



McKnight Sports Council – Recreational Soccer 2019

Coaches Information

Welcome to another year of McKnight recreational soccer! From all of us on the Board of the McKnight Sports Council, thank you in advance for your time and dedication to coaching the children of the participating communities.

The following recommended general guidelines are based on coaching material produced by the Calgary Minor Soccer Association, *adapted to meet the specific requirements of McKnight Recreational Soccer*. These guidelines are intended to provide a basis for consistency, fair play, and allow the children to grow in confidence while enjoying the game.

Common sense, communication and cooperation between coaches should always prevail. Please remember that the purpose of recreational soccer is to introduce children to, as well as foster, future participation in "the beautiful game" and most of all have fun while playing!

‘The best teacher is the game itself...“let the game be the teacher’.

If coaches are able to provide a fun positive environment for their players, the players will enjoy being at practices and games, and over time with continuous repetition of basic skills, the players will eventually get better. They will do so at their own natural pace.

It is recommended that, over the weekend prior to the start of the season, the coach should get in touch with the player’s parents (by phone or email). They can introduce themselves and indicate which field the team should go to for the first game and how to identify yourself and hand out the team jerseys. They can attach a schedule at that time as well if emailing. The Coach may also contact the Team Manager to complete this step.

Coaches make the call if the game is going to be cancelled due to the weather and should either have themselves or the Team Parent **contact the parents and the opposing Team Coach** as soon as possible. Keep in mind that it may be raining 2 hours prior then be sunny the rest of the day. **Don’t make the call too soon and don’t wait too long to contact the parents.**



Abuse, both verbal and physical, will not be tolerated! If you witness such behavior, please calmly talk to the individual and advise them that it is a fun and friendly recreational sport. If they persist, please cancel the game and contact the president (president@mcknightsoccer.ca) immediately after the game.

FORMAT

Age Groups

U4 – Ages 3 – 4

U6 – Ages 4 – 5

U8 – Ages 6 – 7

U10 – Ages 8 – 9

U12 – U14 Ages 10 - 13

U4 - U6

AT THIS STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT – YOU ARE NOT COACHING – YOU'RE HELPING CHILDREN LEARN SKILLS THEY WILL USE LATER!

Children are still VERY individual at this age and are just becoming transitioned into group settings and structure as a whole.

Characteristic traits of 3 and 4 year olds:

- VERY short attention span
- Like to be active
- Play in short bursts
- Like the security of adults (especially their parents)
- Are very individual
- Are still developing very basic physical coordination

Characteristic traits of 5 and 6 year olds:

- Small attention span
- Like to be active
- Play in short bursts
- Like the security of adults
- Socialize with only 2 or 3 others
- Very basic physical coordination

Children at this age have very short attention spans and simply want to be active. Coaches should do as little talking as possible and keep the games going. If a



coach does wish to talk with the players, do so after the players have been involved in some activity.

Be prepared – activities at this age may or may NOT work. Do not let this discourage you from trying something new or adapting the activity. They may need to be repeated before they work OR they may not ever work! It will largely depend on the group you have.

Children at these ages do not have any concept of pacing themselves. They will run themselves crazy for 10 seconds, and after will stand still to recover while the game may be going on. This is natural!

If there are adults present that are positive and delight in their children playing soccer – the children will feel very comforted by their presence. However parents can be VERY distracting for 3, 4 and 5 year olds. The child will gain more from the experience if the parents help to focus the child on what the coach and rest of the team is doing. These children are very individual and are used to attention being just on them from parents and guardians.

Coaches should not expect their players to become good technical players. They are still developing very basic motor skills and coordination – it is unrealistic to expect them to be able to turn their foot sideways to make a pass. For now – kicking the ball (with any part of the foot) is a triumph!

If coaches provide a fun, positive environment for their players they will enjoy coming to soccer every week. Over time with continuous repetition of basic skills, the players will eventually get better. It is important to recognize that they do so at their own natural pace.

Recap

- Keep the ball on the ground
- Players develop good habits around their comfort level with the ball at their feet
- Use BOTH feet
- LOTS of opportunities to Stop and Go with ball and to Turn in all directions
- Encourage players to “find their own space” inside the grid
- Let the players play!



