



**U10 Soccer Program  
Stage 3: Learning to Train**



Alberta Soccer  
Long Term Player Development



# Alberta Soccer Association U10 Soccer

## Acknowledgement

The Technical Committee of the Alberta Soccer Association wishes to thank the following working groups and individuals for their assistance with the development of this program.

The U10 Program:

CSA Long Term Player Development  
CSA Wellness to World Cup  
ASA Technical Director and Grassroots  
Coordinator  
St. Albert Soccer Association

In addition, Alberta Soccer would like to thank our soccer colleagues-both domestic and abroad-for their assistance and contributions.

## **PURPOSE:**

In keeping with the CSA Long Term Player Development “Learning to Train,” the U10 physical curriculum emphasizes the ABC’s of movement: agility, balance, coordination and speed. Technical instruction is introduced through movement exercises and games that promote a feel for the ball.

The goal of the under 10 program is to enhance the child’s movement and technical understanding as it relates to soccer specifically. As well, the program introduces basic individual tactics and team tactics.

## **League Format:**

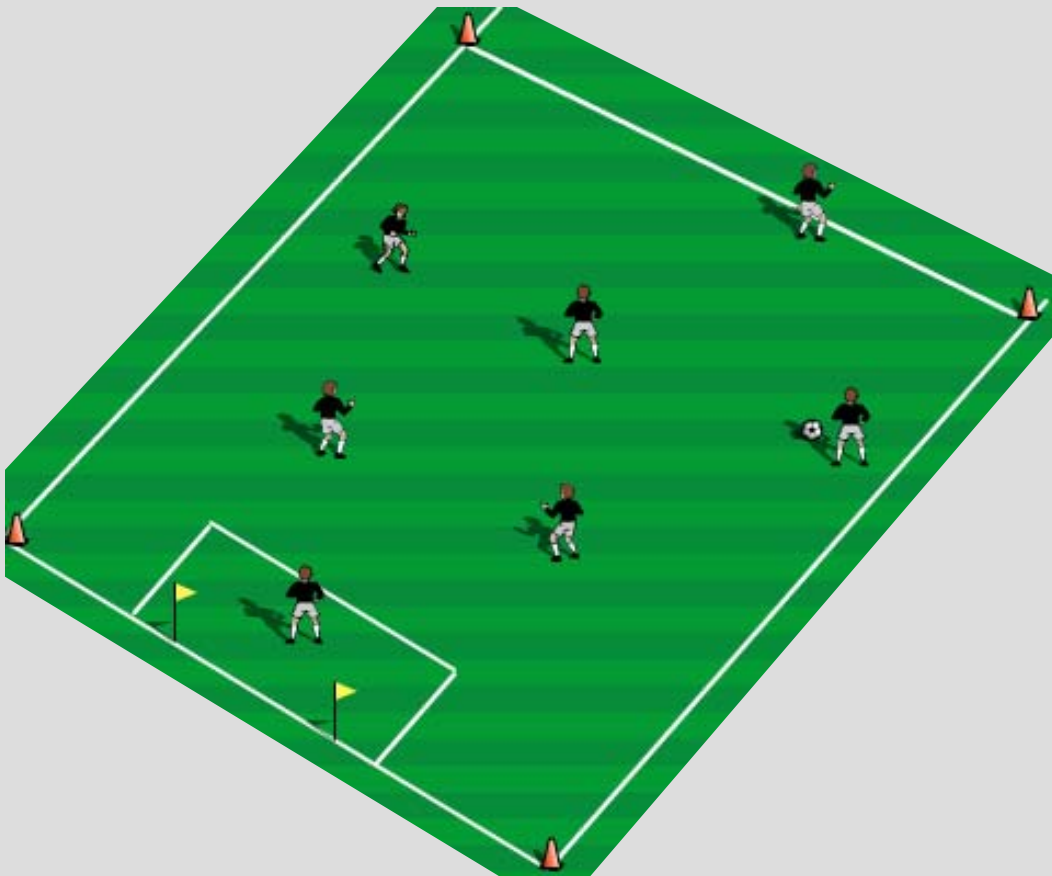
In keeping with the Long Term Player Development, a season for an under 10 team should range from 16-20 weeks; the norm in Alberta is 8 to 12 weeks for outdoor soccer. The league standings are not necessary, and a simple league fixture schedule can be created .

## **Practice to Game Ratio:**

Training to competition ratio should be 2-3 training sessions for every game. However, given the time constraints placed on parents/players, this ratio has been modified to accommodate soccer in Alberta.

