS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
LONG PASS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
HEADING	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
FINISHING	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
SPEED	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
COORDINATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
ENDURANCE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
1 V 1 ATTACKING	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
1 V 1 DEFENDING	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
ATTITUDE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
CONCENTRATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
DECISION MAKING	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

☺ GOOD    ☹ SATISFACTORY    ⊗ NEED'S IMPROVEMENT

