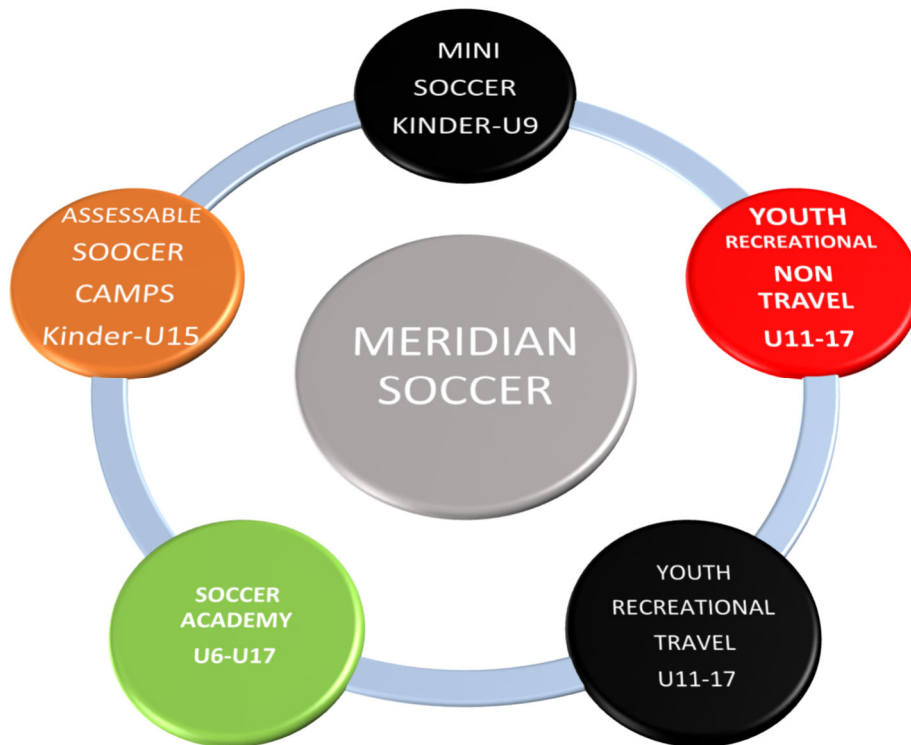


**MERIDIAN SOCCER:  
CLUB MANUAL**



This document aims to guide and educate our organization's players, parents, coaches and club volunteers in becoming familiar with Meridian Soccer Association's programming, philosophy and Club pathway for our player base and membership group. The district includes recreational programming in Club MINI, YOUTH non-travelling players, and YOUTH Travelling Teams from ages 2- 15. Post covid, we have lost several older players and are working on growing to U17.

Our goal is to promote opportunities for our youth players with programming that fits the player's needs, depending on the goals each person has within the game of soccer. Be it as a means to remain active and physically literate.

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Meridian Soccer Association Lloydminster, Alberta, Canada

by Kevin Wagner © 2022

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[www.meridiansoccer.ca](http://www.meridiansoccer.ca)

There are many philosophies and ways to develop players and a soccer club.

This is Meridian Soccer Association's Way

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## INTRODUCTION:

The range of coaches and scope of coaching education in Lloydminster is complex. We are a bi-provincial City with our soccer association based in the Province of Saskatchewan. While this presents us with a set of challenges, these challenges are common to Lloydminster. With the current culture of the game in our City, Meridian Soccer accepts its responsibility to help prepare coaches to bring the game of soccer to our Mini and Youth players. This should include support in guidelines on improving the players on and off the pitch by holding standards on the management of the game and people themselves. For example, how to handle player's parents, referees, and all volunteers.

There is not just one way of coaching; many styles and methods are usually drawn from one's experiences. This may be from past experiences in soccer or sports in general. While some are from a coach's background, some are a product of our personality.

Meridian Soccer Association is focused on delivering a PLAYER-CENTERED soccer program. Our coaches' long-term goals must be improving players' ability in a positive environment to maintain a passion for the game.

This manual is designed to give our Mini and Youth coaches, parents, board members, and all volunteers a core set of ideas for introducing the game of soccer to them.

All recommendations in this manual: MSA: CLUB MANUAL have occurred after a careful review of our local culture of the game (numbers, demographics of players, coaching, and Club structure). This manual was developed with Canadian Soccer Association policies and LTPD in mind, as well as the Saskatchewan Soccer Association's vision of long-term development in the game of recreational and high-performance programming.

## AGE-APPROPRIATE CONSIDERATIONS

The following considerations use broad scopes and base recommendations by grouping players chronologically. As the player's age is the base of our structure, we will also best serve our athletes by considering a player's "soccer age" into consideration. "Soccer Age" considers the player's physical, mental/social, technical, and tactical characteristics. Thus, a player in U9 may be better suited to play U11. Alternatively, a player in U13 may be better served to play in U11. This will be done on a case-by-case basis.

While these recommendations are categorized by chronological age, it is important to remember that this is also based on the assumption that players progress through our

development model with the ability to dribble and control the ball and keep social needs a priority.

The Mini players (Kindersoccer-U9) need to experience success and some failures. The way we measure success is different for each age and each player based on their characteristics.

U5 – U9 should focus on individual ball control and individual play characteristics. U11-U13 still spends most of the time on individual ball control but will begin introducing small group play and decisions (for example, passing and 2 vs. 1 player). U15 should work on technique, group, and team play.

## CONSIDER THIS WHEN COACHING MINI AND YOUTH SOCCER

- The trick is for all players to enjoy themselves while still learning to keep the ball. The most important soccer skill is individual ball control. This should be the priority in all training and games from Kindersoccer to Under 13.
- Practices in U15 and up can then be conducted with an easier introduction to small and larger group tactics. As players learn and have confidence as individuals with the ball, everything else will become easier.
- Practices should be focused on enjoyment and fun! And the ball, keeping it and controlling it.
- Our coaches who work with these players are vital to the future of our players and Club.
- All coaches should clearly understand the value of teaching techniques. Equally important is the personality our coaches have for each respective age group.

## PARENTAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR YOUR PLAYER:

- Training sessions need to be conducted with the ball being the focus and keeping it. (Kindersoccer-U13). If older players are having difficulty controlling the ball, they also need to have training sessions working on individual ball control.
- A coach should be economical in their approach. For example, can a warm-up include fun techniques and some mental triggers?
- A coach should have seasonal goals. All goals should be age-appropriate and player and team-specific. For the younger age groups, the players may not understand “goals,” but this

does not mean that the team's coach cannot have a goal to try to achieve throughout the season. (Ex. Keeping the ball close, running with the ball).

- Developmentally, the players from U6-U11 are the best ones for learning techniques and skills. We need to spend time encouraging individual ball control at this age. By age 15, the capacity to pick up new skills dramatically diminishes. Instead of spending time on group and team organization, tactics and strategy are more beneficial.
- Do not expect practices or games to look like professional play. With advanced players in U15 and older, the game will start to become more organized and advanced.
- All practices should be in a positive environment with the main goal for players to learn, try, and enjoy themselves.
- The purpose of tournament games is for players to apply what they have learned from practice or training.

## ROLES OF THE STAKEHOLDERS & MEMBERSHIP



### Players

The players' contribution is often determined by their enjoyment of the program and what their coach has to offer. However, this does not absolve them from the primary responsibilities of being responsible in terms of punctuality and attendance, focus, effort, dedication, and respect.

### Coaches

Coaches need to understand this critical concept: as the coaches of youth players, you are teachers and leaders within the game of soccer to our young players and parents. This means that your prime consideration is the development of the individual player. The development of teams and the importance of winning are secondary to your role. You have the very important task of providing the young players with all the tools they will need to become competitive or High-Performance players later.

## Parents

Parents should be willing to support the player and coach. Like Administrators, parents must familiarize themselves with Meridian Soccer Association: Club Manual concepts. Critical points for parents to remember are the following:

- Meridian Soccer considers the development of all youth players.
- Try to avoid politics and support all children in the program.
- Emphasis is on development and enjoyment, not necessarily winning.
- If you undermine the coach, your child is adversely affected.

***HAVING AN ATHLETE THAT IS COACHABLE, RESPECTFUL, A GREAT TEAMMATE, MENTALLY TOUGH, RESILIENT AND TRIES THEIR BEST IS A DIRECT REFLECTION OF YOUR PARENTING***

## Board Members

Meridian Soccer is a non-profit group built and led by volunteer board members. The stronger the people are within the board, the more likely the Soccer Club can be viable.

## Admin/Club Support

Meridian Soccer will have a Director of Soccer to lead in the Club's direction and help the registrar with programming admin. A club registrar will administrate the RAMP system, website, and social media. Meridian Soccer has two Lead Programmers to oversee the on-field product and find and retain Coaches.

# PROGRAMMING OPTIONS AND INFORMATION

## INTRODUCTION

Meridian Soccer, supported by SSA, strives to provide each player with an option with programming that best fits players' needs. That said, it is important to understand our market and market needs. Meridian Soccer is a Club that provides recreational programming. This means non-travel and travelling to tournament options.

### LOCAL PROGRAM OPTIONS FROM U4-U19 THROUGH MERIDIAN SOCCER

| PROGRAMMING OPTIONS            |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| KINDER - U3, U4                | Programming runs once per week. This is a child and parent program on the field together.  |
| U5                             | Programming runs twice per week. A game day and a practice day a week - separate boy and girls groups  |
| U7                             | Programming runs twice per week. A game day and a practice day a week - separate boy and girls groups<br>players can also sign up for academy as a once a week option or additional day to regular programming |
| U9, U11                        | Programming runs twice per week. A game day and a practice day a week - separate boy and girls groups  |
| Academy option                 | players can also sign up for academy as a once a week option or additional day to regular programming  |
| Travel or not to travel option | If Meridian has coaching capacity, players can also opt to attend out of town tournaments  |
| U13, U15, U17                  | Programming runs twice per week. A game day and a practice day a week - coed if numbers don't allow separate   |
| Academy option                 | players can also sign up for academy as a once a week option or additional day to regular programming  |
| Travel or not to travel option | If Meridian has coaching capacity, players can also opt to attend out of town tournaments  |

**MERIDIAN SOCCER: MINI AND YOUTH SOCCER: KINDERSOCCER-U17**  
Programming is for beginners in the game and for those players who are more experienced and want to participate in tournament play (U9-U17). Meridian offers non-travelling and travelling programming.

### Mini:

Kinder/U4: Kindersoccer is a parent-and-child program that is once per week. It is 45 minutes in length and is run by Parent Coaches.

U5-U9: Players will be put into age groups based on registrants each season. U5-9 usually separates boys and girls groups. Parent Coaches are with each team.

### Youth Non-Travelling & Travelling:

U11-U17: All players are in the same groups within each age bracket running as a program regardless of whether players want or do not want to travel. All players will get a practice day

and a game day. We have found many players don't have goals to travel at the beginning of a season; however, this can change when they start to learn and enjoy themselves. We always try to maintain separate male and female based programming. This is to be determined but will be determined based on registrations. The program will run twice per week.

### Soccer Academy:

Players from U5 and up can participate in an additional soccer practice once a week and add this to their schedule. Players can also not register in regular programming and opt to register and participate only once a week in the academy. Players only in the academy do not have the option to travel.

### Goalkeeper Academy:

Players from U9 and up can participate in goal training specific skills. This is offered once per week as an additional skill specific session. Players must be registered in regular programming to participate in this academy program.

### Soccer Camps:

Meridian Soccer provides assessable soccer camps throughout the seasons. This is to fill the time gaps after a short outdoor season, between seasons, or holiday gaps within a season.

## PLAYER PATHWAY



### LOCAL PROGRAMMING: HOW PROGRAMMING IS DELIVERED

#### KINDERSOCCER

BODY AWARENESS, COORDINATION, ACTIVITY GAMES, GET KIDS TO LOVE SOCCER

KINDERSOCCER: 3 and 4-year-olds with parents

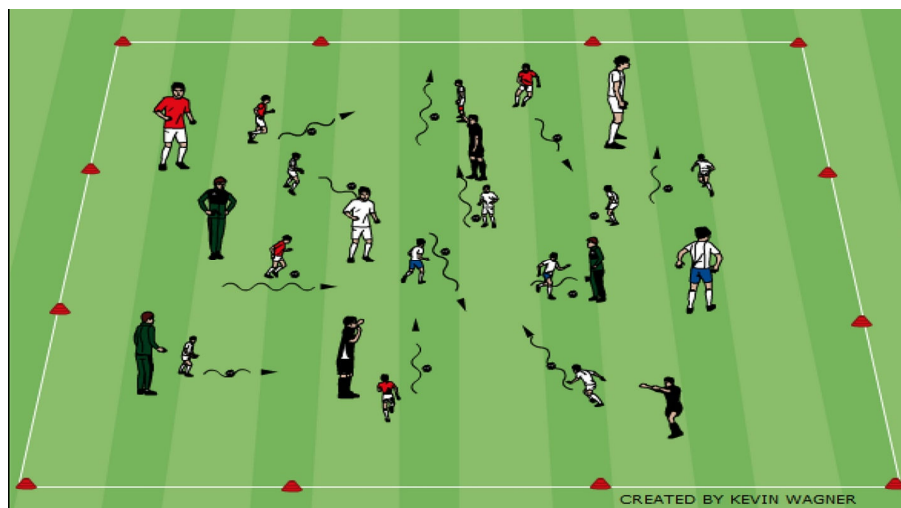
**PLAYER PATHWAY:** The Kindersoccer age group will have an Age Group Trainer who will provide leadership and help for each Kindersoccer group. Meridian Soccer will also attempt to have our older travelling team players help with each group and our parent coaches.

- Players are placed into co-ed groups of 20 players (or close based on numbers), not teams. Each group of Kindersoccer players will have 1, 2 or more adult coaches who will lead each group through the season.
- For each player, there does need to be a respective adult to participate with the child throughout each practice.
- Each group will participate 1/week.
- There is no league play.



## GENERAL THOUGHTS ABOUT KINDERSOCCER:

Players at this age are too young to play in a league. Their social skills and mental maturity is not ready to have success within league play. Instead, we will have larger groups of players led by adult parent coaches. With the help of the player's parents (grandparents, uncles, aunts, etc.), these coaches will lead the players through three, four or more different activities each practice. As the season progresses, the coaches will build towards introducing a game-like activity once the players are more ready. All activities will include body awareness, jumping, twisting, running, keeping the ball by dribbling, catching it, etc. While including the ball, there will be 1 ball/1 player. Most times, the parents will be on the field with their players, and at other times, they will be just off to the side.



**GAME STRUCTURE:** There is no league play.

**FIELD SIZE:** Outdoor: 15 yards wide x 15 yards long in each grid. Indoor: Servus Sports Center or the Synergy Vault.

## PRACTICE STRUCTURE:

Each player will be included in 1 practice/week. At times, organized chaos (never just chaos, though)! Each practice will be 45 minutes in duration. A ratio of 1 ball/player will be used. The size of the ball will be a size 3 ball. There will be some shorter activity games and water breaks so the players are active and can become more confident in the group (social skills) and with the ball (want to keep it and try new things with it). Some of these activity games are with parents, and some are without. At times, a player will love coming to Kindersoccer but then, once he arrives, will freeze up and not want to participate. As a parent, allow this to happen

and encourage them to be in the soccer environment. Before too long, they will start to participate.

#### THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- QUALITIES OF A COACH FOR THIS AGE GROUP: Patience, personality, animation, use of voice, ability to relate to players at their level.
- Assistance has to be given to the age-group trainer (AGT) and coaches at the beginning and throughout the program.

## UNDER 5-7

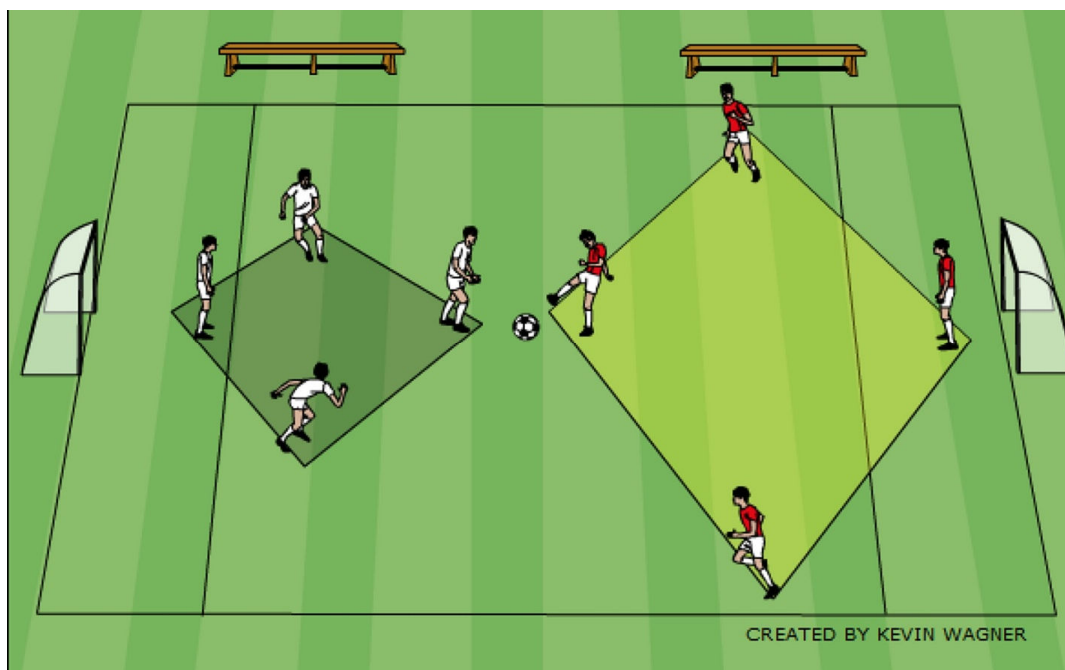
### ENCOURAGE EVERY PLAYER TO KEEP THE BALL, & KEEP IT CLOSE TO THEM

#### PLAYER PATHWAY

- Players will be placed on “teams” with parent coaches. There will be scheduled games; however, no standings are kept. The teams will be co-ed and have two sessions per week.
- All players are expected to attend the sessions during their season in league play.
- Communicate with the coach if they cannot make it is encouraged.
- There is no need for referees.

#### GENERAL THOUGHTS ABOUT UNDER 5-7

Under 5-7 practices will look very similar to Kindersoccer. During each practice, you should see three 8-minute activity games. The number of players on each “team” will be small to allow plenty of playing time during set games. We want players to learn to keep the ball, dribble the ball and control the ball. In doing so, the players will become more confident and look to enjoy the game more while improving their skill set. Every time a player “passes,” they are actually kicking the ball away and always looking to get rid of it instead of controlling it. Due to the players' development and relatively small attention span, sessions will be no more than 60 minutes. For players to stay stimulated with the session, we ask that parents remain on the opposite side of the team bench and that both team benches are on the same side of the field. These are the most impressionable years of every player’s development. If we don’t teach our players anything until under 12, we have just wasted six years we cannot get back.



#### LEAGUE GAME STRUCTURE:

INDOOR + OUTDOOR: 4 V 4

GAME STRUCTURE: GK – 30 minutes of activity games followed by a 25-minute game.

FIELD SIZE: Outdoor- 20 yards wide x 24 yards long. Indoor- 18 yards wide x 24 yards long

BALL SIZE: 3

SPECTATORS: Spectators sit on opposite sides of the player's bench in the outdoor season. In the indoor season, the parents watch from upstairs unless their player needs them on the field.

RESTARTS: When the ball goes out of play, it is restarted by the opposition dribbling it into play.

SCORING GOALS: We want all players to enjoy the game; however, we do not instruct our young players to pass the ball. We want a team of players full of "ball hogs."

#### GAMES:

As a developmental model, 4 v 4 is the best option for our players to play the game. There is a goalkeeper used. When the ball goes out of play on the sides of the field, it is restarted by dribbling it back into the field. When the ball goes out of play at the ends of the field, it is a goal kick. Again, the opposition gets the ball and dribbles or passes the ball back into play. The opposition has to back up and give at least 4 meters of space. This allows time for each player to dribble the ball into play without having the opposition immediately steal it and pound it into the goal. Players need to play on average 3-5 minutes before being substituted. These young players do get tired quickly but also recover quickly. Playing the 4 v 4 games will allow for more

opportunities for players to dribble and have more touches on the ball. The goal is to keep each player involved and has an opportunity to be successful and enjoy the game.

#### PRACTICE STRUCTURE-ACTIVITY GAMES

All players should enjoy having fun with the ball and each other. “Drills” should seldom, if ever, be used. Instead, three 8-minute activity games with each player having a ball. Mixed with this, there should be coordination, activities, and games. Players should be given an opportunity for short water breaks between activities, followed by another activity. A player’s time should always be occupied with something, even when resting.

#### COACHING DEVELOPMENT:

We must provide education and assistance to all our U5-7 parent coaches at the beginning and periodically throughout the season. This will be done through meetings and open communication. Coaching certification courses are an option for our local coaches as well.

#### THINGS TO CONSIDER

- QUALITIES OF A COACH FOR THIS AGE GROUP: Patience, personality, animation, use of voice, ability to relate to players at their level.
- Players at this age must work with the ball at least twice a week.
- Players at this age should be in other activities such as swimming, gymnastics, etc.