# Why 7vs.7 Soccer

At the U8 age group, players were introduced to the diamond shape. This provided a natural method of implementing depth and width while still maintaining angles of support. At the U10 age group, players are now introduced to the next progressions. This includes responsibilities of each position on the field, group tactics, and field awareness. Players are encouraged to try every position to enhance their view of the game and develop different skills as required by each position on the field.



## Suggested Rules for the U10 Program:

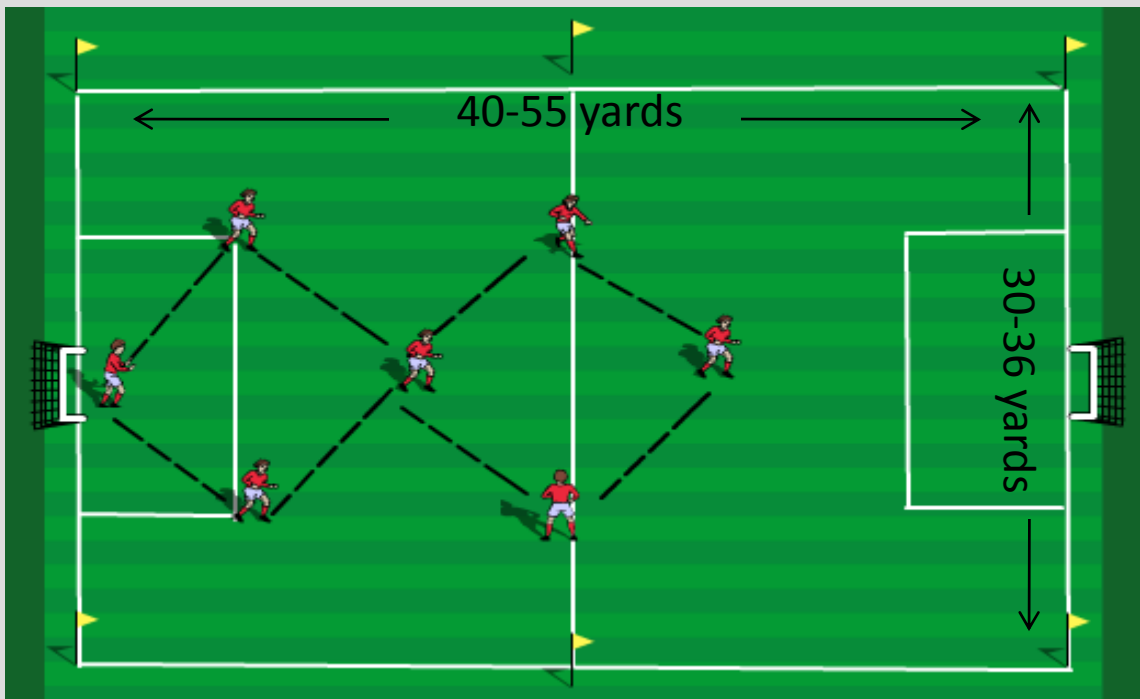
Game Format	Team size	Game Duration	Ball Size	Field Size Width Min/Max	Field Size Length Min/Max	Goal Size Min (H) Max (W)
7 vs. 7	Ideal 9-12	2 x 25 min.	4	30/36 Yards	40/55 Yards	Height 6 ft. Width 16 ft.

The Game: Things to know about the under 10 game

### Formation:

When playing under 10 soccer, the ideal formation includes a goalkeeper, defenders, midfielders, forwards.

It is recommended that teams try to play with 2 defenders, 2 midfielders, and 2 forwards, or to play with 3 defenders, and 3 forwards.



## Suggested Rules for the U10 Program:

### Off-Sides

There are no off-sides at the under 10 level of soccer.

### Throw-ins:

At this stage of player development, the skill of throwing-in the ball correctly might prove too difficult for all players. If a throw-in is not executed in accordance with FIFA Laws, allow the player to try again. If unsuccessful for the second time, proceed with the game reminding the player of the correct technique for a throw-in.

### Goal Area:

The dimensions of the goal area are 10-12 yards wide and 6-8 yards long. It is set up for goalie development.

### Goal Keeper:

At the under 8 4 vs.4 game, a sweeper/keeper was introduced. This is a player who, when retreated back into their goal area is allowed to use their hands. As a progression, at the U10 7vs.7 game one player is assigned the duty of playing in goal. However, for developmental purposes, a goal keeper should not be assigned to play in net for the season. It is important that all players on a team continue to develop the FUNdamentals of soccer.

