

# U9 House Soccer Guidelines (Indoor and Outdoor)

Cold Lake Minor Soccer (CLMSA) runs grassroots programs for children under nine, following Canada Soccer's grassroots standards. At this age, players are eight years old and beginning to show better coordination and understanding of the game. The focus is still on development, fun, and skill building, but with more structure than at U7. The information below combines Canada Soccer recommendations with small-sided rules commonly used across Alberta.

## 1. Program Structure and Philosophy

- Development and enjoyment first – U9 players are usually eight years old. Programs emphasize learning through play, developing ball mastery, and working together as a team. Scores and standings are not tracked. Children should leave sessions having fun.
- Two sessions per week – CLMSA schedules one practice and one game or fun day each week. Practices last about 60 minutes. Games are scheduled on separate days to avoid fatigue. Teams are co-ed, with equal playing time for all. Coaches may add players to a trailing team to keep games balanced.
- Parents as supporters – Parents are encouraged to cheer positively and support their child's effort. Tactical instructions from the sidelines are discouraged. Parents must stay in designated spectator areas.

## 2. Eligibility and Roster Size

- Age requirement – U9 includes players who are eight years old or turning nine during the season.
- Roster size – For 7v7 soccer, rosters of 12–16 players ensure adequate substitutions and playing time.
- Players on the field – 7 players per team (6 outfield + 1 goalkeeper). A game may begin with 5 players if needed.
- Player rotation – Players should rotate positions (including goalkeeper) to develop all-around skills.

## 3. Field, Ball, and Equipment

Item	Recommendation
Field size	40–55 m long × 30–36 m wide (approx. 44–60 yd × 33–40 yd).
Goal size	1.8–2 m (6–7 ft) high × 3–3.6 m (10–12 ft) wide.
Ball size	Size 4 ball (circumference 25–26 in, weight 12–13 oz).
Footwear	Outdoor – cleats with shin guards. Indoor – non-marking shoes or turf shoes.
Equipment	Club-provided jersey, shorts, socks. Shin guard's mandatory. Jewelry removed. Cold-weather gear permitted outdoors.

## 4. Game Format and Laws of Play (Outdoor)

1. Match length – 50 minutes (two 25-minute halves) with a 5-minute half-time break.
2. Kick-off – Taken from the center. Opponents must be outside the center circle.
3. Ball in/out of play – Kick-ins are introduced at U9. Corner kicks and goal kicks follow standard rules. Opponents retreat to the halfway line during goal kicks.
4. Scoring and restarts – Goals can be scored from anywhere in play. No penalty kicks. Free kicks are all indirect.
5. Offside – The build-out line rule applies. Offside is enforced between the build-out line and the goal.
6. Fouls – No slide tackles, no heading. Teach safe play. Explain the rules briefly to help learning.
7. Substitutions – Unlimited, during stoppages. Equal playing time required.
8. Coaching and referees – Coaches or club-appointed referees supervise. Emphasise learning and fun.
9. Keeping games balanced – Coaches may add extra players to trailing teams or place skill restrictions on dominant players.
10. No standings kept – Results are not recorded.

#### 5. Indoor (Boarded or Turf) Soccer Guidelines

- Session format – Indoor games are played in two 25-minute halves (or one 50-minute session with breaks).
- Field size – Approx. 25 m × 15 m (82 × 49 ft) for 7v7 or adjusted to fit local indoor pitches.
- Rules – Ball remains in play off boards. If it hits the ceiling/net, restart with an indirect free kick. No offsides.
- Footwear – Indoor runners or turf shoes only.
- Safety – Players must not push into boards. Teach safe wall play.
- Substitutions – Unlimited, on any stoppage.
- Spectators – Must stay outside the boards or glass.

#### 6. Practice Guidelines and Coaching Tips

- Skill development – Dribbling, passing, shooting, small-group play. Use 1v1, 2v2, 3v3 drills.
- Attention spans – Activities of 10–12 minutes work best. End each session with a scrimmage.
- Parent involvement – Can assist with warm-ups and ball collection.
- Positive coaching – Encourage effort, teamwork, and creativity. Keep lines and lectures to a minimum.

#### 7. Weather and Safety Policies

- Heat – Provide frequent water breaks. Avoid midday heat. Use shade/sunscreen.
- Cold – Players may wear hats, gloves, and warm layers. Cancel games if risk of frostbite/icy fields.
- Thunder/Lightning – Stop play immediately. Resume, only after 30 minutes without thunder.
- Air quality – Monitor local advisories; cancel outdoor sessions in poor conditions.

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## 8. Administration and Communications

- Scheduling – One practice + one game per week. Avoid over-scheduling and back-to-back games.
- Coaching – Volunteer coaches supported with resources. Coaches encouraged to take Canada Soccer Grassroots courses.
- Communication – Updates via email, team app, or website. Ensure all families are notified of cancellations or changes.

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## 9. Summary

Cold Lake Minor Soccer's U9 program provides a safe, enjoyable, and development-focused environment. Children play 7v7 small-sided games with goalkeepers, using size-4 balls and age-appropriate fields. Emphasis remains on fun, skill development, equal playing time, and teamwork. Indoor and outdoor rules are adapted to Alberta conditions, ensuring players build a solid foundation for lifelong enjoyment of soccer.

