



Canada Soccer Grassroots Standards



Active Start

Fundamentals

Learn to Train

Criteria	U5-U6	U7	U8-U9	U10-U11	U12-U13
Game format	No formal games	3v3	4v4 (no GK) or 5v5 (with GK)	7v7	9v9 (U12) 9v9 or 11v11 (U13)
Coaching qualification	Active Start + MED + RiS + Making Headway	Fundamentals + MED + RiS + Making Headway	Fundamentals + MED + RiS + Making Headway	Learn to Train + MED + RiS + Making Headway	Learn to Train + MED + RiS + Making Headway
Maximum game duration	Informal play	30 minutes	40 minutes	50 minutes	U12 70 minutes U13 80 minutes
Maximum game time per player per day	**See Additional Information**	60 minutes	60 minutes	80 minutes	100 minutes
Minimum rest time between games	N/A	Duration of one (1) game	Duration of one (1) game	Duration of one (1) game	Duration of one (1) game
Maximum goal size	Pop-up goals 3ft (0.91m) x 5ft (1.52m)	Pop-up goals 3ft (0.91m) x 5ft (1.52m)	5ft (1.52m) x 8ft (2.44m)	6ft (1.83m) x 16ft (4.88m)	6ft (1.83m) x 18ft (5.49m)
Field size	N/A	Width: 18-22m Length: 25-30m	Width: 25-30m Length: 30-36m	Width: 30-36m Length: 40-55m	9v9 Width: 42-55m Length: 60-75m 11v11 Width: 45-75m Length: 90-110m
Ball size	3	3	3 or 4 (or 4 super light)	4 (or 5 light)	U12: 4 (or 5 light) U13: 5
Number of memorable events	N/A	N/A	Two (2) per year	Two (2) per year	Four (4) per year *One (1) event may be overseas
Referee or Game Leader	N/A	Game Leader (can be the two coaches)	Game Leader (can be the two coaches) or Referee	Referee	Referee
Restarts from Sidelines	N/A	Pass in or dribble in	Pass in or dribble in	Pass in or dribble in	Throw-in



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Offside	N/A	No	No	No	Yes
Retreat line	N/A	If required (one third)	If required (one third)	If required (one third)	If required (one third)
Substitutions	N/A	Unlimited (any stoppage or on the fly)	Unlimited (any stoppage or on the fly)	Unlimited (any stoppage)	Unlimited (any stoppage)
Season or session length (indoor/outdoor)	10-22 weeks	10-22 weeks	10-22 weeks	10-22 weeks	10-22 weeks
Team travel time	Within organization	Under 60 minutes each way	Under 60 minutes each way	Under 60 minutes each way	Under 60 minutes each way
Playing time (players encouraged to try all positions)	Players all play	Fair playing time for all players	Fair playing time for all players	Fair playing time for all players	Fair playing time for all players
Player to coach ratio	Ideal 4:1 Maximum 8:1	Ideal: 6:1 Maximum: 8:1	Ideal: 8:1 Maximum: 10:1 (5v5)	Ideal: 10:1 Maximum: 12:1	9v9 Ideal: 12:1 Maximum: 14:1 11v11 Ideal: 16:1 Maximum: 18:1
Training to game ratio	N/A	1:1	1:1 or 2:1	2:1 or 3:1	2:1 or 3:1
Structured training duration	30-45 minutes	30-45 minutes	45-60 minutes	60-75 minutes	60-75 minutes
Game day roster guidelines (game day only)	N/A	Ideal: 6 players	Ideal: 8 players	Ideal: 10 players	9v9 Ideal: 14 players 11v11 Ideal: 16 players
Game day format	N/A	Festival format	Festival format	Festival format	Festival or league format
Number of game days (Festival or league play) per week	N/A	One (1)	One (1)	One (1)	One (1)



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Additional Information

The Canada Soccer Grassroots Standards have been designed to create the best possible learning and development environment for all young players in Canada. The Grassroots Standards are based on global best practice while taking into account the realities of Canadian soccer. As adults, it is our responsibility to ensure that all of our children are able to enjoy the game in a safe, fun, accessible, inclusive and developmentally appropriate environment.

Given the uniqueness of our country - where geography, climate and infrastructure can be vastly different from one region to the next - it will not always be possible to implement the Grassroots Standards. Do your best to implement the plan while understanding that some standards may not be possible to achieve in your region..

Below you will find some further information about some of the criteria in the Canada Soccer Grassroots Standards.

Game Format

The game format refers to the number of players on each team. This can range from very few players (1v1, 2v2 or 3v3) to the full FIFA regulation game format of 11v11.

Coaching Qualification

This refers to the training that a coach is required to complete prior to coaching a group of young players. As part of Canada Soccer's **Safe Sport Roster**, all coaches in Canada are required to complete the training outlined in the Canada Soccer Grassroots Standards.

Maximum Game Duration

This refers to the maximum length of the game. The game is normally played in two halves of equal duration (i.e. A 30-minute game would be comprised of two, 15-minute halves) however, the game may be divided as required (i.e. Three 10-minute periods)

Maximum Game Time Per Player Per Day

In order to ensure that our young players are safe, we do not want them to be pushed beyond their physical limits. The maximum game time per player is the total amount of game time each player experiences on game day.

Minimum Rest Time Between Games

Further to keeping young players safe, it is important for them to get sufficient rest in between games at a Festival or Memorable Event, such as a tournament.

Season or Session Length

In many parts of our country, there are distinct seasons for soccer where the game is played outdoors or indoors. The guidelines around the length of these seasons provide you with enough flexibility to ensure that young players have the opportunity to experience other sports and activities.

Memorable Events

Playing in tournaments and special events is an important part of a positive soccer experience for young players. Adults can sometimes get carried away by over-scheduling these events. It is best that memorable events are phased in gradually as young players mature in the game.

International vs Overseas Travel

Given the size of our country and the proximity of many Canadians to the United States, it is often more convenient for teams to travel to memorable events in the United States than in Canada. We want our young players to have great experiences in a variety of competitions, and there are many options to do this in Canada and the U.S.

Team Travel Time

We want our young players to spend as much time with a ball as possible, and they can't do that if they're sitting in a car. Do your best to limit the amount of time your players are spending traveling to games so that they can maximize their time spent on the field with a ball.

Playing Time

All children have the right to enjoy their soccer experience - and they can't do that if they don't get to play the game. The outcome of a game is far less important than each player's enjoyment of that game - do your best to ensure that all players get equal and fair playing time.

Player to Coach Ratio

The player to coach ratio is the number of players per coach. Coaching young players is a rewarding profession, but it can be very challenging if you are required to coach too many players. Keeping the player to coach ratio reasonable will increase enjoyment for players & coaches.

Overseas travel (i.e. Europe, Asia, South America) should generally be restricted until players are older so that they can fully appreciate the experience. You may contact your Provincial/Territorial Soccer Association if you wish to apply for an exemption.

Training to Game Ratio

This refers to the relationship between training (practice) and games. Children love to play games, but much of their development will occur in training. If you find a good balance between training and games, you will enhance your players' enjoyment of soccer.

Game Day Roster

With open (or fluid) rosters the recommendation for training in Grassroots programs, it is important for clubs to select the appropriate game day roster size. This is the number of players selected to play in a specific game or competition, and can change from week to week.

Game Day Format

This refers to the type of competition that a group of players engage in. A Festival Format usually involves two games played on the same day, and is the preferred format for young players. League format involves traditionally scheduled games, often played in a home & away format.

U5-U6 Maximum Game Time

The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines recommend 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity per day. Formal games are not recommended in this stage and soccer activities should not exceed 60 minutes.