U4 – U6 Game

For U4 – U6, the one hour time slots should be roughly broken into two even components: approximately ½ hour practice - juice / water break - ½ hour game. The practice session is conducted on ½ of the game field followed by the game on the full field.

U4 and U6 games are conducted across 40 ft x 60 ft fields at Cambrian Community field and North Haven school field. Small portable nets are used. U4 games are generally 3 v. 3 or 4 v. 4 depending on the number of players per team. U6 games are generally 4 v. 4 or 5 v. 5. Discretion needs to be applied in deciding team size. Some teams might have 9 players total, so you might have to have one shift of 4 and another shift of 5.

It is important that coaches communicate with one another prior to the game starting. The goal is to ensure that each player has roughly equal playing time; translated into equal opportunity to touch the ball in a game setting and a minimum of time waiting on the sidelines. To this effect, as far as possible please try to separate your stronger players. **One coach from each team should "ref" the game, stopping play approximately every 2-3 minutes for substitutions on the other ½ of the team.** The other coaches should be on the sidelines organizing that ½ of the team to ensure a quick and smooth changeover.

U4 coaches should return their balls and nets to the community storage after each game.

U6 coaches should return their nets and leave the balls/pylons on the field for the U8 teams that follow.

U8

Similar to U4 and U6, however the Social and Emotional Development

- More independence from parents and family
- Stronger sense of right and wrong
- Increased ability to engage in competition
- Beginning awareness of the future – children are learning to plan ahead
- Growing understanding about one's place in the world
- More attention to friendships and teamwork



Characteristic traits of 6, 7 and 8 year olds

- Small attention span
- Like to be active
- Play in short bursts
- Socialize with only 2 or 3 others
- Very basic physical coordination

Recap

- Keep the ball on the ground
- Players develop good habits around their comfort level with the ball at their feet
- Use BOTH feet
- LOTS of opportunities to Stop and Go with the ball and to Turn in all directions
- Encourage players to “find their own space” inside the grid
- Let the players play!
- Remind parents – this is not a competitive environment rather for development!
- **LET THE GAME BE THE TEACHER!**

U8 Game

U8 games are played on the full rink-sized community hall fields. Depending on the caliber of players, coaches at this level may chose to shrink down the field, using pylons and corner markers to clearly indicate the field. Games are generally 5 v. 5, depending on team sizes.

Coaches need to communicate with one another prior to the game commencing to decide on team size. The goal is to ensure equal playing time for each child. One coach from each team should "ref" the game while the other coaches organize the rest of team, ensuring that changes are as quick as possible.

We have marked the collapsible metal goals for U8; they may take a little bit of time to get up properly.



U10

The coaches and parents should not expect children to become good technical players in a short period of time. Repetition is key at this age and as they continue to develop.

If coaches are able to provide a fun positive environment for their players, the players will enjoy being at practices and games, and over time with continuous repetition of basic skills, the players will eventually get better. They will do so at their own natural pace.

Characteristic traits of 8 - 10 year olds

Short attention span

Like to be active

Like to socialize

Physical coordination is becoming more apparent

U10 Recap

- Learn the basic rules of the game
- Get to play with 2-3 others
- Timid children can become assertive soccer players
- Parents are happy as they see their child actively involved in the game
- (not on the periphery)
- Parent/coach does not need to coach, "let the game be the teacher"
- Soccer triangle (basic concept of soccer)
- Forward and rear support
- Sweeper-keeper (Goalie joins game by providing rear support when their team is on attack)

U10 Game

Coaches at the U10 and U12/U14 levels should consider shorter practices and longer games (i.e., 10-15 minute warm-up followed by 45-50 minute game).

The U10 game is played on the North Haven and Cambrian Elementary school fields, using approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of the field of play between the permanent steel goals.

We are using the larger collapsible steel goals (marked U10), which take some time to set up; coaches are encouraged to either attend early to setup or



delegate this role to a parent. Parents are typically more than happy to assist the coach setup the nets.

U12 - U14

Game

U12/U14 is played at Colonel Irvine Junior High School fields (412 Northmount Drive) using the existing permanent steel goals.

Each player will receive one colored jersey (red or blue) and the opposing team will wear pinnies over their jerseys. As the number of players varies each year for the U12/U14s, there may be more competitive skills taught to engage the players. The coaches may mix up or keep the players on the same teams to hone their skills and get them used to playing with each other emphasizing fair play.