### Scoring:

Goals can be scored from anywhere on the field but must pass under the height of the crossbar or flags and between the posts or flag cones.

## Suggested Rules for the U10 Program:

### Fouls:

All fouls are IN-DIRECT: This means that the ball must be first passed to another player before a goal can be scored.

### Referees/coaches/Parents:

Any of the above mentioned can run the game. This is about the players not the officials.

### Corners:

When a player on the defensive side of the ball is the last person to touch the ball over their own goal line and not between the goal posts, a corner kick is awarded to the attacking team.

### Goal Kicks:

When a player on the attacking side of the ball is the last person to touch the ball over the opposing team's goal line and not between the goal posts, then a goal kick is awarded.

## Objectives for Individual Technique:

The under 10 coach's piece of the player development puzzle can be spelled out in the season objectives that are to be achieved by the players at this level. Keep these objectives in mind every time you spend a game or practice with your team. When you ask yourself what your contribution to these players is, just look over the season objectives to remind yourself. You should periodically monitor these objectives throughout the season to see if players are on the right track and making progress.

Locomotor skills - Players will show improvement in running, sliding (side-stepping), leaping, jumping, starting and stopping.

Stability skills - Players will show improvement in balance (both static and dynamic) and dodging.

Dribbling - Players will attempt to use both feet and improve balance and coordination (not trip over the ball as much).

Shooting - Players will attempt to shoot the ball using the instep (laces) of both right and left feet.

Passing - Players will attempt to pass the ball using the inside of both right and left feet.

Controlling - Players will attempt to control the ball first before passing it (do not let players simply kick it and chase it)

Ball Juggling - Players will become more comfortable when attempting to juggle the ball with many different parts of their body.

Heading - Players will make an effort and attempt to head the ball (will not be as afraid or shy away).



## Objectives for Individual Technique:

Catching - Players, as goalkeepers, will be able to catch a ball rolled or thrown towards them, as well as a ball thrown directly above them.

Rolling - Players, as goalkeepers, will be able to roll the ball to the feet of another player over short distances.

Scrimmage/Game - Players will attempt to use all the general space (spread out instead of swarm around the ball) and further appreciate and understand the basic rules and boundaries necessary to play soccer. Players will also begin to develop a foundation of understanding the concept of cooperation and attempt at making passes to teammates, and most important of all, they will begin to learn the basic concepts of team play.

Effective - Players will have fun, be challenged, accept responsibility, and develop self-confidence and intrinsic motivation towards the game of soccer. Players will become aware and comfortable in a more structured practice environment.

## Individual Tactics:

1. Dribbling

2. Passing

3. Shooting

### 1. Dribbling

#### Free Dribble

Always dribble with the foot farthest away from your opponent (keep your body between the ball and the opponent).

Keep your head up, fake while running and speed up after your fake.

Players are encouraged to move with a ball inside of a defined area. They should touch the ball every time their foot is about to touch the ground. They can use the inside and outside of their foot and should be asked to move the ball side to side with each touch.

#### Running with the Ball

Running with the ball is similar to dribbling as it is a single player moving with the ball. It is dissimilar in that players run with the ball quickly into open space and often without changing direction until they become close to a defender or the goalkeeper. When players are running with the ball, encourage them to use the top of the foot and to push the ball two to three strides in front.

Dribbling...

## Individual Tactics:

1. Dribbling

2. Passing

3. Shooting

### 1. Dribbling

#### *Turns*

##### Stop Turn:

The player places a foot on top of the ball (stopping it) as they continue moving to the other side of the ball. They then turn and dribble back in the opposite direction.

##### Inside Hook:

Using the inside of the foot, the player reaches forward, hooking the inside of their foot around the front of the ball. This should stop the ball and move it back into the area that the player originally dribbled from.

##### Outside Hook:

Using the outside of the foot, the player reaches forward, hooking the outside of their foot around the front of the ball. This should stop the ball and move it back into the area that the player originally dribbling from.

##### Cruyff Turn:

Stepping in front of the ball with one foot, the player uses the inside of the foot to hook the ball backwards behind the foot they are standing on. The player dribbles back into the area they originally dribbled from.

Dribbling...