## UNDER 9

#### BEGIN INTRODUCING TECHNIQUE (“TRICKS”) TO EVERY PLAYER

#### PLAYER PATHWAY

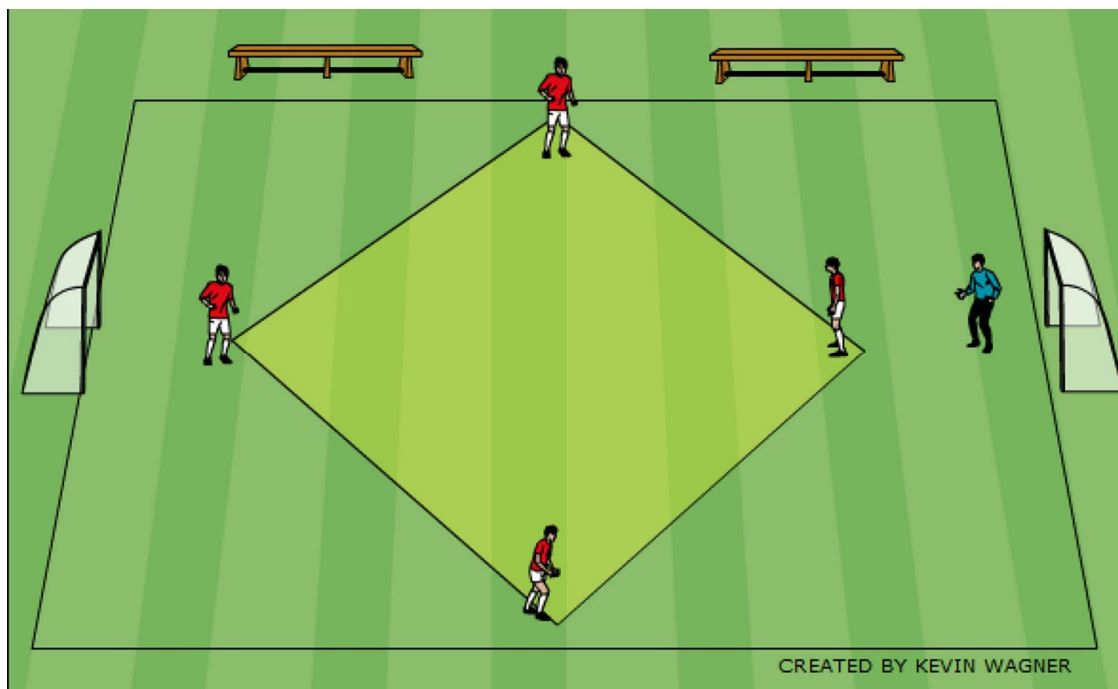
- Players will be placed on “teams” with parent coaches. There will be scheduled games; however, no standings are kept.
- There will be Male and Female leagues unless the number of players does not support it.
- Groups will have two sessions per week.
- All players are expected to attend and communicate with the coach if they cannot attend.
- There is no need for referees.

#### GENERAL THOUGHTS ABOUT UNDER 9

It is critical for our players to have the best experience and be in the best environment in Under 9. By the end of Under 9, players will begin to apply past experiences and relate to their successes and failures. They can remember what they were shown or taught from past

practices and games but cannot always apply it or may forget at times. Through activity games and allowed repetition, all of our under 9 players can now begin to learn how to do “tricks” with the ball. Most players at this age have developed enough coordination and muscle base to, at the very least, try how to do some of these “tricks.” The players are generally very interested when termed this way as learning a “trick.” The types of tricks are simply running with the ball, turning with the ball, trapping the ball, etc. Each player will be at a different level, technically and physically, and encouraged to improve themselves at whatever stage of development they are in. Similar to Under 5 - 7, there will be two sessions per week. Duration will be 60 minutes in length. Again, the number of players on each team will be small to allow for plenty of playing time during games. We ask that during league games, both team benches be on one side of the pitch and spectators on the opposite side of the playing area. In indoor soccer, we ask for parents to watch in the bleachers. Most players at this age still cannot recognize space on the field or how or when to pass the ball. Thus, we still try to develop each player to dribble the ball instead of encouraging players to pass (kick it away).

GAME STRUCTURE: MALE AND FEMALE IF NUMBERS SUPPORT IT  
INDOOR + OUTDOOR 5 V 5



GAME STRUCTURE: 5 V 5; A Goalie is used.

30 minutes of practice activity followed by 30 minutes of play.

FIELD SIZE: Outdoor: 20 yards wide x 30 yards long. Indoor: 18 yards wide x 24 yards long

BALL SIZE: 3 or 4

SPECTATORS: Spectators sit on the opposite side of the player's bench or upstairs during the indoor season.

RESTARTS: When the ball goes out of play, it is restarted by the opposition dribbling the ball into play.

SCORING GOALS: As in Under 7, encourage all players to score. Do not punish a player who has developed earlier than teammates and scores goals. We shouldn't "punish" any player doing too good of a job. Encourage other players to get to this point.

#### GAMES:

As a developmental model, 5 v 5 is the best option for our players to play the game. There is a goalkeeper used. This is to allow our youngest soccer players more success. When the ball goes out of play on the sides of the field, it is restarted by passing the ball back into the field. When the ball goes out of play at the ends of the field, it is a goal kick. Again, the opposition gets the ball and passes it back into play to their teammates. The opposition has to back up and give at least 4 meters of space. This allows for time for each player to dribble the ball without having the opposition immediately steal it and score in the goal. Players need to play on average 4-6 minutes before being substituted. These young players do get tired quickly but also recover quickly. Playing the 5 v 5 game will allow for more opportunities for players to dribble and touch the ball more. The goal is to keep each player involved and have an opportunity to be successful and enjoy the game.

#### PRACTICE STRUCTURE-GAME LIKE ACTIVITIES

All players should be enjoying themselves with the ball and with each other. "Drills" should seldom, if ever, be used. Instead, game-like activities with each player having a ball. Mixed with this, there should be coordination, activities, and games. Players should be given an opportunity for short water breaks between activities, followed by another activity. A player's time should always be occupied with something, even when resting. We have also begun to introduce techniques/tricks to players. Most players will be able to try to build up skill in dribbling and turning with the ball. These "tricks" will be the key for each player as they move through the Meridian Youth Soccer Association. Along with one ball/player, there will also be games of 1 vs. 1, having the players compete against each other, experiencing success and failure. Remember that being competitive is part of healthy development. The key for adults to remember is that competition is about the process, not the result.

## COACHING DEVELOPMENT:

We must provide education and assistance to all our U9 parent coaches at the beginning and periodically throughout the season. This will be done through on-field help, meetings and open communication. Coaching certification courses are an option for our local coaches as well.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER

- QUALITIES OF A COACH FOR THIS AGE GROUP: Patience, personality, animation, use of voice, ability to relate to players at their level, ability to show players how to do tricks.
- Be able to monitor and understand the capabilities and limitations of this age group.
- Players at this age must work with the ball at least twice weekly.
- Players at this age should be in other activities such as swimming, gymnastics, etc.
- These are the most impressionable years in every player's development. If we don't teach our players anything until under 12, we have wasted four years we cannot get back.
- Some competition will begin. Adults must remember that competition is a healthy part of an individual's development as long as players experience both success and failure. This must be monitored. However, we have to be careful that our young players have the opportunity to experience both and not only failure and success.
- The games are just another opportunity for players to keep, turn with and dribble the ball. They should be considered and treated as another practice (just in a game).
- Our coaches must work with the weaker players to develop their confidence with the ball. At the same time, continue to challenge the stronger players to expand their creativity and confidence.
- The goal by the end of the season should be for every player on each team to want the ball and want to keep it and, dribble, turn with it. If we can accomplish this, the season will be deemed a success.

## UNDER 11

### PLAYER PATHWAY

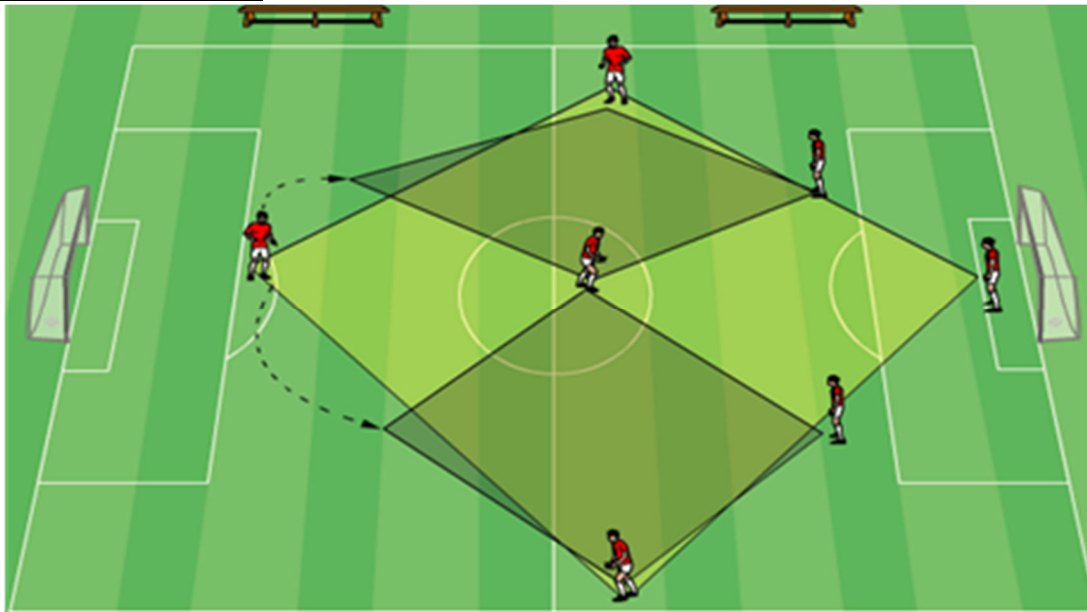
- Players will be placed on teams with parent coaches. There will be scheduled games. However, no standings are kept.
- There will be male and female leagues unless the number of players does not support it; then, we will run co-ed teams and have two 60-minute sessions per week.

- All players are expected to attend and to communicate with the coach if they cannot make it.
- There is a need for referees as part of referring development.

#### GENERAL THOUGHTS ABOUT UNDER 11

In this phase of soccer, league games should be used as a forum to test their ball skills and game awareness. League games are important as they give the players a competitive focus during the match; however, the process is more important than the result. Care should be taken with players regardless of athletic ability to address ball skill, especially in tight spaces. The faster and stronger players must be careful not to rely on their athletic superiority to solve problems. As other players catch up physically in future years and develop proper technique, these players will find the game more difficult and start to drop out. Coaches and parents have to consider now that individual ball control is still the basis of success and focus in Under 11; however, they also realize and begin encouraging players to recognize themselves and how their play affects 1 or 2 other players surrounding them (introduce individual to small group play).

#### OUTDOOR SOCCER:



**GAME STRUCTURE:** Outdoor 9 v 9, including a goalkeeper (GK).

Two twenty-five-minute halves. Male and Female league if numbers support it.

**FIELD SIZE:** Outdoor: 40 yards wide x 60 yards long.

**BALL SIZE:** 4



**SPECTATORS:** Spectators sit on the opposite side of the player's bench.

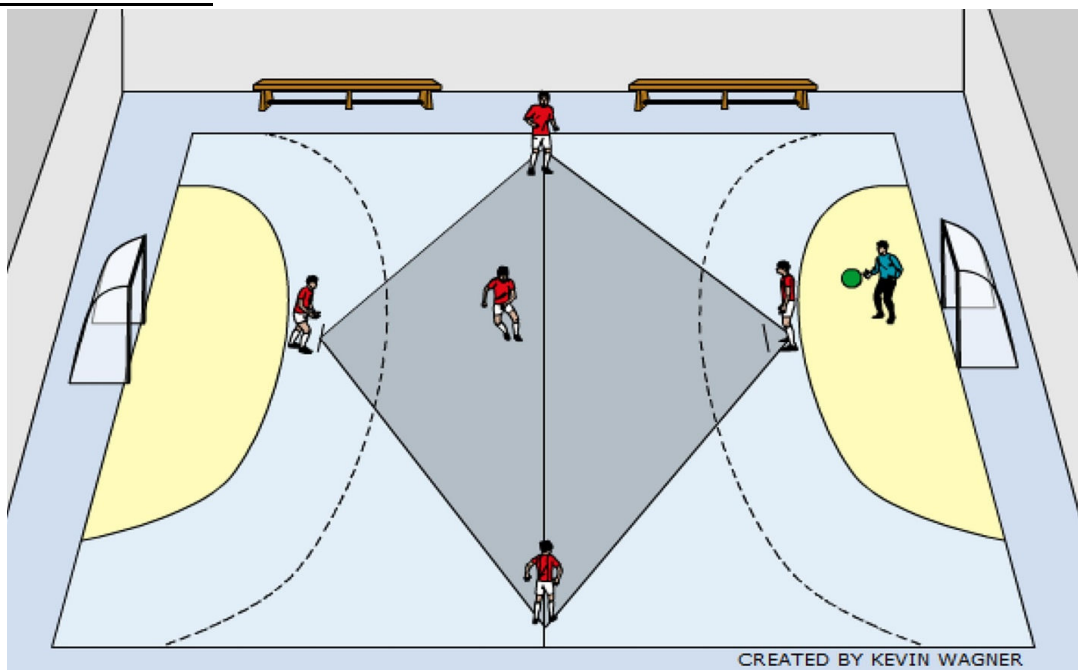
**RESTARTS:** When the ball goes out of play, it is restarted by a throw-in.

**SCORING GOALS:** Encourage all players to score. Do not punish a player who has developed earlier than teammates and scores goals. We shouldn't "punish" any player doing too good of a job. Encourage other players to get to this point.

#### **GAMES:**

The next step in development is 9 v 9 in the **OUTDOOR** season. The game of 9 v 9 allows players to develop in a progressive manner. With a foundation of diamond soccer creating natural width and depth, the play can now be facilitated through 2 diamonds and a GK. This game allows players to have five times more touches on the ball than the game of 11 vs. 11. The approach is developmentally prudent as we build the numbers up as the players get older. All games in the outdoor season are to be played 9 v 9, including the GK. There are offsides at the 2/3 area of the pitch. It is recommended that each player plays at least 6 minutes before being substituted. There will be two 25-minute halves facilitated by a referee.

## INDOOR SOCCER



**GAME STRUCTURE:** 6 v 6, including a goalkeeper (GK).

Two twenty-five-minute halves. Male and Female league if numbers support it.

**FIELD SIZE:** Indoor: Futsal pitch at Servus Sports Center

**BALL SIZE:** 4 Futsal ball

SPECTATORS: Spectators sit in bleachers.

RESTARTS: When the ball goes out of play, it is restarted by a kick-in.

SCORING GOALS: Encourage all players to score. Do not punish a player who has developed earlier than teammates and scores goals. We shouldn't "punish" any player who is doing too good of a job. Encourage other players to get to this point.

#### GAMES:

As a developmental model, 6 v 6 is the next step to build from 4 vs. 4 in Under 11 and on the bigger pitch for 9 v 9 outdoors. The best path to developing and preparing our youth players is by providing a game model that plays to the strengths of the athletes we currently have.

Playing 6 v 6 and 9 v 9 will allow for more touches on the ball. Because of the smaller field, the environment will encourage players to keep the ball rather than kick it away and chase it. Rules apply with corner kicks, kick-ins and goal kicks. Allow players to learn and become comfortable in a position before moving them around. 6 v 6, also allows for principles of play to become apparent by playing diamond soccer plus the GK. 1 player high, two players wide and one back for support, and one player in the middle of the diamond trains natural width and depth (developmentally a very key component). Allow a player to stay on the field and play at least 6 minutes before substituting.

#### COACHING DEVELOPMENT:

We must provide education and assistance to all our U11 coaches at the beginning and periodically throughout the season. This will be done through on-field help, meetings and open communication. Coaching certification courses are an option for our local coaches as well.

#### THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Give players a chance to play for about 6 minutes before substituting or changing "positions." This will allow players to start learning and have confidence in a specific field area before they are moved.
- It's easier to be confused and frustrated when a young player is continuously moving around.
- Players at this age should be on the field around 75% of the time during a game. We need to ensure the number of players on each team is sufficient to allow this to happen.
- Remember that there will be large gaps in a group of player's abilities.
- Qualities in the coach should be energetic and have the ability to show and explain technique. Belief in the Club development model is key to growth and success.
- Competition is a healthy component of the development of every individual. Remember that the process of competition is important, not the result.

## UNDER 13 & 15

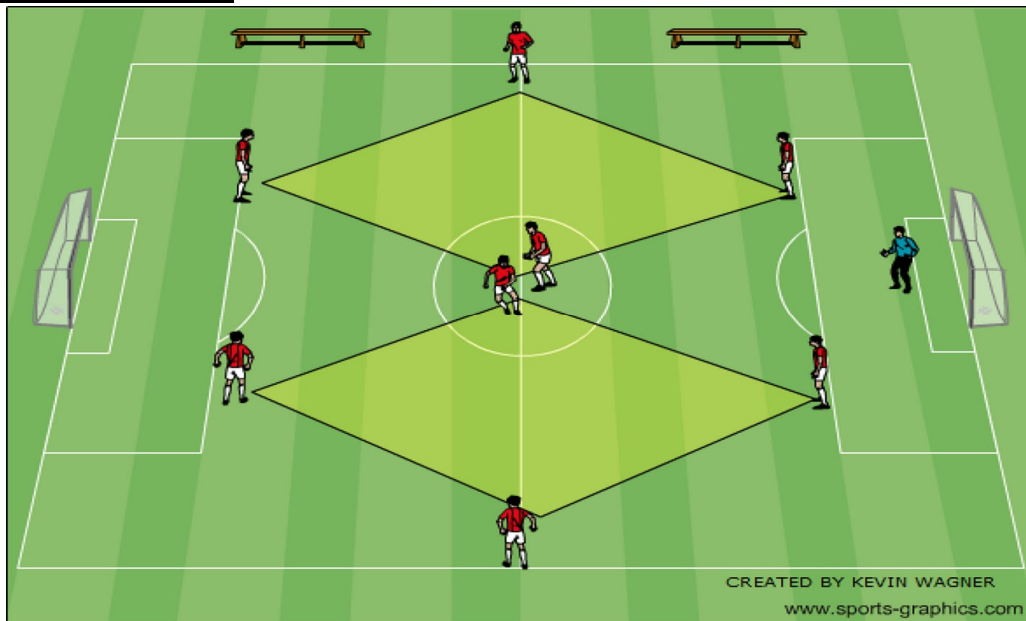
### PLAYER PATHWAY

- Players will be placed on teams with parent coaches. There will be scheduled games, and standings are not kept. There will be one practice day and one game day for the league. There will be male and female leagues unless the number of players does not support it.
- All players are expected to attend and communicate with the coach if they cannot attend.
- There is a need for referees during league games.

### GENERAL THOUGHTS ABOUT UNDER 13 - 15

As the players become more coordinated and physically stronger, confidence as a player will build. Most players at this age have matured enough to be able to think in a more complex manner. Combined with this, a more physically mature mind and body make a perfect opportunity to positively affect players. This becomes the transitional component into the adult game of 11 v 11. We will play 6 v 6 in the indoor season, which will foster more touches and enjoyment and be a game that fits the makeup of our local City League play. In the outdoor season, we will play a game of 9 v 9. This will allow stability and growth from the Under 11 way of play with the same numbers and game. Again, the type of game we play will match the physical and mental maturity makeup of our athletes. The goal at this point with our athletes should be two-fold. First, we need to keep players playing in our game. Secondly, we must assume that our players and parents support the league and still want to learn more about the game and be challenged in a way their technical, physical and game maturity allows.

## OUTDOOR SOCCER:



**GAME STRUCTURE:** 9 v 9, including goalkeeper (GK).

Two twenty-five-minute halves. Male and Female league if numbers support it.

**FIELD SIZE:** Outdoor: 40 yards wide x 60 yards long.

**BALL SIZE:** 4 OR 5

**SPECTATORS:** Spectators sit on the opposite side of the player's bench.

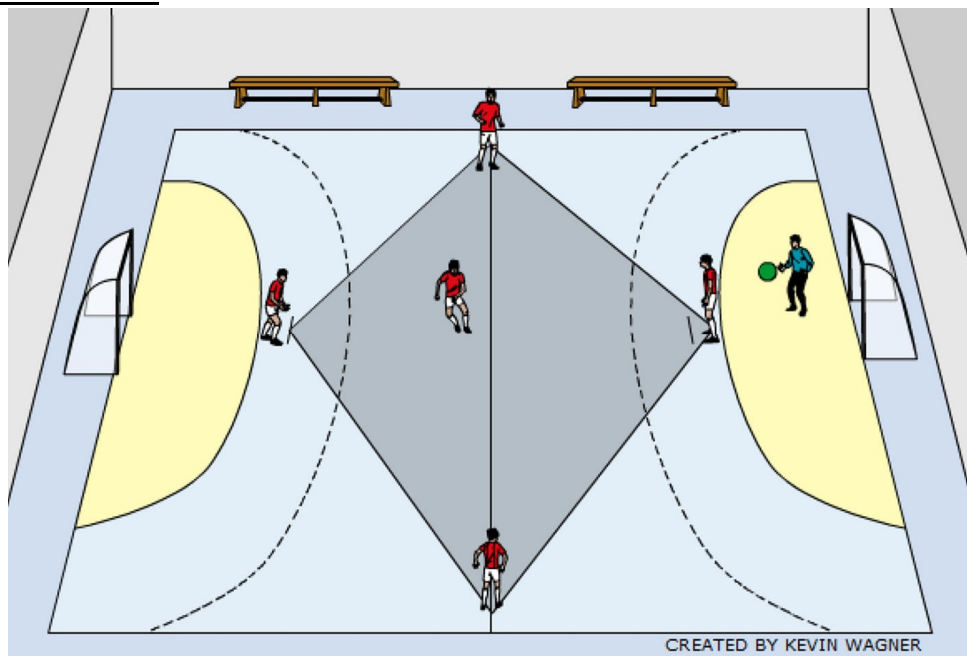
**RESTARTS:** When the ball goes out of play, it is restarted by a throw-in or goal kick.