Characteristic traits of U12 and U14

- Develop the abilities to sustain complex, coordinated skill sequences.
- Think abstractly and are thus able to understand some team concepts that are foundational to the game.
- Spend more time with friends and less time with their parents.
- Susceptible to conformity to peer pressure.
- Developing a conscience, morality and scale of values.
- Tend to be highly self-critical. Instruction needs to be enabling.
- Openly competitive. A few may foul on purpose.
- Looking towards their role models and heroes in order to know how to act.
- More complex and developed sense of humour.
- Yell at their teammates when they make a mistake.
- Openly question the coach's/referee's decisions.
- Encourage each other.
- Pass the ball even when they know that they will not get it back.

Coaches are encouraged to **show them what can be done instead of telling them **what not to do**.**

Goal is to develop players in a fun, engaging environment. Winning has its place but must be balanced with the other goals of teaching them to play properly. Some decisions will need to be made that might not necessarily lead to wins (ie: having players play different positions, or asking players to try to play the ball "out of the back".)



GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR PLAY

| Age | Start time | Field sizes (locations) | Team sizes | Rules of Play |
|------------|-------------------|---|------------------------------------|--|
| U4 | 6:15 – 7:00 pm | Approx. 40 ft x 60 ft Cambrian Heights Community Field 600 Northmount Drive NW or North Haven Elementary School Field 4922 North Haven Drive NW | 3 vs 3 or 4 vs 4 | kicking goal kicks |
| U6 | 6:15 – 7:15 pm | Approx. 40 ft x 60 ft Cambrian Heights Community Field 600 Northmount Drive NW or North Haven Elementary School Field 4922 North Haven Drive NW | 4 vs 4 or 5 vs 5 | kicking passing goal kicks throw-ins introduced |
| U8 | 6:30 – 7:30 pm | Approx. 60 ft x 120 ft or 75 ft x 150 ft Cambrian Heights Community Field 600 Northmount Drive NW or North Haven Elementary School Field 4922 North Haven Drive NW | 4 vs 4 or 5 vs 5 | goal kicks throw-ins corner kicks introduced |
| U10 | 6:30 – 7:30 pm | ¾ length of soccer field (120 x 180 ft) Cambrian Heights School Field 600 Northmount Drive NW or North Haven School Field 4922 North Haven Dr. NW | 7 vs 7 or 9 vs 9 | goal kicks throw-ins corner kicks off side introduced |
| U12 | 7:30 – 8:30 pm | Full Soccer Field Colonel Irvine School 412 Northmount Drive NW | 9 vs 9 or 11 vs 11 (optimal) | Goal kicks throw-ins corner kicks off side |



COACHES CLINICS

This year we invited McKnight coaches and assistant coaches to attend introductory and intermediate coaching clinics. Please feel free let us know how it went; your feedback is always welcome at president@mcknightsoccer.ca. Let us know what we can do to make it a better experience for our coaches next year.

Useful coaching information can also be found on our websites for various soccer associations; Calgary Minor Soccer Association, Soccer Alberta, Canadian Soccer Association, etc...

FIELD LINE PAINTING

McKnight Soccer has a line painter and white spray cans, stored in the soccer shed, and dedicated line painters will be spraying the fields. Please contact the equipment coordinator if the fields require an additional coat prior to the next game. Any U10 or U12-U14 coaches interested in painting the field may do so together or on their own. In addition, pylons and flags should be used to clearly mark the field of play.

COACHES APPRECIATION DINNER

As our volunteer coaches and assistant coaches commit the most volunteering time and effort throughout the soccer season, we recognize and thank you by hosting a Coaches Appreciation Dinner Saturday, June 1st, 2019.

YEAR END COACHES MEETING (ONLINE FEEDBACK)

A coaches meeting may be held at the completion of the year, on a date to be announced, if there is sufficient interest or you may also provide your feedback online at www.mcknightsoccer.ca. Please e-mail us with any interest or any comments.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The McKnight Sports Council Board of Directors is in need of Volunteers; If you know anyone that would like to volunteer their time to a great cause, please feel free to forward them our contact information (soccer@mcknightsoccer.ca).



McKnight Soccer is completely volunteer driven; any and all feedback is welcomed and appreciated (constructive or otherwise).

HAVE A GREAT SOCCER SEASON!