## Individual Tactics:

1. Dribbling

2. Passing

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### 1. Dribbling

Beating an Opponent 1 versus 1

#### Matthew's Move:

As the player dribbles forward, they jump to one side of the ball onto one foot. They then push the ball in the opposite direction with the outside of the other foot.

#### Scissors / Step Over:

As the player dribbles forward, with the foot closest to the ball, the player steps around the front of the ball to the other side. They then push the ball in the opposite direction using the outside of the other foot.

#### Double Scissors:

Same as the Scissors, however the player steps around the front of the ball with both feet and then pushes the ball away using the outside of the foot of the leg that they first stepped with.

#### Shielding:

Crucial to keeping the ball in possession as an individual, shielding asks the player to keep their body between the ball and the defender who is trying to steal the ball.

## Individual Tactics:

1. Dribbling

2. Passing

3. Shooting

### 2. Passing

- Always pass to whichever one of the receiver's feet is farthest away from the opponent.
- The safest and most accurate pass is with the inside of the foot.
- Players may use the outside of the foot.
- Try to pass as accurately as possible – make it easy for your teammate.
- As soon as you make one pass, get open for another (PASS & MOVE).

### •3. Shooting

- Aim into the corners when at close range.
- Aim into the empty half of the goal – when farther away.
- Low shots to the corner are more difficult for the Goalkeeper.
- Be relaxed, “aim it.”
- If you have a good shot, take it – do not pass up opportunities.
- Remember, look up one last time before shooting.

## Group Tactics:

Group tactics are the planned and purposeful actions (both in attack and defence) of at least two players. There are three age appropriate concepts of group tactics that the under 10 players can learn.

- Playing a Position
- Combination Play
- Shifting the Area of Play

### Playing a Position

- In the game, each player is assigned to a position; however, players must understand that they are responsible for the entire area around them, depending on the where the ball is and not just for the spot where they are standing.
- If players follow this rule, they will begin to practice the basics of moving with the ball, which will help them as they develop.
- Make each player try a different position.

### Combination Play

- Players must understand that they are part of a team and that this gives them certain opportunities to work together in both attack and defense.
- Whenever a player has the ball, they should have a plan. They should either dribble, pass or shoot, and they should be able to explain it to the coach if asked.
- If a player cannot find a receiver, there is usually a player free behind them – even if it is the goalkeeper – so a safe pass is always possible.

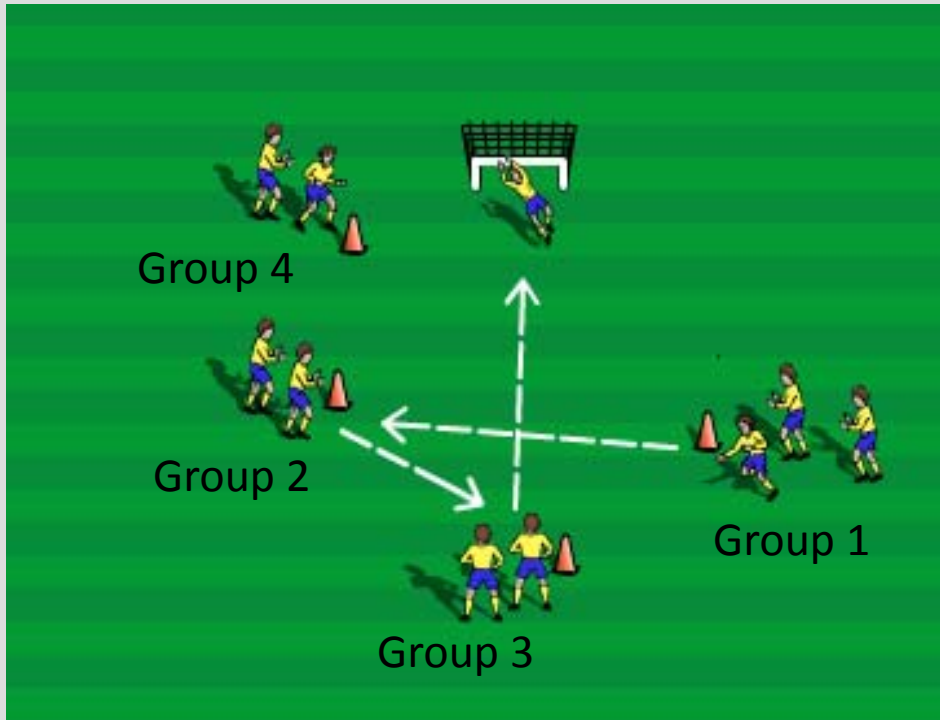
## Group Tactics:

### Shifting the Area of Play

- Players must learn the basic meaning of this concept. “*Switching sides*” may be easier for the player to understand.
- If there are too many opponents on one side for an attack to be successful there, the ball should be passed back and to the other side.
- After the switch, attackers should move toward the goal as quickly as possible in order to take advantage of the open space and, ideally, score.