**SCORING GOALS:** Encourage all players to score. Do not punish a player who has developed earlier than teammates and scores goals. We shouldn't "punish" any player who is doing too good of a job. Encourage other players to get to this point.

**GAMES:** The next step in development is 9 v 9 in the outdoor season and 6 v 6 in the indoor season. The game of 9 v9 allows players to build their development from what was learned in U11 7 v 7 soccer. With a foundation of diamond soccer creating natural width and depth, the 9 v 9 way of play can now be facilitated through 2 diamonds on top of each other. This will be done with two options. A 2-2-1-2-1 with two central defenders. A 1-2-1-1-2-1 with two diamonds sitting on top of each other. This game allows players to have five times more touches on the ball than the game of 11 v 11. The approach is developmentally prudent as we build the numbers up as the players get older. The U13 – 15 version of the soccer game is now how the players consider how their individual and group decisions and movements on the field affect teammates and opponents. With the outdoor season played 9 v 9, it does have extended offside lines 2/3 of the field on both ends. EACH PLAYER IS REQUIRED TO PLAY AT LEAST 6

MINUTES BEFORE BEING SUBSTITUTED. There will be two 25-minute halves facilitated by a referee.

## INDOOR SOCCER



**GAME STRUCTURE:** 6 v 6, including a goalkeeper (GK).

Two twenty-five-minute halves. Male and Female league if numbers support it.

**FIELD SIZE:** Indoor: Futsal pitch at Servus Sports Center

**BALL SIZE:** 4 Futsal ball

**SPECTATORS:** Spectators sit in bleachers.

**RESTARTS:** When the ball goes out of play, it is restarted by a kick-in.

**SCORING GOALS:** Encourage all players to score. Do not punish a player who has developed earlier than teammates and scores goals. We shouldn't "punish" any player doing too good of a job. Encourage other players to get to this point.

### **GAMES:**

The next step in development is 6 v 6. One more player now encourages diamond soccer with 1 in the middle and 1 in goal. The one player in the middle is the central midfielder. One player high, two players wide, one player deep and now 1 in the middle for central support. This game allows players to have 3-5 times more touches on the ball than the game of 11 v 11 or even 9 v 9. The approach is developmentally prudent as we build the numbers up as the players get older. The U13 version of the soccer game is still about the individual; however, now, the players should also start considering how their individual decisions and movements on the field

affect teammates and opponents. All indoor games, including the GK, are to be played as 6 vs 6. Indoor has no offsides, while the outdoor season does. EACH PLAYER IS REQUIRED TO PLAY AT LEAST 6 MINUTES BEFORE BEING SUBSTITUTED OR CHANGING POSITIONS ON THE FIELD.

#### COACHING DEVELOPMENT:

We must provide education and assistance to all our U13 – U15 parent coaches at the beginning and periodically throughout the season. This will be done through meetings and open communication. Coaching certification courses are an option for our parent coaches as well.

#### THINGS TO CONSIDER

- U13 & 15, the level of competition should be comparable and competitive with each other. We want players to experience both failure and success. Not one or the other.
- Give players time on the field to learn before substituting them (6-minute “rule of thumb”).
- The league, facilities, and structure must also be comparable and compatible with the players.
- By the end of playing U13, each player should have a very familiar grasp of the principles of the game to take to their U17 division of 7 v 7 and later on 11 v 11. Thus, making the game more enjoyable.

## UNDER 17

#### PLAYER PATHWAY

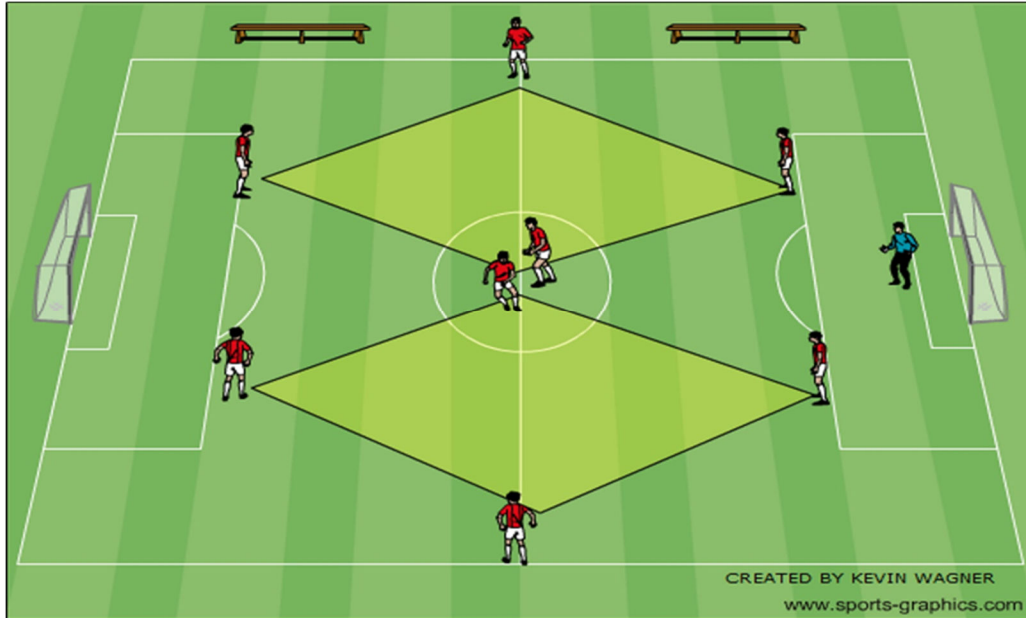
- Players will be placed on Co-Ed teams with parent coaches/supervisors. There will be scheduled games, and standings will not be kept.
- All players are expected to attend and communicate attendance with the Coach.
- There is a need for referees.

#### GENERAL THOUGHTS ABOUT UNDER 17

We will play 5 v 5 in the indoor season, which will foster more touches and enjoyment and be a game that fits the makeup of our local City League play. In the outdoor season, we will play 9 v 9. U17 is the final component of youth soccer. Given the past years of development, our players will have a new sense of enjoyment and understanding of how to play. The majority of players at this age have matured enough to be able to think in a complex manner. The goal at this point with our athletes should be two-fold. First, we need to keep players playing in our game. Secondly, we must assume that our players and parents support the league and still want to learn more about the game and be challenged in a way their technical, physical and game

maturity allows. As young adults, we must provide a positive environment for all our athletes and recognize a way to foster their development and purpose. This age group will encourage our players to play youth and enter the Adult Soccer Leagues of LDSA.

## OUTDOOR SOCCER:



**GAME STRUCTURE:** 9 v 9, including a goalkeeper (GK).

Two twenty-five-minute halves. CO-ED League play.

**FIELD SIZE:** Outdoor: 40 yards wide x 60 yards long.

**BALL SIZE:** 5

**SPECTATORS:** Spectators sit on the opposite side of the player's bench.

**RESTARTS:** When the ball goes out of play, it is restarted by a throw-in.

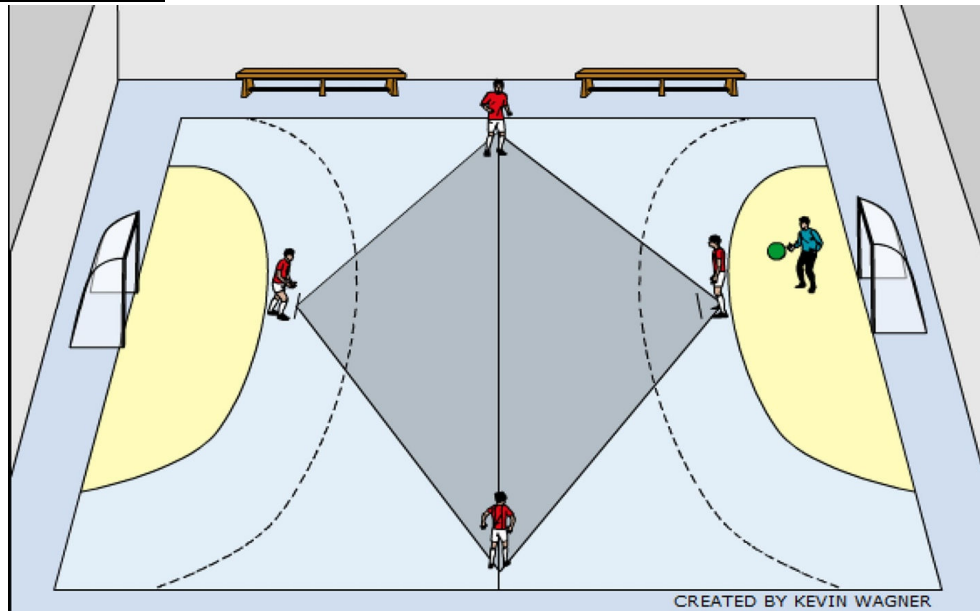
**SCORING GOALS:** Encourage all players to score. Do not punish a player or other teammates for scoring goals. We shouldn't "punish" any player who is doing too good of a job. Encourage other players to get to this point. That said, team play always needs to be developed as well.

**GAMES:** Playing essentially a half-full-sized pitch in the outdoor season with either 7 v 7 or 9 v 9 play and 5 v 5 in the indoor season. The 7 v 7 – 9 v 9 game allows players to develop based on what was learnt in U13 9 v 9 soccer. With a foundation of diamond soccer creating natural width and depth, the 7 v 7 or 9 v 9 way of play can now be facilitated through diamond soccer. This will be done with two options. 7 v 7 should be 2-3-1 OR 1-3-2. 9 v 9 can be facilitated easily with a 3-3-2 system of play. This game allows players to have five times more touches on the game of 11 vs 11. The approach is developmentally prudent as we build the numbers up as the players get older. The U17 version of the soccer game is now how the players consider how

their individual and group decisions and movements on the field affect teammates and opponents. With the outdoor season played 9 v 9, it does have extended offside lines 2/3 of the field on both ends. EACH PLAYER IS REQUIRED TO PLAY AT LEAST 6 MINUTES PRIOR TO BEING SUBSTITUTED.

There will be two 25-minute halves facilitated by a referee.

## INDOOR SOCCER



**GAME STRUCTURE:** 5 v 5, including a goalkeeper (GK).

Two twenty-five-minute halves. CO-ED League play.

**FIELD SIZE:** Indoor: Futsal pitch at Servus Sports Center

**BALL SIZE:** 4 Futsal ball

**SPECTATORS:** Spectators sit in bleachers.

**RESTARTS:** When the ball goes out of play, it is restarted by a kick-in.

**SCORING GOALS:** Encourage all players to score. Do not punish a player who has developed earlier than other teammates and scores goals. We shouldn't "punish" any player who is doing too good of a job. Encourage other players to get to this point. That said, we also need to be aware of team play.

**GAMES:**

All indoor games are to be played as 5 v 5, including the GK. Indoor has no offsides, while the outdoor season does.



These players enter the recreational stream and play for recreation development and enjoyment of the game. They will not practice and will play two games/week. We will play 5 v 5 in the indoor season, which will foster more touches and enjoyment and be a game that fits the makeup of our local recreational player. The majority of players at this age have matured enough to be able to think in a complex manner. We need to provide a positive environment for all our athletes and recognize a way to foster development and purpose for them. This age group will encourage our players to play not only youth but also to enter the Adult Soccer League after U17 with LDSA's Adult Leagues.

EACH PLAYER IS REQUIRED TO PLAY AT LEAST 6 MINUTES PRIOR TO BE SUBSTITUTED OR CHANGING POSITIONS ON THE FIELD

#### COACHING/SUPERVISORS:

In these age groups, we are looking for supervisors more so than Coaches. We are looking for people who can manage players and parents through the scheduled games. When to make subs, manage players and playtime in a safe and fair manner. During games, inspire players to dribble, keep possession of the ball, and play with one defender, two wide midfielders, and one forward (diamond soccer).

We must provide education and assistance to all our U17 coaches at the beginning and periodically throughout the season. This will be done through meetings and open communication. Coaching certification courses are an option for our parent coaches as well.

#### THINGS TO CONSIDER

- At U17, the level of competition should be comparable and competitive with each other, focusing on enjoyment within the game.
- Manage playing time fairly and equally.
- The process and enjoyment are more important than the result.
- The league, facilities, and structure also need to be comparable and compatible with the players.
- We need to keep promoting the game at this age. Not only will our adult leagues have healthy growth, but our generations of young adults and future parents will also promote and help in our structure when they have children.

## MERIDIAN SOCCER – YOUTH TRAVELLING TEAMS/GROUPS U9-U17

MISSION STATEMENT- FOR PARTICIPANTS WHO ARE JUST GETTING STARTED IN THE GAME OF SOCCER AND FOR THOSE MORE EXPERIENCED PLAYERS. EITHER GROUP WHO LOVES SOCCER, LOOKING FOR INDIVIDUAL SKILL AND GROUP DEVELOPMENT IN A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT AND WANTING TO TRAVEL FOR TOURNAMENT PLAY.

### PLAYER PATHWAY

- The Program Lead will oversee players and Coaches with our travelling teams.
- We strive to encourage as many players as possible.
- We encourage all players interested in training and travelling to try a tournament.
- Developed for recreational and competitive players.
- We go twice per week and travel to tournaments per season in U9-U17. We enter division 2 or 3 events.
- Players will be placed on teams with volunteer Club coaches. There will be scheduled practice and game day.
- There will be male and female teams as long as the number of registered players can support it.
- Co-ed teams are an option.
- All players are expected to attend the practices and game days.

### THOUGHTS ABOUT U9-U17 TRAVELLING TEAMS

The travelling team's program is developed and focused on skill development. All players are welcome in the program with the understanding that the players and parents support the philosophy of our Club and travelling teams. In the U9 - U17 age groups, we will promote as many players as possible to play in our program. There may be evaluations in these age groups to ensure the program fits the needs of any new players. This aims to ensure that all players entering the program will be comfortable in the environment. The focus of our travelling players is on all players who want to practice and travel to play. We work towards having many players in each of our youngest age groups. First, the focus is to get more players into a positive environment. We will grow the number of players wanting to develop their skill set to advance. Secondly, we need to foster, develop and provide opportunities for more players to apply themselves in the game to reach their full potential.

The travelling teams will be led under the direction of Meridian Soccer DOS. Each team/age group will have a respective Head Coach. The Head Coach and Assistant Coaches are responsible and held accountable. The expectation is that our volunteer Club Head Coaches will follow the guidelines set by the MSA: Club Manual.

All our coaches will share the same development model and, thus, philosophy. As we work to improve our players, coaches, and volunteer base under the philosophy of a club, we are a PLAYER-CENTERED PROGRAM. Secondly Team centred environment, then Club Centered.

## OUTDOOR AND INDOOR PLAY

There is no league play with our travelling teams. We train twice weekly and enter tournament play 2-3 times per season.

## COACHING DEVELOPMENT:

We must provide education and assistance to all our volunteer Club coaches at the beginning and throughout the season. This will be done through meetings, on-field support from the Club Head Coach and open communication. Coaching certification courses are an option for our Club coaches.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Is the level of competition comparable and competitive for my player?
- We want players to experience both failure and success. Not one or the other.
- By the end of each season, your son or daughter should have a very familiar grasp of the techniques involved, the principles of the game, and the expectations required to keep advancing. Thus, making the game more enjoyable.
- Our Travelling teams will be made up of both recreational and competitive players.



### WHAT IS EXPECTED OF OUR MERIDIAN CLUB COACHES?

Introduction: The club has committed to implementing the club philosophy, including age-appropriate training for our travelling team players. The selection of coaches with the personality and skills to conduct the training program at each training stage is critical.

The reality of the situation in our Region is that coaches are hard to come by, and in most instances, the use of “Parent Coaches” is common. This does not mean, however, that we should not attempt to develop and maintain standards within our coaching base. We also need to attempt to align coaches with the levels of training to which they are best suited. An example is which coaches are best suited for the young players and teams compared to the older players and teams.

It is critical that each coach fully understands the concepts of the MSA: Club Manual and developmental coaching, methods, philosophy and the values these values can provide for our coaches and players.

#### OUR COACHES: OUR LEADERS

Our volunteer Club Coach will work in several areas requiring broad knowledge. The demands can vary considerably depending on the age group or player being coached. Generally, the coach will work in the following five areas:

- Preparing practice plans for each practice.
- Coaching and preparation of players and the team during practices.
- Organization and communication with players, managers, and parents.
- Viewing of players and of opponents' games (tournaments).

- Coaching during games.

#### DESIRE TO LEARN AND SHARE KNOWLEDGE IN THE GAME

Understanding the game allows the coach to understand what they need to teach at certain developmental levels and why. Our coaches consider technical, physical, and tactical components when developing practice plans.

This can be achieved easily with practice plans developed with the philosophy of structuring our practice plans in the following way:

1. Warm-up using technique,
2. Related game,
3. Skill or tactical small-sided games play, and
4. Gameplay.

#### PERSONALITY REQUIRED

Our coaches need to be keen, energetic and excited about the game. They need to have a positive approach and outlook and be able to provide players with positive feedback that serves to motivate them.

As Leaders in the game, our Meridian Soccer Volunteer Club coaches need to be patient, desire to improve players, and take joy from watching improvement, even if it does not immediately translate into winning games.

All our coaches must maintain an open mind and be flexible enough to adapt to various conditions. An example is with practice plans when not all players show up, thus changing the numbers anticipated during training.

#### THE COACHING STYLE OF OUR TRAVELLING TEAM CLUB COACHES

Along with the Meridian Club Manual, our coaches will be able to set realistic targets and objectives for themselves, the team and the players. While each coach will always have their own personality, it is important for each coach to familiarize themselves with and find when and how to use different styles in coaching.

Parents, please keep in mind the expectations of our coaches as leaders. They also have to be able to praise or give constructive criticism as deemed necessary without creating different cliques or favourites within the group. Training habits are developed from a young age; unfortunately, it is common to find players with poor training habits.

Coaches need to remember that the players are a product of their environment. These range from lack of punctuality, poor personal discipline, bad manners, disrespect and a lack of attention and concentration during training. The coach is responsible for establishing standards that eliminate these conditions from day one of the program.

## THE QUALITIES OF OUR COACH

**ORGANIZER:** A good coach is usually an intelligent, coherent person who has common sense and is able to pick up on a variety of cues. Organizational skills are important. Our travelling team coaches need to understand the psyche of players at different ages and body language cues in order to deal with the different issues, moods, and demeanours of players as they move through each stage of development.

**COMMUNICATOR:** Our coaches are communicators and are able to establish a good working atmosphere within the team. Coaches need to be able to work within their team, within the Club, and with the Head Coach to establish a cooperative spirit in the Club.

**TEACHER:** All our Coaches are always learning, just as our players are. Our Coaches will not only teach our players but also keep learning themselves. This will be through their own self-discovery and research, working with the Club Head Coach, and certification that Meridian Soccer pays for.

**DISCIPLINED:** We strive to set the environment within the Club to establish goals and discipline within our players. Each of our club coaches is a volunteer. They balance their day-to-day life and family responsibilities as well as working for your child and Club.

## STANDARDS

Starting at the youngest age group, it is important that coaches set and impose high training standards on players. If this does not happen, it is reflected in short and long-term goals:

Examples of these Standards:

- Low intensity or lack of effort.
- Bad habits are formed and thus now expected.
- The lack of challenge leads players to quit or to get frustrated.
- Coaches become frustrated, and we lose valuable assets to our Club.

## COACH APPEARANCE – LOOK THE ROLE

Look like a coach and use your personality to set the environment where players are engaged through the practice. We expect players to have their training gear on, and we expect our club leaders to also look at the role of a coach. This will also increase respect and set our coach up for success.

IN CLOSING, A COACH'S JOB IS:

- To be a self-motivated Leader.
- Energetic, organized, and disciplined.
- A good communicator and teacher within the game of soccer.
- Design realistic practice plans.
- Set problems for players to consider and allow for solutions.
- Ensure training is related to the player's needs and to games.
- Help players learn through different stages of developmental needs.
- People are sharing pride and passion with our athletes.

## DIFFERENT STYLES OF A COACH

### COACHING (TEACHING) STYLES, METHODOLOGY

There are several different teaching styles that have proven to be effective for coaches in soccer and futsal. This document will focus on three:

1. Command-Autocratic Style,
2. Question and Answer Style (seeing/hearing), and
3. Guided discovery- Kinesthetic Style.

#### Command-Autocratic Style:

This style involves the coach making all the decisions regarding practice and game situations and the players responding to the orders given. The player's role is to listen, absorb and try to execute what the coach says.

There is not much room for discussion or alternatives. This style can be and has been effective for many coaches, especially in situations where the player's level of experience or time is limited (e.g., Mark #8 man-to-man) or when a coach needs to bring discipline and order to a team in a short period of time.

The drawback to this style is that it can limit players' potential by denying them a chance to experiment or try different solutions to soccer problems, which may prove to be just as effective, if not more so, than those of the coach.

Example: "Stop! Foot on the ball! I want you to always....."

#### Question and Answer Style

The coach stimulates a response from the players by asking a question about a technique/skill or a soccer situation they are working on. The players will then offer a verbal reply or explanation. This helps to involve the players in the learning process by allowing them to gain

confidence in making decisions for themselves. This process is more democratic and encourages an environment of cooperation, where the coach begins to guide the learning process through the types of questions asked.

A drawback to this style of coaching is that it may take longer initially to get the desired responses from the players, but as they gain experience and confidence in their decisions, they will make progress more rapidly. From the perspective of long-term development, this would be considered an advantage.

Example: “Stop! Foot on the ball! In this situation, how many passing options do you have, and which one do you think would be the best?”

### Guided Discovery- Kinesthetic Style

The coach asks the players for an alternative to the soccer problem through gameplay. The players are encouraged to offer a solution to a particular action or soccer situation. Often, it is useful to pose the players with a soccer problem and give them a certain amount of time or number of repetitions in which to come up with a solution. If they are able to solve the problem, the coach may progress by making the situation more difficult or by posing another problem.

Advantages to this coaching style include enabling the players to take ownership of the learning process, greater confidence in their ability to be able to come up with solutions to soccer situations, a willingness to analyze a situation, an increase in experience of various soccer situations, more effective long-term development. The coach is seen as a guide, and the players gladly seek that guidance if they cannot come up with a solution to the problem on their own.

As with Question & Answer, the disadvantage is that initially, the desired response will take a little longer.

Example: “In this game, you get points or score by....” Players are allowed to try different options under a certain time period. The players are later brought in for review to see if the problem on the field was solved.

## HOW PLAYERS LEARN

### THEORY OF LEARNING

Coaching players involves establishing an environment where teaching and learning can occur. Whatever the environment our coaches are looking to set, it is important to have a basic understanding of how players learn so that we can develop teaching styles which will most effectively help players improve. Not everyone learns in the same way. Some learn by doing, some by seeing what or how something is done, and others by hearing how it's done.



In order to improve their effectiveness, coaches should take this into consideration when developing their coaching personality.

## LEARNING STYLES

There are many. However, we will focus on three general ways in which players learn best. At times, it may be one or a combination of these, so we need to make sure we do our best at the following:

1. Visual-see,
2. Audio-hear, and
3. Kinesthetic-doing/trying.

Coaches can get into good habits of showing (demonstrating) while we are talking and coaching the young player. Then, allow each player to try the activity.

### THE BRAIN LEARNS BEST WHEN

- Players are motivated.
- When it's building off what it already knows.
- It recognizes the significance of what it is doing.
- It is learning collaboratively in a social/team setting.

### THE BRAIN LEARNS LEAST WHEN

- It's not motivated.
- There is no purpose to the learning.
- When it stays in its comfort zone.
- When it doesn't get to apply its acquired new skills.

### COACHES MUST

- Design realistic practice plans.
- Ensure it is related to our player's needs and related to games.
- Help players learn through periods of learning.
- Use all three styles of Coaching to full effectiveness.

### LEARNING STAGES

- Unconscious incompetence- the first time a player tries something.
- Conscious incomplete- thinking and trying specifically on the activity but still struggling to execute.
- Conscious competence- can execute when focused on how- still struggle with when, where, and why.

- Unconscious complete- on command, at pace and under control.

Three key things will happen once our coaches better understand and implement all three coaching methods. First, players will understand sooner and improve quickly in training sessions. Second, players and coaches will have greater success and, thus, less frustration. Third, this will maintain and improve our player and travelling team coaching base.

## CONSIDERATIONS IN THE PLANNING OF AND RUNNING YOUR PRACTICE

### PLANNING A SESSION

The planning and personality of the Coach is important in the delivery of the practice. Always review and visualize your session plan based on the needs of your players. Do not be afraid to repeat the same exercises. Players learn technique through familiarity and repetition.

Introducing new exercises when players are ready for the challenge is more important than changing simply for the sake of changing. The Coach should plan the practice session ahead of time, write it down and bring it with them to the practice to enable the best and most focused sessions possible.

### RUNNING A PRACTICE

Quickly get the players active. Have everyone moving in some type of dynamic warm-up activity, combining the physical and technical components. Participate in demonstrating and getting involved in setting the tone of the session from the beginning. As you move to the second activity of the session, explain quickly and demonstrate as much as possible. Getting players active again quickly will be key to success. This will help the coach establish the desired environment and standards to successfully complete phases three and four of the practice. Your practice should always end with some sort of a small-sided game.

### LENGTH OF PRACTICE

Most practices will be 60-90 minutes in length. Regardless of the length of the practice, it should follow a similar structure.

# STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT- TECHNIQUES

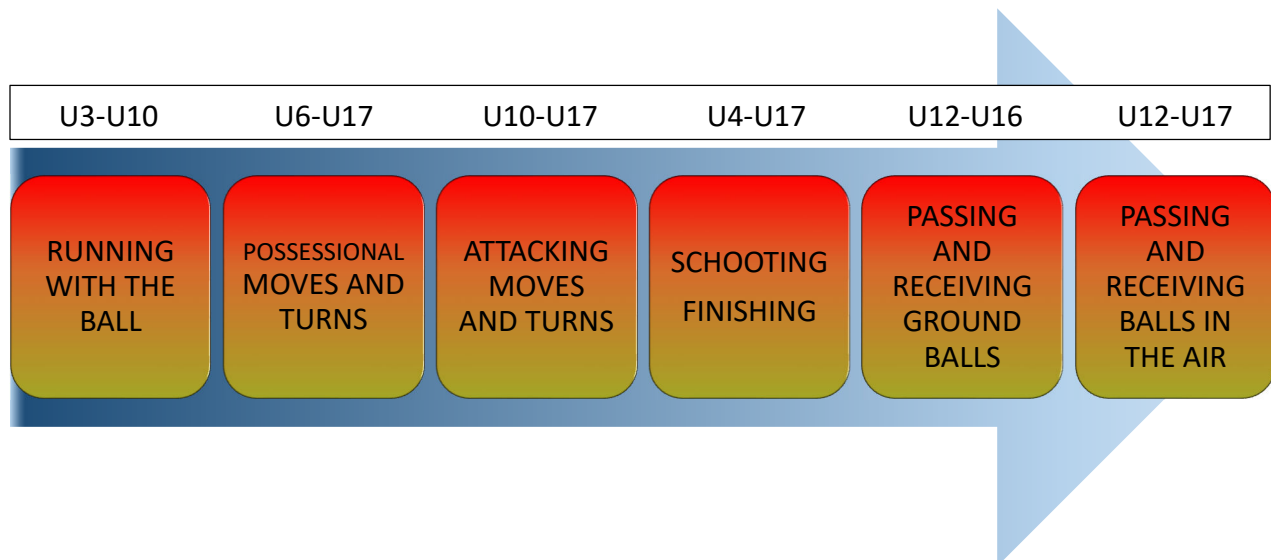


## TECHNIQUES USED IN SOCCER:

### Age-Appropriate Progressions

The technique refers to “how” a move is done or completed. We would like to give a brief review of the skills MSA believes are instrumental to our players’ development. These are not all the skills involved in soccer, but they are the ones we believe each of our players should be taught from U3-U16.

MSA believes that players should learn techniques in these logical steps:



## TECHNIQUES WHEN DRIBBLING

Techniques most commonly used in dribbling the ball include Running with the Ball, Cruyff turns, Step Overs, Roll Overs, and Faking a Shot in efforts of keeping possession and attacking Play.

### RUNNING WITH THE BALL

The first important skill that needs to be emphasized from Kindersoccer onward is to keep the ball and keep it close. Running with the ball is the first and most important step in soccer.

- Keep the ball close and in control.
- Forward on feet, not heels.
- Toe down.
- Short, choppy touches.
- Using inside and outside touches.
- A short or long step followed by a short or long touch.
- Always fast footwork.

### POSSESSIONAL MOVES – TURNING WITH THE BALL

Keeping individual possession is critical in the development and performance of soccer. Using turns with the inside, outside, and sole (bottom) of the foot will be critical in using Rollbacks, Cruyff Turns, and Pullbacks. While improving running with the ball, we need to introduce possession moves into our players' skill sets. We recommend at U6 and reinforce throughout Meridian Soccer development.

#### INSIDE FOOT TURN

- Step and pivot on toes with the planted foot, shield the ball with the body.
- Using the inside of the other foot with the toes up, wrap the big toe around the ball.
- Last touch is away and long.
- Outside of foot turn.
- Step past the ball. Body between the ball and a defender, and plant foot.
- Arms up for balance and protection.
- With the other foot with the toe up, wrap the pinky toe around the ball and chop away from the body.
- Long touch and accelerate.

#### SOLE OF FOOT (BOTTOM) – ROLLBACK

- Plant foot beside the ball.
- Quickly place the bottom of the other foot on top of the ball.
- In one motion, roll the ball back while you open your hips to face the opposite direction.

- Take a long touch and accelerate.
- While you turn, keep the ball in front of you.

### SOLE OF FOOT (BOTTOM) – PULLBACK

- The ball is in front of the player and still.
- Plant one foot and have the other foot on top of the ball.
- Taking a quick step back, roll the ball back towards yourself quickly.
- Take another touch and change direction by cutting inside or outside of the foot with a long touch.
- Accelerate away.

### CRUYFF TURN

- Plant foot to the side but ahead of the ball.
- Bring the other leg past the ball and wrap the toe around the ball.
- Pass the ball with one short touch with a passing foot behind the planted foot.
- Follow with planted foot coming up, accelerating and taking a long touch away.

## ATTACKING MOVES, TURNS, FEINTS

By the end of U6 and U8, players should have a good understanding of how to apply the skills of running with the ball, as well as possessional moves and turns. Beginning in U10 we add additional techniques that advance the previous skills used, along with understanding when to use them in a game situation.

### DROPPING A SHOULDER

- While dribbling with the ball, exaggerate with your head and drop your shoulder.
- Acting like going in that direction.
- Quickly cut the ball with the outside of the foot and flick the ball the other way.
- Change speed and accelerate.

### STEP OVER/SCISSOR

- Forward on feet.
- Plant one foot alongside the ball.
- Step over the ball with the other foot, keeping the ball in front of the body.
- Stepping leg moves around the ball from inside to outside position.
- Step down and cut the ball away with the outside of the opposite foot.

### ROLL OVER

- Turn hips to move laterally.
- Using the sole of the foot, move the ball across your body sideways.

- Move the ball with your leg from outside to inside across the body.
- A little hop with a planted foot between rollovers will allow for quicker technique.

### FAKING A SHOT

- After dribbling.
- Player attempts to shoot (must sell the shot).
- A big forward step.
- When almost about to make contact, cut the ball with the inside or outside of the kicking foot (with one motion).
- Accelerate with a long touch.

### PASSING THE BALL ON THE GROUND

In almost all instances, you will want to make quick contact with the ball in passing. It's almost a "punching/striking" reference with short, sharp surface contact with passing the ball.

### INSIDE OF FOOT

- Push pass.
- Using the biggest flattest part of the foot to pass.
- Plant foot alongside the ball, knee slightly bent.
- Kicking foot with knee bent, toe up, locked ankle.
- Follow through the middle of the ball with a short, hard strike to the ball.

### OUTSIDE OF FOOT

- More deceptive ways to pass.
- Planted foot slightly away from the ball.
- With the toe down and away from the ball, strike the ball on the side, making contact on the outside of the foot.
- Lock the ankle and strike the ball sharply; follow through away from the ball.

### USING INSTEP

- Planted foot is alongside the ball with a slightly bent knee.
- Opposite arm out for balance.
- Kicking foot with toe down, making contact with laces through the middle of the ball.
- Lock ankle.
- Follow through hard and low.

### FLICK

- Performed with the body side on or back away from the defender.
- A one-touch deceptive pass.

- As a ball moves quickly towards you, meet the ball with the inside or outside of the foot.
- Toes are flat and under the ball.
- On contact, the toe quickly comes up to flick upward and past the defender.

## TOE

- Very deceptive way to pass.
- No need to have a long wind-up.
- Use either in stride when dribbling or after the sole has been used to deaden the ball.
- Lock ankle, hard, short, sharp strike-through ball with a toe.

## USING INSTEP

- Planted foot is alongside the ball with a slightly bent knee.
- Opposite arm out for balance.
- Kicking foot with toe down, making contact with laces through the middle of the futsal ball.
- Lock ankle.
- Follow through hard and low.

## RECEIVING THE BALL FROM THE GROUND PASS

The quickest and best option to receive the ball is to stop or deaden it using the sole, inside and outside of the foot. Keep in mind that as we develop players, we want players to be able to receive the ball in stride while moving. Not stopping the ball completely.

## INSIDE OF FOOT

- Plant foot, knee bent.
- On contact, toe up, heel down.
- Receive the ball on the inside of the foot, which is the largest surface to do so.
- If coming in with a high pace, the player can adjust by taking a hop with the planted foot on impact to deaden the ball.

## OUTSIDE OF FOOT

- Plant foot further away from ball to pivot.
- Both knees are usually bent.
- Receiving foot toe up, heel down or parallel to the ground.

## SOLE OF FOOT

- Put your body behind and square to the ball on the first touch.
- Stop the ball completely with the bottom of the foot.

- Be prepared to roll it quickly on the second touch.
- This helps with control of technique but also tempo in play.

## SHOOTING THE BALL-FINISHING

The ability to finish quickly from short and long distances will be required to offset the Goalkeeper and prevent him or her from setting. Finishing with the inside of the foot and toe is most often used in these situations. The ability to drive the ball with the laces is required from a longer range.

## DRIVEN SHOT

- Planted foot is alongside the ball with a slightly bent knee.
- Opposite arm out for balance.
- Kicking foot with toe down, making contact with laces through the middle of the futsal ball.
- Lock ankle.
- Follow through hard and low.

## FINISHING WITH THE INSIDE OF THE FOOT

- Like a Push pass.
- Using the biggest flattest part of the foot to pass.
- Plant foot alongside the ball, knee slightly bent.
- Kicking foot with knee bent, toe up, locked ankle.
- Follow through the middle or corner of the ball with a short, hard strike to the ball.

## FINISHING WITH THE TOE, TOE PUNCH

- Very effective way to score.
- No need to have a long wind-up.
- Use either in stride when dribbling or on a scramble when the ball is sitting or rolling.
- Lock ankle, hard, short, sharp strike-through ball.
- Allows a finish that the Goalkeeper may struggle with setting or reacting to.

## PASSING THE BALL IN THE AIR

In most instances, you will want to make contact with the bottom half of the ball in passing in the air. It is not always, but usually, a longer stride to the ball with a step (planted foot) slightly behind it.

## USING INSTEP/DRIVEN BALL-LONG CROSS

- Planted foot is slightly back of the ball with a slightly bent knee.



- If crossing, make sure to get hips open and planted foot pointed in the direction of the target.
- Opposite arm out for balance.
- Kicking foot with toe down, making contact with laces through the lower part of the ball.
- Lock ankle.
- Follow through hard and medium to high height.

### SCOOP

- Performed in clever moments.
- A one-touch deceptive pass.
- As a ball is settled, you scoop it smoothly under it with your foot and carry it forward, flicking it up. Usually by a defender, by a defender, etc.
- While scooping, the toes quickly come up to flick upward and past the defender.
- Have a flexible ankle.

### CHIP

- Usually used for shorter distances to flight a ball.
- Planted foot is back from the ball. With a slightly bent knee.
- Opposite arm out for balance.
- Kicking foot with toe up, making contact with laces through the bottom of the ball.
- Lock ankle.
- Follow through hard and high. You should see a backward spin on the ball.

## RECEIVING THE BALL FROM THE AIR

In youth play, you will encourage play to be on the ground as it will be quicker, more efficient and better developmentally. As players get older, they will have more opportunities and purposes to play with the ball in the air. These skills include the use of chesting, heading, trapping, and use of thigh. The percentage of balls in the air compared to the ground should increase U14-16.

### CHESTING

- Arms can be out for balance.
- Receive the ball on the chest as high as possible on contact.
- To deaden the ball, the player may want to take a hop on impact.

### ATTACKING HEADING

- The attacking header technique will most often be desired when either trying to score goals or re-direct the ball forward.

- Contact on the player's head at the lower and flatter area of the forehead.
- Contact with the middle to upper part of the ball to get the ball changing direction.
- Make sure to strengthen neck muscles on contact and go through the ball.

### THIGH

- Adjust body and hips behind the ball.
- On contact, a hop to allow the ball to hit your upper thigh and make good contact.
- Then to have the thigh come away from the ball.
- May need to use arms for balance.

### TOP OF FOOT TRAP

- Adjust body and hips behind the ball.
- Plant foot, bring other foot up to meet the ball, knee bent.
- On contact with the ball, the top of the foot (laces) and toe should be up.
- On contact cushion ball, bring the foot and ball down to the court.

### DEFENSIVE HEADING

- The defensive header technique will most often be desired when either trying to head goals away from your goal or re-direct the ball away from the opposition.
- Contact on the player's head at the higher and more rounded area of the forehead.
- Contact with the middle to lower part of the ball to get the ball down to ground level.
- Make sure to strengthen neck muscles on contact and go through the ball.
- Using your arms for balance and to hold off opponents will be valuable.



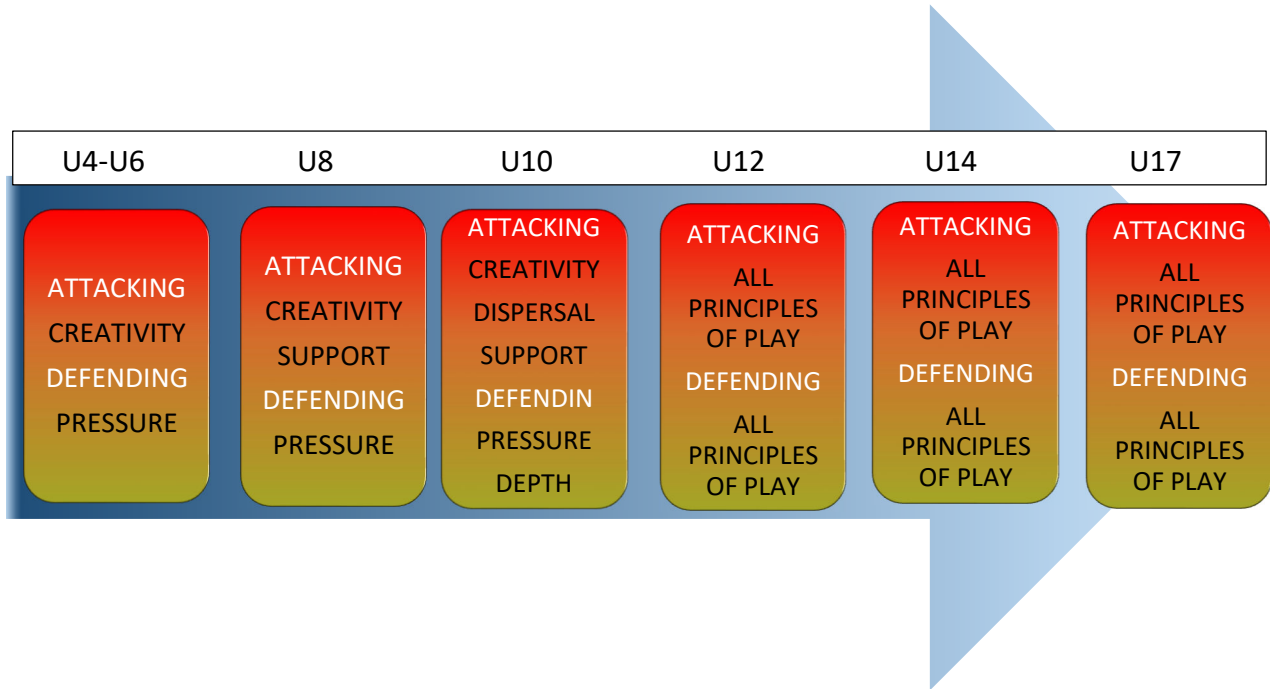
### INTRODUCTION OF PRINCIPLES OF PLAY

The ideas and concepts fundamental to effective and successful team play.

**Introduction:** In the game of soccer, there are general “principles of play” that never change. These principles of play lay the groundwork for any and all individual, small group, large group, and team tactics. Once players have developed the skill base, their ability to apply these principles of play will be greatly increased. There are four key attacking principles of play that will be countered by four defensive principles of play. **The trick is to put players in small practice games where they are learning these pieces without even realizing it!**

| ATTACKING PRINCIPLE OF PLAY | DEFENSIVE PRINCIPLE OF PLAY |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| PENETRATION                 | DELAY-PRESSURE              |
| SUPPORT/MOVEMENT MOBILITY   | DEPTH/BALANCE               |
| DISPERSAL                   | CONCENTRATION/COMPRESSION   |
| INDIVIDUALISM/CREATIVITY    | DISCIPLINE                  |

MSA believes that coaches should teach the game using the principles of play in these logical steps:



## ATTACKING PRINCIPLES OF PLAY

**PENETRATION:** How to use possession and attacking movements in order to enter scoring areas.

- The easiest way to think of the game tactically is in possession of the ball. Can we play forward? If we can, then play as long as direct as possible. In doing so, try to play between defenders and behind defenders (making them turn and retreat back to their own goal). This is when we would refer to penetration.
- This can be done with a shot on goal, a pass, or a dribble.
- Get behind defenders.

**SUPPORT/MOVEMENT:** Referring to the players in attack who do not have the ball.

- The distance of the supporting players and angles to avoid pressure and being ready for the ball.
- The timing of runs made by the player.
- Also, it can be the interchanging of positions between players on and off the ball.

**DISPERSAL:** The ability to spread defenses out using the wide and high areas of the field. (WIDTH AND DEPTH)

- Depth with player(s) ahead of the ball and behind the ball.
- Using the field in high areas or wide players in behind wide marking defenders in combination play.