# Under Siege

## How it Looks



### How to Play

1. Technical Development Group is split into 4 equal teams.
2. First player in Group 1 serves ball to Group 2.
3. First player in Group 2 must head the ball to Group 3.
4. First player in Group 3 shoots ball at first player in Group 4.
5. Players rotate in a clockwise direction.

### What to Look for

Do The Players :

- adjust position to both head and shoot?
- vary type of shot?

### Changes to the Game

**Easier**

- Serve balls on floor.

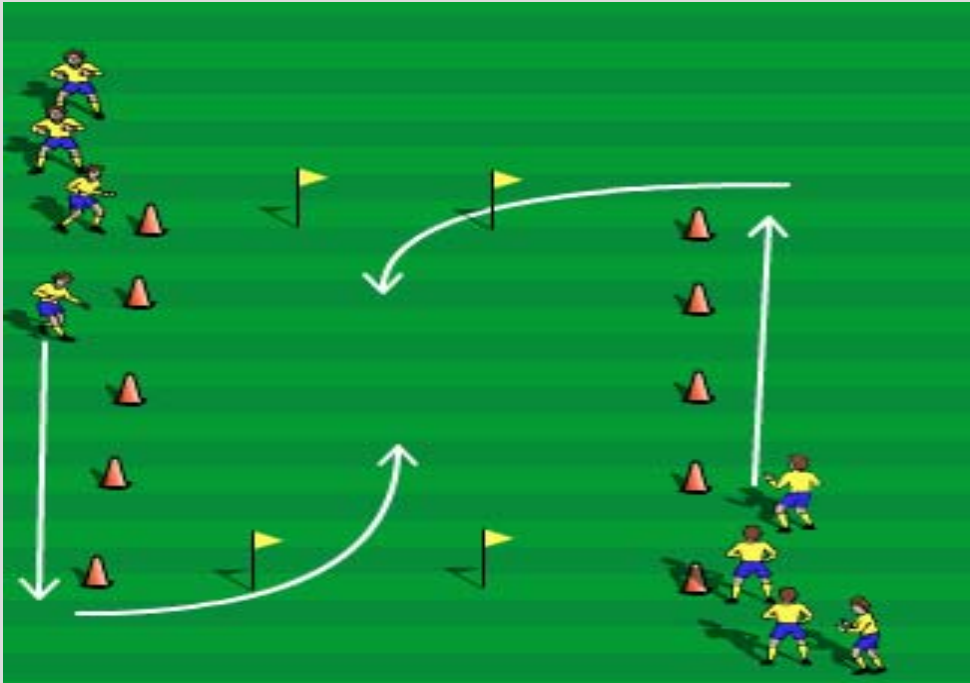
**Harder**

- Shot must be a volley.
- Add static defenders.



# Star Wars

## How it Looks



### How to Play

#### Small Sided/Conditioned Activity

1. Organize the group into two teams and place each team at the corner of the pitch.
2. Each player is given a number and reacts by running around the outside of the area, entering the field of play through their 'goal'.
3. running around the outside of the area, entering the field of play through their 'goal'.
4. The coach serves the ball into the area.

### What to Look for

- Do the players:
- move into space to receive possession?
  - work together to achieve the goal set?
  - take the opportunity to score when it arises?

### Changes to the Game

#### **Easier**

- Shout multiple numbers at a time serving to either team.

#### **Harder**

- Players must pass twice before shooting

# Shoot About

## How it Looks



### How to Play

Small Sided/Conditioned Activity

1. Group is split into teams of 5 with 4 in central area and 1 in end zone.
2. Players score by shooting ball from anywhere to the hands of player in end zones.
3. When ball goes out, the game restarts with the coach playing ball in.

### What to Look for

- Do The Players:
- create shooting opportunities?
  - head down when attempting to score?
  - vary contact with ball?

### Changes to the Game

#### **Easier**

- Add neutral side players.

#### **Harder**

- Limit number of touches
- Must attempt to shoot after 3 passes.
- Can only score by header



For further information with regards to  
the development of soccer in Alberta,

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