**INDIVIDUALISM/CREATIVITY:** The special things players do that innately come from within and can't always be taught. The closest and best thing we can do is to encourage our players to get on the ball and play with confidence. This will help foster creative, deceptive, individualistic players.

- The first attacker's ability to use technique at pace to be unpredictable on possession, attacking, and shooting.
- To disguise and use deception to hide attacking intention.

## DEFENDING PRINCIPLES OF PLAY

There are defending principles of the game of soccer that will enable you to employ team tactics, systems, etc. We look at the 5 Principles of Defence that counter the five previous Attacking Principles of Play.

**DELAY/PRESSURE:** The decision of when, why, and how to close an attacker down, or to wait and take away space behind the defender and thus keep the attacker in front of you. Individual defending and pressure on the ball with the first defender are key to every team's development and success.

- The first defender's ability to make decisions on when to pressure and get the ball or delay and take space away behind or in front of the defender. Defending with composure, awareness, and ability to make good contact and tackles.
- Also, the line of confrontation in team tactics.

**DEPTH AND BALANCE:** Referring to second, third and team defending. Involving two or more players in defending and taking time or space (or both) away from attacking players.

- Proper distance and angle of second and third defenders in group and team play.
- Decisions to mark players or space as secondary defenders.
- Used with zonal defending. The defending team needs to adjust to the strong side of the ball and take space away; while the players further away from the ball stay tucked in, they also look to intercept or take passing lanes away.

**CONCENTRATION AND COMPRESSION:** The space around the ball between the opposition ball carrier and your goal.

- Players make decisions based on not only having pressure, cover and balance but also when to pass players off, mark tighter or looser and take shooting and passing lanes away.
- Always central with team movements of lines of play. For example, the center midfielders, the outside midfielders, and the back line of defence.

**CONTROL/RESTRAINT:** When and how to tackle so the players don't "dive in" and get beat in 1v1 play. Individual as well as group and team tactics.

- Coaches and players can also develop and deploy different Individual and group options. For example, individual defenders can learn creative ways to win balls back (faking to dive in, for example).
- Coaches using tactics of mixed zonal and man marking. These elements are not always traditional thinking; however, the players can explore and think with many learning moments.

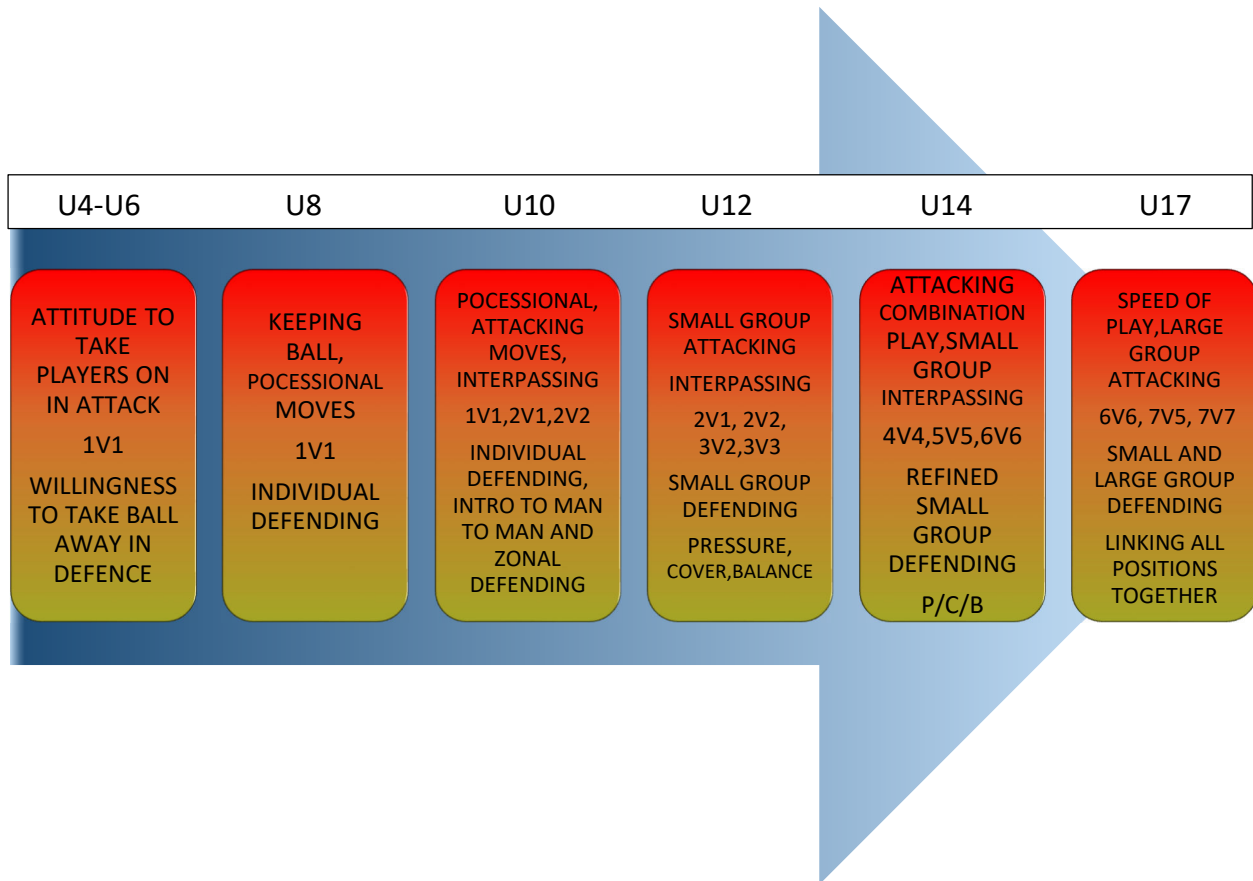
# TACTICAL DEVELOPMENT



## INTRODUCTION AGE-APPROPRIATE PROGRESSIONS

Tactics refer to the “how,” “when,” “why,” and “where” to apply techniques and Principles of play. These decisions are based on the area of the pitch and what the opposition is doing at each moment. Below is a review of the tactical components we believe are instrumental to our players’ development. These are not all the tactics involved in soccer, but these are the ones we believe each of our players should be taught from U6 to U16 with Meridian Soccer.

MSA believes that players should learn tactics in these logical steps:



## INDIVIDUAL TACTICS

### ATTACKING: POSSESSIONAL AND ATTACKING 1V1 PLAY

The key is for each player to want to keep the ball, the responsibility of it. Then, develop individual possessional and attacking moves. The player with the ball is the first attacker.

- How to keep the ball.
- How to get defenders to move and dive in.
- How to get behind defenders and when not to try.

### DEFENDING: FIRST DEFENDER/PRESSURE

The decision to go to the opposition to win the ball (pressure) or drop and deny space behind you to keep the opponent in front of you (delay).

- Communication, body positioning, distance, speed, and angle of approach of the first defender.



- When and how to tackle.
- Making play predictable for teammates.

## TRANSITION

In attack, the moment your team wins the ball, we immediately need to move to support the ball and position ourselves to move up the field. In defence, our players need to immediately retreat, organize and get back to the ball and behind the ball.

- Mentally being aware of these key moments.
- When, where, and how to support in attack or recover in defence.
- Distance speed, angles of movement.

## SMALL GROUP TACTICS

### ATTACKING: INTERPASSING

Players without the ball are the second, third and even fourth closest players around the first attacker, ready and positioning themselves to receive a pass to help their teammate.

Interpassing is simply passing and receiving the ball.

- Technique to allow for passing and receiving.
- How to apply technique at pace and on command away from the defender.
- If possible, position yourself to get behind defenders.

### ATTACKING: COMBINATION PLAY

Combination play uses technique and movement to use skill in outnumbering defenders in small groups.

- Reading the cues of the game.
- How can two attackers position themselves to get around one defender?
- Overlaps, give and go's, takeovers, third man runs, dummy runs.
- Communication, first touch, and early decision-making are required.

### ATTACKING: GROUP PLAY 4V4, 5V5

We are using small-sided games to link forwards or midfielders or our defenders and midfielders.

- Taking into consideration the third of the field to take risks or to be safe.
- As first, second and third attackers, when to pass, dribble, shoot, play forward or play backward.
- Because it is game-related, now, defenders/opposition will make us consider principles of play tactics.

- With this, linking inter-passing, combination play, and possession together.

### DEFENDING: PRESSURE, COVER, BALANCE

First, second and third defenders. First, defenders decide to Pressure or delay.

- Based on pressure, second and third defenders judge distance and angle of support behind the ball.
- Reading cues in the game.
- When to intercept passes.
- When to take space compared to when to take the man.

### DEFENDING: LINE OF CONFRONTATION

A team cannot defend everywhere on the field. A group effort and decision need to be made on how far up the pitch you will begin defending at (striker). This “line of confrontation” is where we systematically attempt to win back the ball. This line will allow us to stay compact.

- Reading the cues.
- Communication.
- First and second defenders are the first line of defence at the line of confrontation.
- The players behind the first and second defenders move with the first and second defenders to intercept passes or spoil the ball from the opposition.

## LARGE GROUP TACTICS

### ATTACKING: SPEED OF PLAY

Defined as the speed of technique plus the speed of decisions equals the speed of play. A priority by U14. It would involve two or more players.

- Techniques at pace on command.
- Reading the cues, being aware and learning the game
- The first thing seen or thought is what you should do. It is then easier to correct the decisions involved.

### ATTACKING: LINKING FORWARDS, MIDFIELD AND BACK PLAYERS TOGETHER

Using large-sided games like 6 v 6 or 7 v 7 allows three lines of play. Thus, we can train the principles and tactics among strikers, midfielders and the back line.

- Third of field to consider.
- Responsibilities in that area and within your role and capabilities.
- The score changes how you need to play to give yourself the result needed.

- Individual decisions, principles of play, roles, and responsibilities can all be trained within large-sided games.
- Lines of play can be worked on within this. An example is working on a midfield three linking up with a target striker.

## ATTACKING: RUNS IN ATTACKING THIRD

In the attacking third, we need to take as much risk as possible using possession to put the ball in a scoring opportunity. Runs in the attacking third require the ball to be played along the flanks as it moves into the middle third.

- Timing of runs.
- Direction of runs to end up with front post, back post and penalty spot for supporting ball carrier.
- Service is key from the flank player.
- Players making runs need to begin late but arrive on time.
- Strikers, wingers, wide players, and attacking midfielders should all be involved.

## DEFENDING: REFINING PRESSURE, COVER, BALANCE (6 v 6, 7 v 7, 8 v 8)

We must remember to refine the communication and movement in group and team tactics. Pressure, cover, and balance could simultaneously involve a central midfielder, a center back and a flank player. Thus, many lines of play are now involved. The same principles of play exist but need to be resolved quickly among more players and things we need to consider.

- Based on pressure, second and third defenders judge distance and angle of support behind the ball.
- Reading cues in the game.
- When to intercept passes.
- When to take space compared to when to take the man.

## DEFENDING: LINE OF CONFRONTATION AND DEFENCE

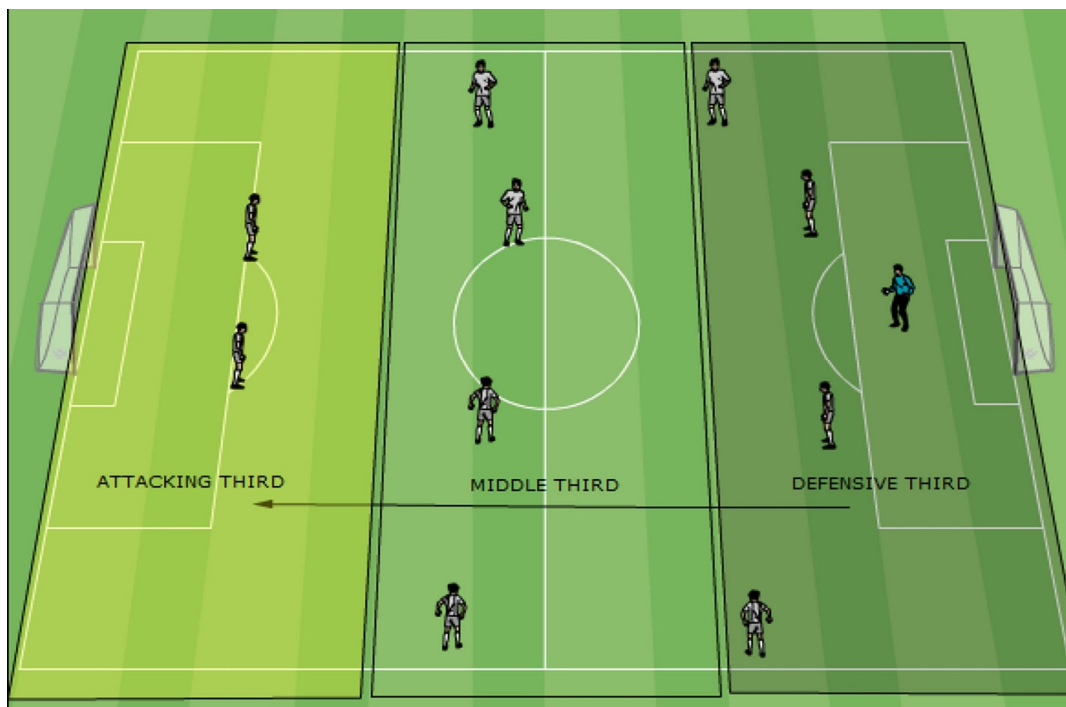
The line of confrontation refers to how far up our strikers will begin to defend and then how the midfield and back line will provide cover. The line of defence is how deep our back line will defend from. An example is a team that plays with an “offside trap.” This would be a very high line of defence. Usually, a high line of confrontation would lead to a high line of defence (and thus the opposite). You would not play with a high line of confrontation and a low line of defence. There would be too much space left in midfield, and the opposition would control the game with possession.

- Being aware of the opposition’s strengths and weaknesses.
- Cues of the game.

- This will lead to a higher likelihood of intercepting passes.
- Also allows the squad to stay compact and concentrated.
- Could try to win the ball up higher on the flank.
- Or drop with a low line of confrontation and defence to counterattack.
- Distances, angles communication, and tackling must be taught and trained.

## THIRDS OF THE FIELD

Soccer is tactically broken into three-thirds on the field, with decisions on how to attack and defend in each third.



**DEFENDING THIRD:** The area of the field where most goals are scored by the opposition, and most attacks begin in attack.

### IN ATTACK:

- Play safe by passing more than dribbling.
- Build up with low risk; safety is very important.
- The goalkeeper's feet and overall distribution are important.

### IN DEFENCE:

- Tighter marking.
- Play ball up, out and away when at risk.

- Don't foul.
- Line of defence potentially in this third.

MIDDLE THIRD: A balance between taking risks and playing safe. The majority of possession in this third of the play.

#### IN ATTACK:

- If you cannot play forward, look to switch point of attack in the middle third.
- Techniques of passing and dribbling will be used.
- The use of combination plays and interchange.
- Can midfielders shoot from range?

#### IN DEFENCE:

- Being compact, marking both men and space
- Opportunity to double up may exist.
- Careful with the line of defence in this third.

ATTACKING THIRD: Area of the pitch where most goals will be scored for us. Having players that take risks and like that responsibility in this third by taking chances.

#### IN ATTACK:

- Techniques of dribbling, shooting, and crossing will be required.
- Combination plays in tight areas to penetrate.
- If you cannot play inside, then look wide; the third option would be back to keep possession.

#### IN DEFENCE:

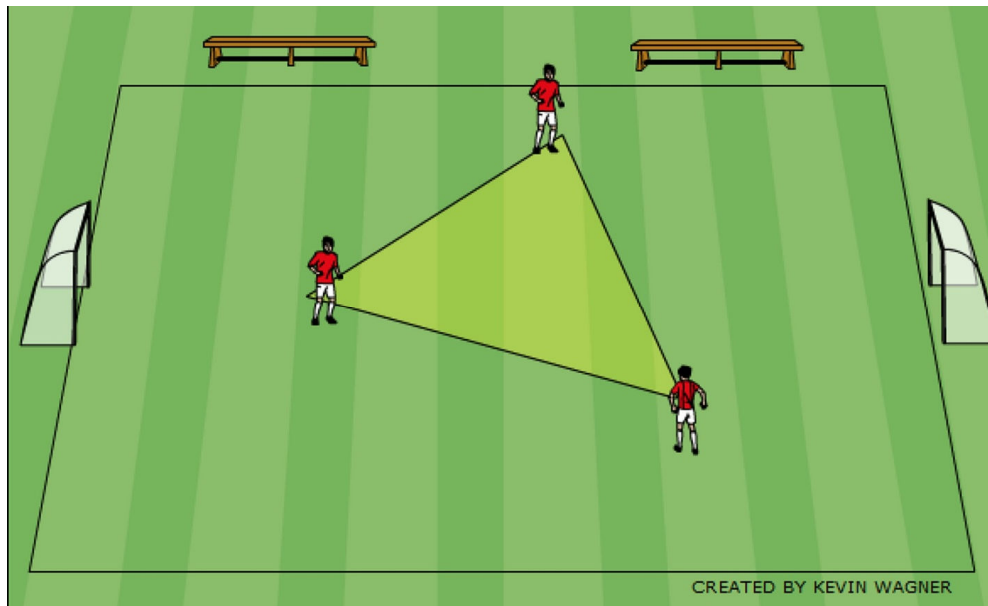
- Strikers are the first line of defence.
- Strikers must make play predictable in this third for our midfield and back line.
- Line of confrontation potentially in this third.

## UNDERSTANDING PROGRESSIONS AND SYSTEMS OF PLAY WITH MERIDIAN SOCCER

There are many philosophies and ways to develop soccer players and a Club. This is our way:

### 3V3

The beginning of developing tactical shape with our players. The key is to not get caught up with given roles as a striker or back player. Encourage triangular shape creativity and confidence. This will encourage passing and dribbling. All players attack and defend.

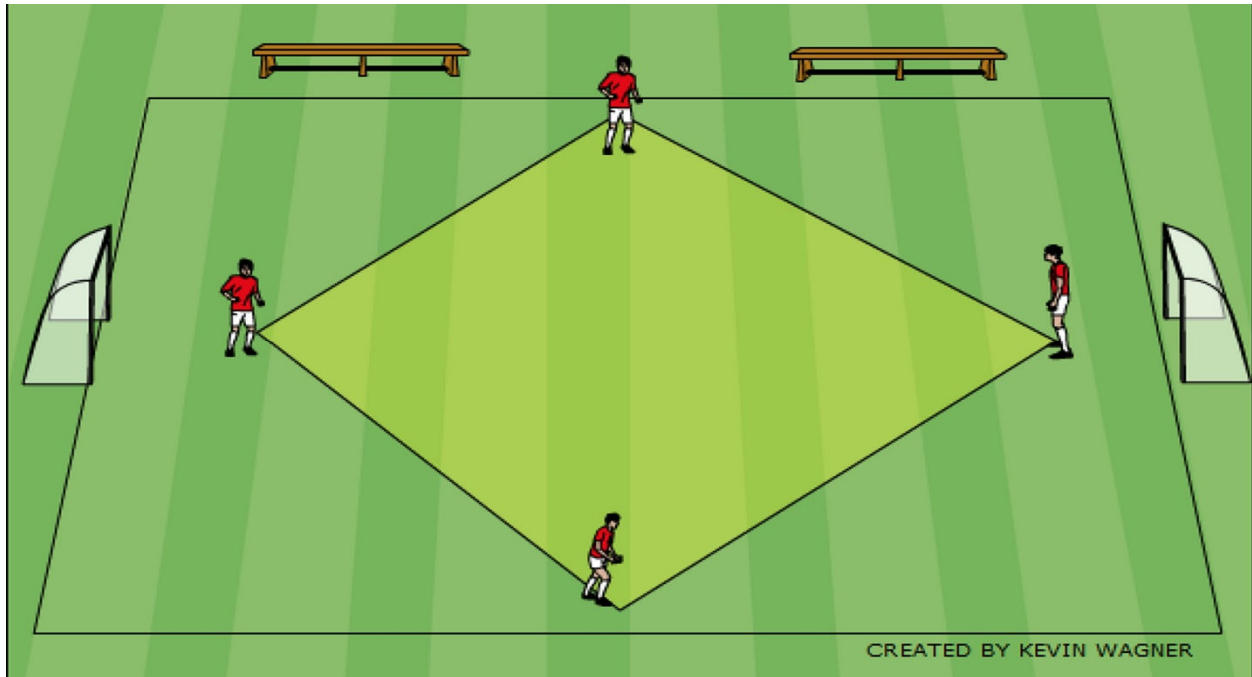


| STRENGTH                                       | WEAKNESS   |
|--|--|
| CREATIVITY                                     | PLAYERS MAY NOT WANT TO TAKE RISK WITH ONLY ONE AT THE BACK AT TIMES |
| GOOD ATTACKING AND DEFENDING HABITS ARE FORMED | ERRORS ARE NATURALLY PUNISHED  |
| TIMING IN SUPPORT AND MOVEMENT IS ENCOURAGED   | PLAYERS HAVE TO BE PREPARED TO MOVE                                  |

### 4V4

Meridian Soccer is based on triangles. Instead of playing a box of two forwards and two defenders/backs, Meridian implements a diamond 1-2-1 shape. This is the basis of our club's

shape. As the numbers in the game grow to 11v11, the basis is diamond play. Width must come from the wide players in the diamond.

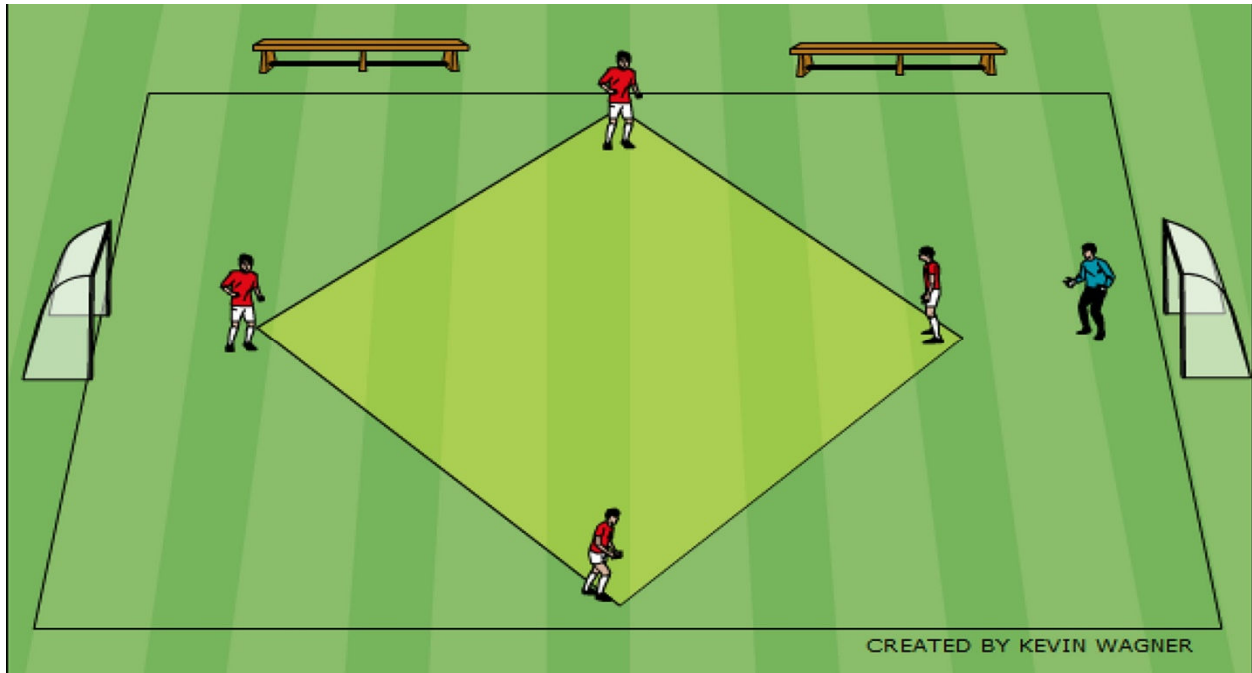


| STRENGTH  | WEAKNESS                             |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| NATURAL WIDTH, DEPTH, TWO TRIANGLES   | LESS NUMBERS UPFRONT                 |
| ALLOWS FOR EASY TO TEACH DIFFERENT DEFENDING AND ATTACKING PRINCIPLES OF PLAY –MAKE PLAYERS ACCOUNTABLE | PLAYERS HAVE TO BE PREPARED TO MOVE  |
| FORCES THE BACK PLAYER TO HAVE DRIBBLING AND PASSING SKILLS   | PACE AND FITNESS OF PLAYERS REQUIRED |
| TARGET STRIKER CAN LEARN BACK TO GOAL OR DIAGONAL RUNS  | ERRORS ARE NATURALLY PUNISHED        |
| GOOD ATTACKING AND DEFENDING HABITS ARE FORMED  | POTENTIALLY CAUGHT ON COUNTERATTACK  |
| TIMING IN SUPPORT AND MOVEMENT IS ENCOURAGED  |                                      |

## 5V5

Simply adding the goalkeeper position. Meridian Soccer is based on triangles. Instead of playing a box of two forwards and two defenders/backs, Meridian implements a diamond 1-2-1 shape.

This is the basis of our club's shape. As the numbers in the game grow to 11 v 11, the basis is diamond play.



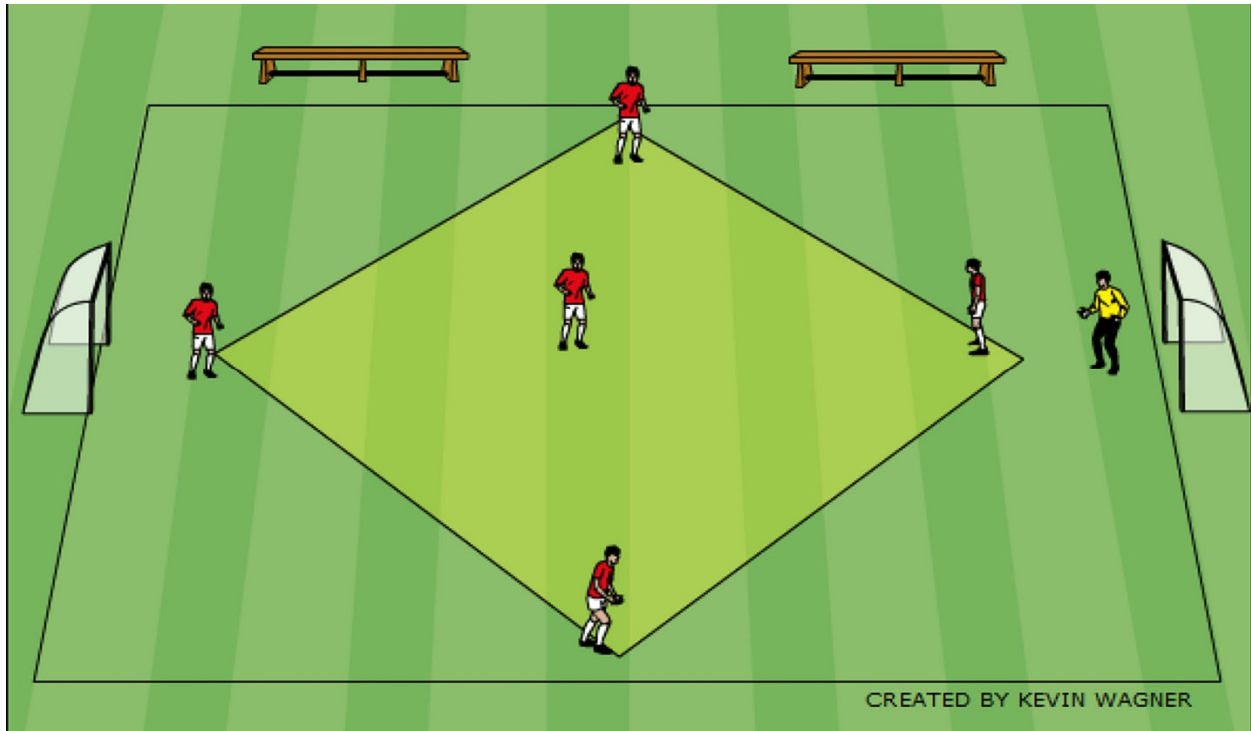
| STRENGTH  | WEAKNESS                             |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| NATURAL WIDTH, DEPTH, TWO TRIANGLES   | LESS NUMBERS UPFRONT                 |
| ALLOWS FOR EASY TO TEACH DIFFERENT DEFENDING AND ATTACKING PRINCIPLES OF PLAY | PLAYERS HAVE TO BE PREPARED TO MOVE  |
| FORCES THE BACK PLAYER TO HAVE DRIBBLING AND PASSING SKILLS                   | PACE AND FITNESS OF PLAYERS REQUIRED |
| TARGET STRIKER CAN LEARN BACK TO GOAL OR DIAGONAL RUNS                        | ERRORS ARE NATURALLY PUNISHED        |
| GOOD ATTACKING AND DEFENDING HABITS ARE FORMED                                | POTENTIALLY CAUGHT ON COUNTER-ATTACK |
| TIMING IN SUPPORT AND MOVEMENT IS ENCOURAGED                                  |                                      |

## 6V6

The next step in our development is to add a central midfielder. This player needs to be the most reliable and likely the best player on the squad. The central midfielder will now split the



shape into a large diamond with one in the middle. Or, looking at it another way, eight triangles.

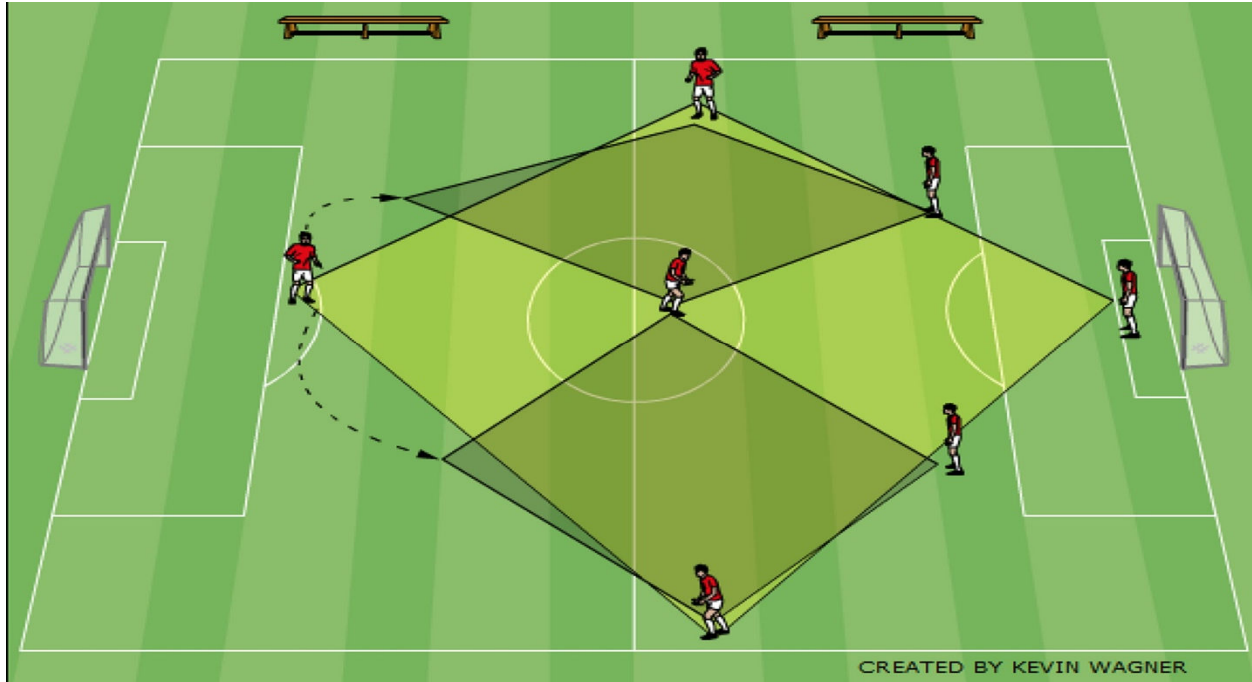


| STRENGTH   | WEAKNESS  |
|--|---|
| NATURAL WIDTH, DEPTH, CENTRAL SUPPORT                  | IF NOT, CAREFUL WILL BE FLAT ACROSS MIDFIELD        |
| NATURAL DIAMONDS AND TRIANGLES – SHAPE                 | TRAINING ONLY 2 WIDE PLAYERS AND 1 CENTRAL DEFENDER |
| CAN OUT NUMBERS IN MIDFIELD                            | PACE AND FITNESS OF WIDE PLAYERS REQUIRED           |
| INTERCHANGE WITHIN MIDDLE THREE PLUS STRIKER           | CAUGHT ON COUNTER-ATTACK IF ALL FOUR GO UP          |
| ROLES ARE EASILY DEFINED – ALL STILL ATTACK AND DEFEND | LESS FORWARD SUPPORT                                |

## 7V7

We have added a secondary back. If, during competition, we needed a goal, we could switch this and have two strikers, and one center-back would remain. The striker now has to make

runs (as shown) to make the top of the diamond on either side of the team. If you had two strikers, the back player would have to move to add depth from behind in each diamond.

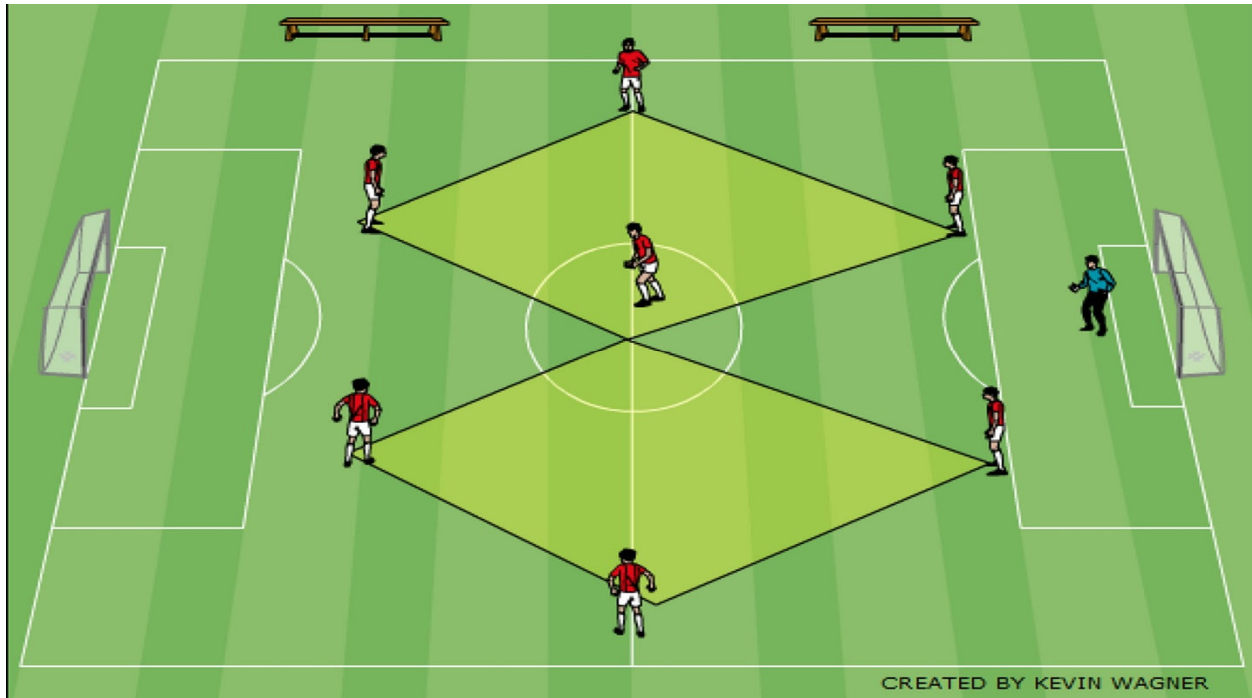


| STRENGTH                                     | WEAKNESS                                     |
|--|--|
| NATURAL WIDTH, DEPTH, CENTRAL SUPPORT        | IF NOT, CAREFUL WILL BE FLAT ACROSS MIDFIELD |
| NATURAL DIAMONDS AND TRIANGLES - SHAPE       | TRAINING ONLY 2 WIDE PLAYERS                 |
| CAN OUT NUMBERS IN MIDFIELD                  | PACE AND FITNESS OF WIDE PLAYERS REQUIRED    |
| INTERCHANGE WITHIN MIDDLE THREE-PLUS STRIKER | CAUGHT ON COUNTER-ATTACK IF ALL FOUR GO UP   |
| SUPPORT AT THE BACK FOR SAFETY               | LESS FORWARD SUPPORT                         |

## 8V8

Now we have two diamonds side by side. The central midfielder anchors both diamonds. Speed of play should now be efficient and fast. Strikers now have to play off each other, making runs to both feet and space. This system is lane-based. When the ball is with the left side, the left

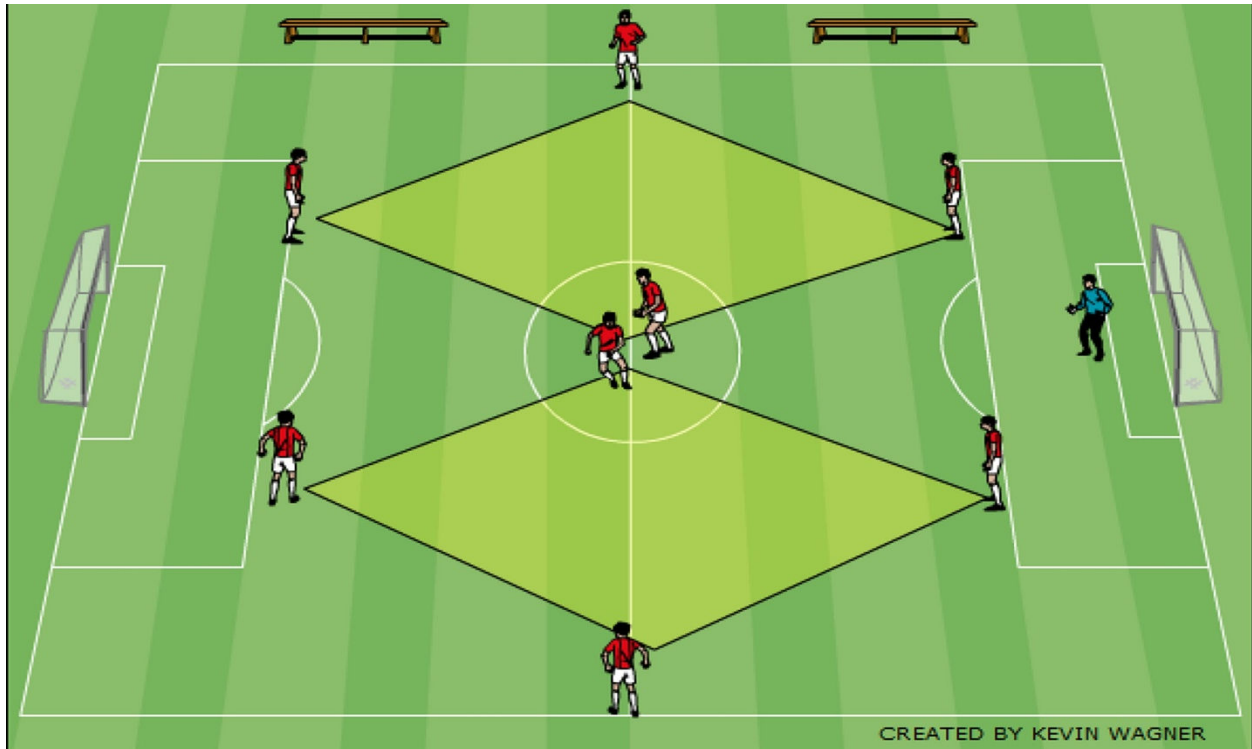
side of the diamond plays off each other, and when switched, the other side of the diamond is engaged.



| STRENGTH  | WEAKNESS  |
|---|---|
| NATURAL WIDTH, DEPTH, CENTRAL SUPPORT                           | IF NOT, CAREFUL WILL BE FLAT ACROSS MIDFIELD    |
| LANE BASED-BALANCED AS THE SAME SHAPE ON EACH HALF OF THE PITCH | TRAINING ONLY 2 WIDE PLAYERS                    |
| CAN OUT NUMBERS IN MIDFIELD                                     | PACE AND FITNESS OF WIDE PLAYERS REQUIRED       |
| INTERCHANGE WITHIN THE MIDDLE THREE PLUS STRIKERS               | CAUGHT ON THE COUNTER -ATTACK IF ALL FOUR GO UP |
| SUPPORT UP FRONT IN TRAINING A FRONT TWO                        |   |

## 9V9

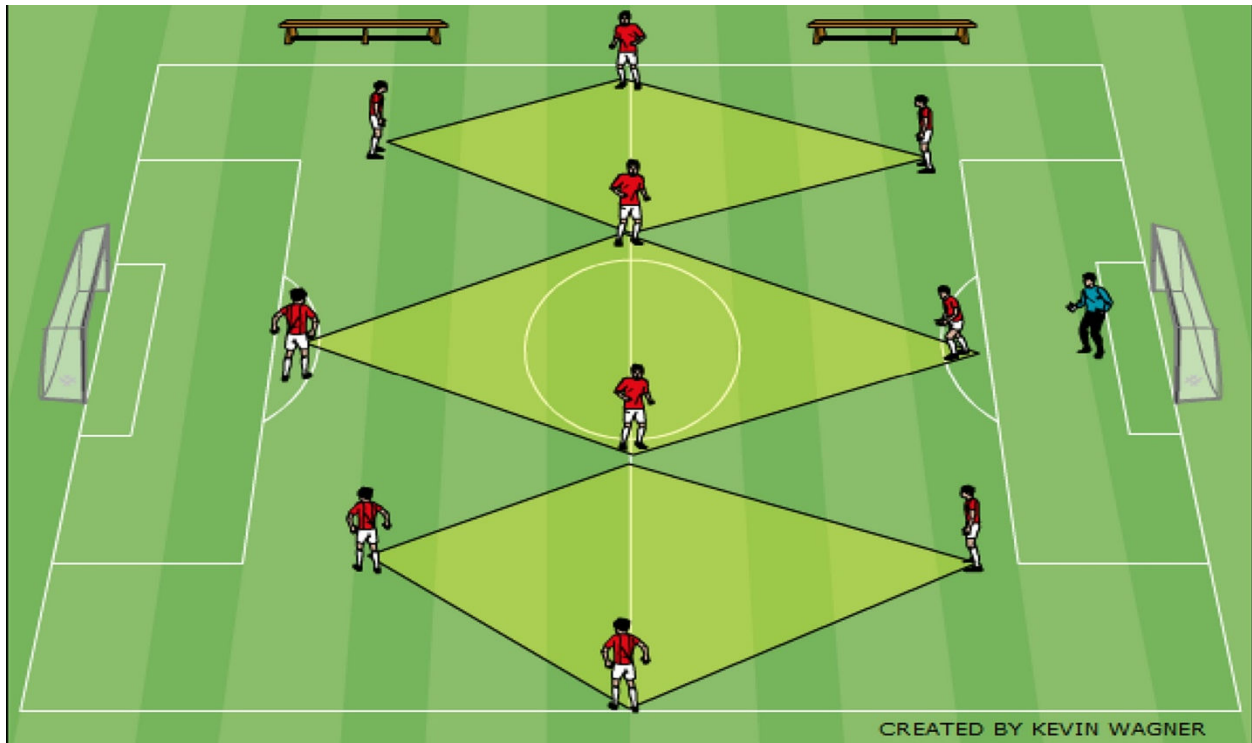
In 9 aside, we maintain the double diamond by adding a second central midfielder. There are still two diamonds, and it is still a lane-based system. Now, the two central midfielders have to play off each other.



| STRENGTH  | WEAKNESS   |
|---|--|
| NATURAL WIDTH, DEPTH, CENTRAL SUPPORT                           | THE MIDFIELDERS WILL TAKE UP THE SAME SPACE AND BE TOO CLOSE TO EACH OTHER           |
| LANE BASED-BALANCED AS THE SAME SHAPE ON EACH HALF OF THE PITCH | TRAINING ONLY 2 WIDE PLAYERS   |
| INCREASED COMBINATION PLAY AND SPEED OF PLAY                    | PACE AND FITNESS OF WIDE PLAYERS REQUIRED  |
| INTERCHANGE WITHIN MIDDLE THREE PLUS STRIKER                    | CAUGHT ON COUNTER-ATTACK IF ALL FOUR GO UP   |
| TRAINING AN ATTACKING AND HOLDING MIDFIELDER                    | AT TIMES, THE MIDFIELDERS WILL TAKE UP THE SAME SPACE AND BE TOO CLOSE TO EACH OTHER |

## 11V11

The final progression we believe in is the **3-4-3** in 11-aside soccer. There has been an additional back-and-forth added. Maintaining both diamonds and lane-based systems. There are now three diamonds side by side. The speed of play and combination play are greatly increased. Knowledge and understanding are increased with proper progressions.



| STRENGTH   | WEAKNESS  |
|--|---|
| NATURAL WIDTH, DEPTH, AND CENTRAL SUPPORT                      | GOALKEEPING WILL BE KEY TO DISTRIBUTING, PROVIDING COVER, AND SHOT-STOPPING |
| LANE-BASED- ADDING ADDITIONAL SUPPORT UP FRONT AND AT THE BACK | RISKY AT THE BACK PLAYING WITH ONLY THREE BACKS                             |
| INCREASED COMBINATION PLAY AND SPEED OF PLAY                   | PACE AND FITNESS OF WIDE PLAYERS REQUIRED TO RECOVER INTO BACK LINE         |
| INTERCHANGE, RISK AND CREATIVITY ENCOURAGED                    | TRANSITION IS KEY, AND MANAGING WHEN TO GO UP OR BACK ON THE FLANKS         |



Meridian Soccer

# Age Group **Handbooks**

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Created for Meridian Soccer Association



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**Created and Written by:**  
Kevin Wagner

### **KINDERSOCCER PROGRAMMING**

BODY AWARENESS, COORDINATION, ACTIVITY GAMES, GET KIDS TO LOVE SOCCER

KINDERSOCCER: 2- 4-year-olds with parents – VLA FIELD

#### **PLAYER PATHWAY:**

- Players are placed into co-ed groups of 12 players (or close based on numbers) and not teams. Each group of Kindersoccer players will have one leader /coach who will lead each group through the season.
- For each player, there is a need for a parent to participate with the child throughout each practice.
- Each group will participate 1/week.
- There is no league play.

Players at this age are too young to play in a league. Their social skills and mental maturity do not lead to success by putting these players onto teams for league play. Instead, we will have larger groups of players led by adult coaches. With the help of the player's parents (grandparents, uncles, aunts, etc.), these coaches will lead the players through 3, 4, or more activities each practice. As the season progresses, the coaches will build towards introducing a game-like activity once the players are more ready. All activities will include body awareness, jumping, twisting, running, keeping the ball by dribbling, catching it, etc. While including the ball, there will be 1 ball per player. At times, the parents will be on the field with their players, and at other times, they will be just off to the side.

#### **GAME STRUCTURE:**

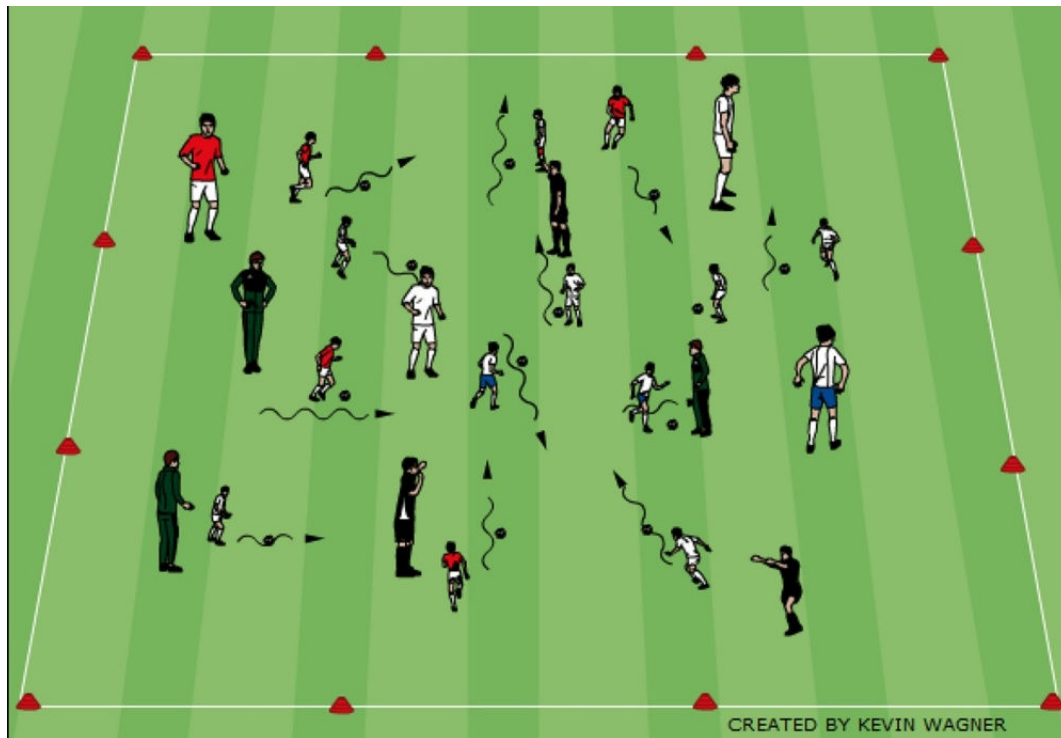
There is no league play.

#### **PRACTICE STRUCTURE:**

Each player will be included in one practice/week. At times, organized chaos (never just chaos, though)! Each practice will be 45 minutes in duration. A ratio of 1 ball/player will be used. The size of the ball will be a size 3. There will be several shorter activity games and water breaks so the players are active and can become more confident within the group (social skills) and with the ball (want to keep it and try new things with it). Most of these activity games are with parents. At times, a player will love coming to Kindersoccer but then, once he arrives, will freeze up and not want to participate. As a parent, allow this to happen and encourage them to be in the soccer environment. Before too long, they will start to participate.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- QUALITIES OF A COACH FOR THIS AGE GROUP: Patience, personality, animation, use of voice, ability to relate to players at their level.
- Assistance has to be given to the coach at the beginning and throughout the program. All parents need to help their child and the Coach.
- **We are not only introducing our young players to the game of soccer, but we are also teaching our young parents about the game so they can be future coaches.**





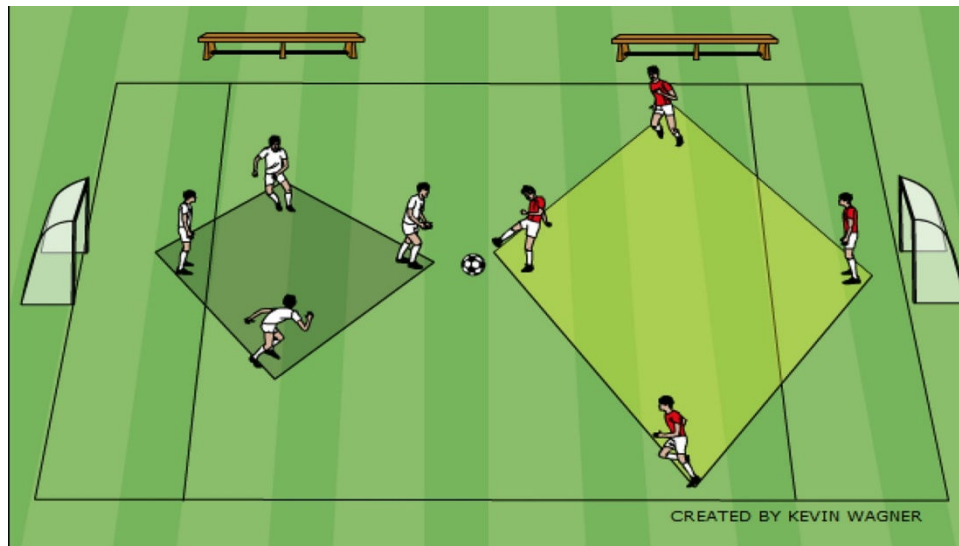
**U5 - U7 GUIDELINES, RULES AND PRACTICE PLANS**

**ENCOURAGE PHYSICAL LITERACY, EVERY PLAYER TO KEEP THE BALL CLOSE TO THEM**

TWICE/WEEK: 30-minute practice activities followed by a 25-minute game.

Each team will arrive at the field and organize their players. Each session will include 30-minute practice activities followed by a 25-minute game. The players should arrive on time. All players should rotate through equally. THERE ARE GOALKEEPERS IN THE GAME AT U5 – U7.

**4 V 4 LEAGUE GAME STRUCTURE**



**GAME STRUCTURE:** 1 X 25-minute game of play. A Goalie is used. Allow all players to rotate through the GK position.

**FIELD LOCATION:** VLA Soccer Fields

**BALL SIZE:** SIZE 3

**SPECTATORS:** Spectators sit on the opposite side of the player's bench.

**RESTARTS:** Kick-ins/dribble-ins, Corner kicks, Goal kicks.

**SCORING GOALS:** Encourage all players to score.

**SUBSTITUTIONS:** Players should play for at least 4-minute increments before being substituted.

As a developmental model, 4 v 4 is the best option for our players to play the game. There is a goalkeeper used. This is to allow our youngest soccer players more success. When the ball goes out of play on the sides of the field, it is restarted by passing it back into the field or dribbling it into play. There are no throw-ins. When the ball goes out of play at the ends of the field, it is then a goal kick. Again, the opposition gets the ball and passes it back into play to their teammates. **The opposition has to back up and give at least 4 meters of space.** This allows for time for each player to dribble the ball without having the opposition immediately steal it and score in the goal. Players need to play on average 4 minutes before being substituted. These young players do get tired quickly but also recover quickly. Playing the 4 v 4 game will allow for more opportunities for players to dribble and more touches on the ball. The goal is to keep each player involved and have an opportunity to be successful and enjoy the game.

**PRACTICE STRUCTURE: 30 minutes of practice activities followed by a 25-minute game.** Allow games to be the teacher.

**COACHING:** In an effort to make things more economical for our coaches, the expectation is for players to show up. The Coach's expectation is to ensure that all players are respectful and get fair playing time. Practice activities and plans are supplied each week.

**THINGS TO CONSIDER: QUALITIES OF A COACH FOR THIS AGE GROUP:** Patience, Personality; animated, use of voice, ability to relate to players at their level.

- Players at this age must work with the ball at least twice weekly.
- Players at this age should be in other activities such as swimming, gymnastics, etc.

## UNDER 5 - 7 SOCCER

### RULES OF PLAY

#### LAW # 1 – FIELD OF PLAY

**FACILITIES:** Servus Sports Centre (Indoor)  
VLA Soccer Fields (Outdoor)

#### FIELD MARKINGS:

- All fields are marked.
- Goalkeeper can use their hands inside the large crease area.
- Goal kicks will be taken anywhere inside the Goal lined area.

#### THE GOALS:

Goals will be given out to the Coaches. We use coaching sticks, portable goals, and structured goals on the field for goals. We will use the inside markings as the goal line.

We want to offer the kids the experience of scoring a goal, which is one of the most rewarding experiences in soccer. The more goals, the better. There is no goal limit for a player. Goals can be scored from anywhere on the field.

#### LAW # 2 – THE BALL

Size 3 soccer ball

#### LAW # 3 – THE NUMBER OF PLAYERS

- Format of play: 4 v 4 (including the goalkeeper) **on** the field at a time.
- There is a goalkeeper who can use their hands in the goalkeeper area and will wear a goalkeeping jersey or bib, distinguishing them as the goalkeeper.
- Substitutions should be made every 4-5 minutes. Have the players on the bench ready to go on. This should be a quick process so it doesn't bring the game to a halt.

#### LAW # 4 – THE PLAYERS EQUIPMENT

- Players wear equipment that is safe for both them and others. This includes shin pads that are **covered by soccer socks**. This is done in case the shin guards have edges to them that may hurt their fellow players.
- Each team will wear colours that are different from each other's team. If both teams are the same colour, the coach can put the team into bibs for that game.
- Players cannot wear hats during practice or play on the field. (safety issue).

### **Player Equipment and Jerseys**

- MSA will have all required equipment at the field, and jersey tops will be given to all players and are required to be worn for games and practices.
- Players are responsible for the purchase of their shoes, shin pads, and socks.

### **LAW # 5 – THE REFEREES – There is no referee at U6. Coaches are to teach and manage the Laws of the game.**

- At this age, players should never slide tackle in indoor soccer (safety issue).
- Both coaches should consult with each other if a player's behaviour becomes dangerous.
- Coaches are encouraged before each game to talk with their counterparts concerning any issues or concerns. Be proactive.
- Make sure that these rules are followed and that the Fair Play nature of the game is followed.

### **LAW # 6 – DURATION OF THE MATCH**

- 1 x 25-minute game

**NOTE: Due to the busy schedule, please be on time and respect others' time on the field. Use common sense and be considerate of problems that arise. Work them out and be a good example for the kids!**

### **LAW # 7 – KICK-OFF AND RESTARTS OF THE GAME**

- Always takes place from the center point (marked or not marked) of the halfway line of the playing area.
- At the kick-off to start the game and after a goal is scored, the opposing team will retreat behind the center circle.

- When a team kicks off, they are at half and pass the ball forward to a teammate to begin play.

**LAW # 8 – THE BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY- If the players are trying to keep the ball in play and it barely goes out, allowing the players to play is fine.**

- The ball is considered out of play if the ball goes over the sideline or end line (touchline). Field marked by lines and or cones. The team who didn't kick the ball out then gets to restart play.
- Throw-in: There are no throw-ins in U6 soccer. Use your feet and dribble the ball in when it goes out of play.
  - When the ball goes over the sideline (side of the field), it is restarted quickly with the opposite team dribbling it in.
  - "Out-of-Play" is restarted by the opposite team dribbling the ball back into play from the point the ball went out of play. Again, the opposition must back up 3 meters to allow time for the team to dribble it in.

**LAW # 9 – SCORING AND OFFSIDE**

- There is no offside in U6 soccer. Goals can be scored from anywhere on the field.

**LAW # 10 – FOULS AND MISCONDUCT**

- Coaches should be conscious of this and communicate clearly to their players and coaches if a player's behaviour doesn't change. Use common sense.
- **SLIDE TACKLES ARE NOT ALLOWED** in U6 soccer. Players are not allowed to leave their feet or "go to ground" to win the ball from the opponent.

**LAW # 11 – DRIBBLE-IN, GOAL KICK AND CORNER KICK:**

THROW-INS -There are no throw-ins (using hands) in U6 soccer,

- A DRIBBLE IN is given to the opposing team when the opposition plays the ball out of play on either SIDELINE of the field.
- CORNER KICKS: There are no corner kicks as the back wall is in play.

- GOAL KICKS: A goal kick can be awarded when the opposition scores. Have the team that scored go back to their own goal.

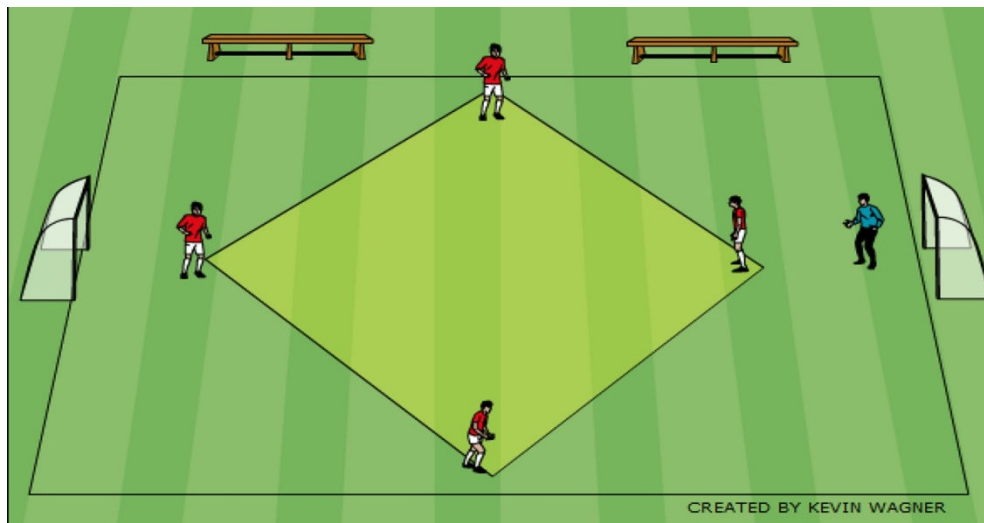
**U9 GUIDELINES, RULES AND PRACTICE PLANS**

ENCOURAGE PHYSICAL LITERACY, EVERY PLAYER TO KEEP THE BALL CLOSE TO THEM

TWICE/WEEK: 30 minutes of practice ACTIVITIES FOLLOWED BY A 30 MINUTE GAME

Each team will arrive at the field, organize their players, practice for 30 minutes, and then have a game for 30 minutes. The players should arrive on time. All players should rotate through equally. THERE ARE GOALKEEPERS IN THE GAME AT U9. No other player is allowed to use their hands.

**5 v 5 LEAGUE GAME STRUCTURE: SEPARATE MALE AND FEMALE LEAGUES**



GAME STRUCTURE: 1 X 30-minute game of play. A Goalie is used. Allow all players to rotate through the GK position.

FIELD LOCATION: VLA Soccer Fields

BALL SIZE: SIZE 3 or 4

SPECTATORS: Spectators sit on opposite side of player's bench.

RESTARTS: Kick ins, Corner kicks, Goal kicks

SCORING GOALS: Encourage all players to score.

SUBSTITUTIONS: Players should play for at least 4-minute increments prior to being substituted.

## **UNDER 9 SOCCER PROGRAMMING.**

As a developmental model, 5 v 5 is the best option for our players to play the game. There is a goalkeeper used. This is to allow our youngest soccer players more success. When the ball goes out of play on the sides of the field, it is restarted by passing the ball back into the field. When the ball goes out of play at the ends of the field, it is then a goal kick. Again, the opposition gets the ball and passes it back into play to their teammates. **The opposition has to back up and give at least 4 meters of space.** This allows for time for each player to dribble the ball without having the opposition immediately steal it and score in the goal. Players need to play on average 4 minutes before being substituted. These young players do get tired quickly but also recover quickly. Playing the 5 v 5 game will allow for more opportunities for players to dribble and more touches on the ball. The goal is to keep each player involved and have an opportunity to be successful and enjoy the game.

**COACHING:** In an effort to make things more economical for our coaches, the expectations are for the players to show up. The Coach's expectation is to ensure that all players are respectful and get fair playing time. Practice activities and plans are supplied each week.

### **THINGS TO CONSIDER:**

- **QUALITIES OF A COACH FOR THIS AGE GROUP:** Patience, personality, animation, use of voice, ability to relate to players at their level, ability to show players how to do tricks. Be able to monitor and understand the capabilities and limitations of this age group.
- Players at this age should be in other activities such as swimming, gymnastics, etc.
- Some competition will begin. Adults must remember competition is a healthy part of an individual's development as long as players experience both success and failure. This must be monitored, however. We have to be careful that our young players have the opportunity to experience both and not experience only failure or only success.
- League games are just another opportunity for players to keep, turn with and dribble the ball. They should be considered and treated as another practice (just in a game).
- The goal by the end of the season should be for every player on each team to want the ball and want to keep it and, dribble, turn with it. If we can accomplish this, the season will be deemed a success.



## UNDER 9 OUTDOOR SOCCER

### **RULES OF PLAY**

**ALL GAMES ARE MONITORED BY THE TEAMS COACHES. THERE ARE NO REFEREES IN U9 SOCCER**

#### **LAW # 1 – FIELD OF PLAY**

##### **FIELD MARKINGS:**

- All fields are marked.
- Goalkeeper can use their hands inside the large crease area.
- Goal kicks will be taken anywhere inside the goal-lined area.

##### **THE GOALS:**

Will be handed out to Coaches. We use coaching sticks, portable goals, and structured goals on the field for goals. They are placed in the ground and picked up after each game.

We want to offer the kids the experience of scoring a goal, which is one of the most rewarding experiences in soccer. The more goals, the better. There is no goal limit for a player. Goals can be scored from anywhere on the field.

#### **LAW # 2 – THE BALL**

Size 4 soccer ball

#### **LAW # 3 – THE NUMBER OF PLAYERS**

- Format of play: 5 v 5 (including the goalkeeper) **on** the field at a time.
- There is a goalkeeper who can use their hands in the goalkeeper area and will wear a goal-keeping jersey or bib, distinguishing them as the goalkeeper.
- Substitutions should be made every 4-5 minutes. Have the players on the bench ready to go on. This should be a quick process so it doesn't bring the game to a halt.

#### **LAW # 4 – THE PLAYERS EQUIPMENT**

- Players wear equipment that is safe for both them and others. This includes shin pads that are **covered by soccer socks**. This is done in case the shin guards have edges to them that may hurt their fellow players.
- Each team will wear colours that are different from each other's team. If both teams are the same colour, then the coach can put the team into bibs for that game.
- Players cannot wear hats during practice or play on the field. (safety issue).
- Goalie equipment is necessary. A different coloured bib will do if required.

### **Player Equipment and Jerseys**

- MSA will schedule games and provide jerseys for all players to be worn for games and practices.
- Players are responsible for the purchase of their shoes, shin pads, and socks.

### **LAW # 5 – THE REFEREES – There is no referee at U9. Coaches are to teach and manage the Laws of the game.**

- At this age, players should never slide tackle in soccer (safety issue).
- Both coaches should consult with each other if a player's behaviour becomes dangerous.
- Coaches are encouraged to discuss any issues or concerns with their counterparts before each game. Be proactive.
- Make sure that these rules are followed and that the Fair Play nature of the game is followed.

### **LAW # 6 – DURATION OF THE MATCH**

- 2 x 22 MINUTE HALF/GAME

**NOTE: Due to the busy schedule, please be on time and respect others' time on the field. Use common sense and be considerate of problems that arise. Work them out and be a good example for the kids!**

### **LAW # 7 – KICK-OFF AND RESTARTS OF THE GAME**

- Always takes place from the center point (marked or not marked) of the halfway line of the playing area.

- At the kick-off to start the game and after a goal is scored, the opposing team will retreat behind the center circle.
- When a team kicks off, they are at half and pass the ball forward to a teammate to begin play.

**LAW # 8 – THE BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY- If the players are trying to keep the ball in play and it barely goes out, allowing the players to play is fine.**

- The ball is considered out of play if the ball goes over the sideline or end line (touchline). Field marked by lines and or cones. The team who didn't kick the ball out then gets to restart play.
- Throw-in: There are no throw-ins in u8 soccer. Use your feet and pass the ball in when it goes out of play.
- When the ball goes over the sideline (side of the field), it is restarted quickly, with the opposite team taking a kick in.
- "Out-of-Play" the game is restarted by the opposite team passing the ball back into play from the point the ball went out of play. Again, the opposition must back up 3 meters to allow time for the team to pass the ball in.
- **Kick-in: When a Foul is committed and called, the opposite team will get a free kick where the foul occurred.** A penalty shot is awarded if the foul is in the large crease area.
- If the ball goes over the end line anywhere outside the goal area, depending on which team has touched the ball last, the game will be restarted with one of the following two scenarios:
  - **Goal Kick:** If the attacking team was the last to touch the ball, it was taken anywhere on the small crease area. The ball is required to be passed in to begin play. The opposition should retreat 3 meters.
  - **Corner Kick:** if the defending team was the last one to touch the ball, taken by the opposition from the corner of the field on the side, the ball went out of play. The ball will be passed in using their feet. Opponents must be at least 3 yards away from the ball on all the above.

**LAW # 9 – SCORING AND OFFSIDE**

- There is no offside in u8 soccer. Goals can be scored from anywhere on the field.

**LAW # 10 – FOULS AND MISCONDUCT**

- Coaches should be conscious of this and communicate clearly to their players and coaches if a player's behaviour doesn't change. Use common sense.
- **SLIDE TACKLES ARE NOT ALLOWED** in U9 soccer. Players are not allowed to leave their feet or "go to ground" to win the ball from the opponent.

#### **LAW # 11 – KICK-IN, GOAL KICK AND CORNER KICK,**

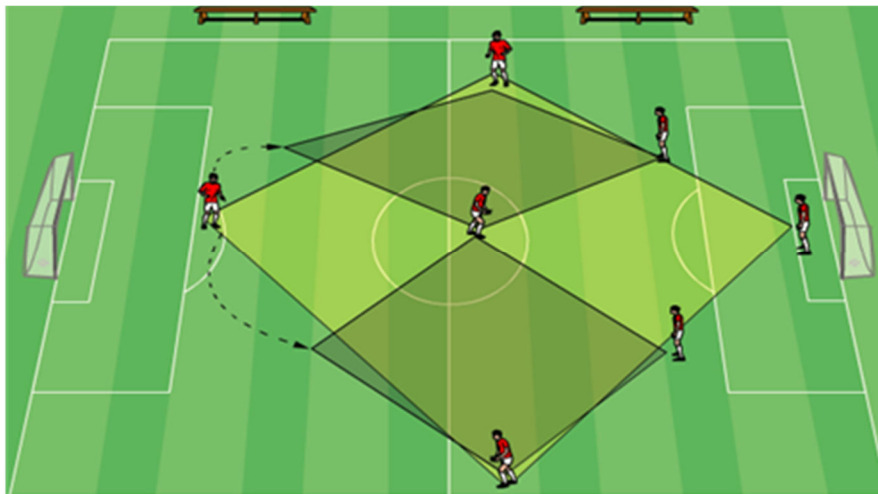
THROW-INS Indoor: There are no throw-ins (using hands) in U9 soccer.

- A kick-in is given to the opposing team when the opposition plays the ball out of play on either SIDELINE of the field.
- There are four types of restarts when the ball goes out of play or after a goal is scored: The kickoff, kick-in, goal kick and corner kick. Remember that the purpose of our players is to try and keep the ball close and on the ground. Not to give it away.
- Opponents are required to be 3 yards away until the ball is in play on corner kicks and kick-ins. Opposition is to be at half field on goal kicks and back to their own goal after they have scored. This will encourage more success and flow to the game,

**U11 YOUTH SOCCER GUIDELINES AND RULES**

The U11 games are important as they give the players a competitive focus during the match; however, the process is more important than the result. Care should be taken with players to address ball skill, especially in tight spaces. The faster and stronger players must be careful not to rely on their athletic superiority to solve problems. As other players catch up physically in future years and develop proper technique, these players will find the game more difficult and start to drop out. Coaches and parents have to consider now that individual ball control is still the basis of success and focus in Under 11; however, they also realize and begin encouraging players to recognize themselves and how their play affects 1 or 2 other players surrounding them (introduce individual to small group play).

**7 v 7 GAME STRUCTURE:** Separate male and female leagues when number of registrations allow. If not, coed leagues will be structured.



GAME STRUCTURE: 2 x 25-minute half of play. A Goalie is used. Allow those with interest to play goal. Do not force those who aren't interested to play goal.

FIELD LOCATION: VLA Soccer Fields

BALL SIZE: SIZE 4

SPECTATORS: Spectators sit on opposite side of player's bench.

RESTARTS: Throw-Ins, Corner kicks, Goal kicks

SCORING GOALS: Encourage all players to score.

SUBSTITUTIONS: Players should play for at least 6-minute increments prior to being substituted

## **LEAGUE GAMES: 2 X 25 MINUTE HALVES**

As a developmental model, 7 v 7 is the next step to build from 5 vs 5 in Under 9. The best path to developing and preparing our mini-players is by providing a game model that plays to the strengths of the athletes we currently have. Playing 9 v 9 will allow for many more touches on the ball. Because of the smaller field, the environment will encourage players to keep the ball rather than kick it away and chase it. Regular rules apply with corner kicks, kick-ins, goal kicks, and throw-ins. Allow players to learn and become comfortable in a position before moving them around. 9 v 9 also allows for two diamonds side by side of play to become apparent by playing diamond soccer. Natural width and depth and two central midfielders who provide support around the ball. Allow a player to stay on the field and play at least 8 minutes prior to substituting. As an introduction to refereeing, we will also have our youngest refs officiate in the U11 league.

**UNDER 11 YOUTH OUTDOOR SOCCER**  
**NON-TRAVELLING**  
**RULES OF PLAY**

**LAW # 1 – FIELD OF PLAY**

**FACILITIES:**

All games are played at the VLA Soccer Fields.

**FIELD MARKINGS:**

- All fields are marked.
- Goalkeeper can use their hands inside the large crease area.
- Goal kicks will be taken anywhere inside the goal-lined area.

**THE GOALS:**

Goals will be on site, with netting.

We want to offer the kids the experience of scoring a goal, which is one of the most rewarding experiences in soccer. The more goals, the better. There is no goal limit for a player. Goals can be scored from anywhere on the field.

**LAW # 2 – THE BALL**

Outdoor ball size 4

**LAW # 3 – THE NUMBER OF PLAYERS**

- Format of play: **9 v 9** (including the goalkeeper) on the field simultaneously.
- There is a goalkeeper who can use their hands in the goalkeeper area and will wear a goal-keeping jersey distinguishing them as the goalkeeper.

**SUBSTITUTIONS:**

- Substitutions are required to be made at half-field. The players can sub on the fly but are required to exit and enter the field of play at half, on the same side as the team benches.
- As long as you sub at your bench at half, you **DO NOT** need to ask the referee for a substitution.
- Have the players on the bench ready to go on. This should be a quick process so it doesn't bring the game to a halt.

## **LAW # 4 – THE PLAYERS EQUIPMENT**

- Players wear equipment that is safe for both them and others. This includes shin pads that are **covered by soccer socks**. This is done in case the shin guards have edges to them that may hurt their fellow players.
- Each team will wear colours that are different from each other's team. If both teams are the same colour, the coach can put the team into bibs for that game.
- Players cannot wear hats during practice or play on the field. (safety issue). The Goalkeeper can wear a hat during play.
- Goalie equipment is necessary. A different coloured bib will do if required.

### **Player Equipment and Jerseys**

- MSA will schedule games and jersey tops to be worn for games.
- Players are responsible for the purchase of their shoes, shin pads, and socks.

**LAW # 5 – THE REFEREES** – If a referee cannot be scheduled for that game. The game is still played, with coaches overseeing it.

- Slide tackling from the front is allowed.
- Both coaches and referees should consult with each other if a player's behaviour becomes dangerous.
- Yellow and red cards can be used for the referee to manage the game.
- Coaches are encouraged before each game to talk with their counterparts concerning any issues or concerns. Be proactive.
- Make sure that these rules are followed and that the Fair Play nature of the game is followed.
- If a referee is not scheduled. The game goes on. Both Coaches can supervise play and email the result to the Club Administrator.

## **LAW # 6 – DURATION OF THE MATCH**

- Two twenty-five-minute halves.

**NOTE: Due to the busy schedule, please be on time and respect others' time on the field. Use common sense and be considerate of problems that arise. Work them out and be a good example for the kids!**

## **LAW # 7 – KICK-OFF AND RESTARTS OF THE GAME**



- Always takes place from the center point (marked or not marked) of the halfway line of the playing area.
- At the kick-off to start the game and after a goal is scored, the opposing team will retreat behind the center circle.
- When a team kicks off, they are at half and pass the ball forward to a teammate to begin play.

#### **LAW # 8 – THE BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY– THROW-IN, GOAL KICK AND CORNER KICKS**

- The ball is considered out of play if the ball goes over the sideline or end line (touchline). Field marked by lines and or cones. The team who didn't kick the ball out then gets to restart play.
- **Throw-in: There are throw-ins in U11 soccer. When the ball goes over the sideline (side of the field), it is restarted quickly, with the opposite team taking a Throw-in.** The opposition must back up 2 meters to allow time for the team to pass the ball in.
- **Throw-In:** There are throw-ins (using hands) in soccer. Feet on or behind the touchline, using both hands, the ball must be played over the head.
- **Kick-in: When a Foul is committed and called by the referee, the opposite team will get a free kick where the foul occurred.** If the foul is in the large crease area, a penalty shot is awarded.
- If the ball goes over the end line anywhere outside the goal area, depending on which team has touched the ball last, the game will be restarted with one of the following two scenarios:
- **Goal Kick:** If the attacking team was the last to touch the ball, it was taken anywhere on the small crease area. The ball is required to be passed in to begin play. The opposition should retreat 8 meters.
- **Corner Kick:** if the defending team was the last one to touch the ball, taken by the opposition from the corner of the field on the side, the ball went out of play. The ball will be passed in using their feet.

**Opponents must be at least 6 yards away from the ball on all the above, and 2 yards away on throw-ins.**

#### **LAW # 9 – SCORING AND OFFSIDE**

- There is no offside in U11 soccer.

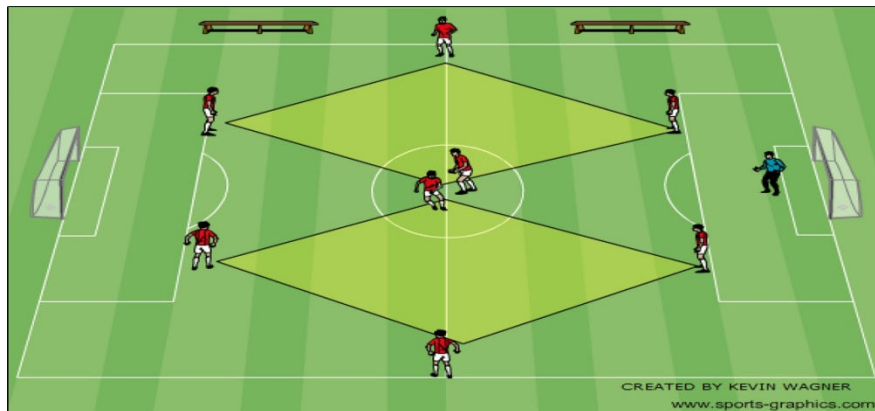
## **LAW # 10 – FOULS AND MISCONDUCT**

- FIFA laws of the game still prevail when addressing fouls, yellow cards, and red cards. The acceptations are no offside rule and no slide tackling.
- Referees and coaches, be conscious of this and provide clear communication to your players, coaches, and referees if a player's behaviour doesn't change.
- **SLIDE TACKLES ARE ALLOWED** in U11 soccer.

**U13 & 15 GUIDELINES AND RULES**

Players at U13 are entering the “Active for Life” stage of long-term player development. These players enter the recreational stream and play for recreation development and enjoyment of the game. They will not practice and will play two games/week. We will play 9 v 9 this OUTDOOR season, which will foster more touches and enjoyment and be a game that fits the makeup of our local City League play. The majority of players at this age have matured enough to be able to think in a complex manner. As young adults, we need to provide a positive environment for all our athletes and recognize a way to foster fact development and purpose for them.

**9 v 9 GAME STRUCTURE:** Separate male and female leagues when number of registrations allow. If not, coed.



**GAME STRUCTURE:** 2 x 25minute half of play. A Goalie is used. Allow those with interest to play goal. Do not force those who aren't interested to play goal.

**FIELD LOCATION:** VLA Soccer Fields

**BALL SIZE:** SIZE 4 OR 5

**SPECTATORS:** Spectators sit on opposite side of player's bench.

**RESTARTS:** Throw-Ins, Corner kicks, Goal kicks

**SCORING GOALS:** Encourage all players to score.

**SUBSTITUTIONS:** Players should play for at least 6minute increments prior to being substituted

**STANDINGS:** Not kept

**U13 & 15 DEVELOPMENT:** The next step in development is 9 v 9 in the OUTDOOR season. The game of 9 v 9 allows players to develop in a progressive manner. With a foundation of diamond soccer creating natural width and depth, the play can now be facilitated through 2 diamonds and a GK. This game allows players to have five times more touches on the ball than the game of 11 vs. 11. The approach is developmentally prudent as we build the numbers up as the players get older. The U13-17 version of the soccer game is how the players consider how their individual and group decisions and movements on the field affect teammates and opponents. All games this outdoor season are to be played 8 v 8, including the GK. There are offsides in the 2/3 area of the pitch. It is recommended that each player play at least 5 minutes before being substituted. There will be two 25-minute halves facilitated by a referee.

**COACHING:** In these age groups, we seek supervisors more than Coaches. We are looking for people who can manage players and Parents through the scheduled games. When to make subs, manage players and playtime in a safe and fair manner. During games, inspire players to dribble and keep possession of the ball.

#### **THINGS TO CONSIDER**

- At U13, the level of competition should be comparable and competitive with each other. We want players to experience both failure and success. Not one or the other.
- Give players time on the field to learn prior to substituting them (10 minutes).
- The league, facilities, and structure also need to be comparable and compatible with the players.

#### **Player Equipment and Jerseys**

- Meridian Soccer will provide scheduling of games and jerseys to be worn for games.
- Players are responsible for the purchase of their shoes, shin pads and tall socks.

## UNDER 13 & 15: OUTDOOR SOCCER

### RULES OF PLAY

#### LAW # 1 – FIELD OF PLAY

##### FACILITIES:

Games will be played on grass at VLA Soccer Fields.

##### FIELD MARKINGS:

- All fields are marked.
- Goalkeeper can use hands inside the large crease area.
- Goal kicks will be taken anywhere inside the Goal lined area.

##### THE GOALS:

Goals will be on site, with netting.

We want to offer the kids the experience of scoring a goal, which is one of the most rewarding experiences in soccer. The more goals, the better. There is no goal limit for a player. Goals can be scored from anywhere on the field.

#### LAW # 2 – THE BALL

- Size 5
- The home team provides the game ball.

#### LAW # 3 – THE NUMBER OF PLAYERS

- Format of play: **9 v 9** (including the goalkeeper) on the field at a time.
- There is a goalkeeper who can use their hands in the goalkeeper area and will wear a goal-keeping jersey distinguishing them as the goalkeeper.

##### SUBSTITUTIONS:

- Substitutions are required to be made at half-field. The players exit and enter the field of play at half on the same side as the team benches.
- Substitutions can only be made in a stoppage of play. The Coach must “call for a sub” by asking the referee for a sub when the ball goes out of play.

- Have the players on the bench ready to go on. This should be a quick process, so it doesn't bring the game to a half.

#### **LAW # 4 – THE PLAYERS EQUIPMENT**

- Players wear equipment that is safe for both them and others. This includes shin pads that are **covered by soccer socks**. This is done in case the shin guards have edges to them that may hurt their fellow players.
- Each team will wear colours that are different from each other's team. If both teams are the same colour, the coach can put the team into bibs for that game.
- Players are not allowed to wear hats during play on the field. (safety issue).
- Goalie equipment is necessary. A different coloured bib will do if required.

#### **Player Equipment and Jerseys**

- Meridian Soccer will provide scheduling of games and jersey tops to be worn for games.
- Players are responsible for the purchase of their shoes, shin pads, socks, and shorts.

#### **LAW # 5 – THE REFEREES**

- Slide tackling from the front is allowed.
- Both coaches and referees should consult with each other if a player's behaviour becomes dangerous.
- Yellow and red cards can be used for the referee to manage the game.
- Coaches are encouraged to discuss any issues or concerns with their counterparts before each game. Be proactive.
- Make sure that these rules are followed and that the Fair Play nature of the game is followed.

#### **LAW # 6 – DURATION OF THE MATCH**

- Two twenty-five-minute halves.
- Teams do switch halves after halftime.

**NOTE: Due to the busy schedule, please be on time and respect others' time on the field. Use common sense and be considerate of problems that arise. Work them out and be an excellent example for the kids!**

#### **LAW # 7 – KICK-OFF AND RESTARTS OF THE GAME**

- Always takes place from the center point (marked or not marked) of the halfway line of the playing area.
- At the kick-off to start the game and after a goal is scored, the opposing team will retreat behind the center circle.
- When a team kicks off, they are at half and pass the ball forward to a teammate to begin play.

#### **LAW # 8 – THE BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY— THROW-IN, GOAL KICK AND CORNER KICK,**

- The ball is considered out of play if the ball goes over the sideline or end line (touchline). Field marked by lines and or cones. The team who didn't kick the ball out then gets to restart play.
- **Throw-in: There are throw-ins in U13 soccer. When the ball goes over the sideline (side of the field), it is restarted quickly, with the opposite team taking a Throw.** The opposition must back up 2 meters to allow time for the team to pass the ball in.
- **Throw-In:** There are throw-ins (using hands) in soccer. Feet on or behind the touchline. Using both hands, the ball must be played over the head.
- **Kick-in: When a Foul is committed and called by the referee, the opposite team will get a free kick where the foul occurred.** A penalty shot is awarded if the foul is in the large crease area.
- If the ball goes over the end line anywhere outside the goal area, depending on which team has touched the ball last, the game will be restarted with one of the following two scenarios:
- **Goal Kick:** If the attacking team was the last to touch the ball, it was taken anywhere on the small crease area. The ball is required to be passed in to begin play. The opposition should retreat 8 meters.
- **Corner Kick:** if the defending team was the last one to touch the ball, taken by the opposition from the corner of the field on the side, the ball went out of play. The ball will be passed in using their feet.

Opponents must be at least 6 yards away from the ball on all the above and 2 yards away on throw-ins.

#### **LAW # 9 – SCORING AND OFFSIDE**

- There is offside in U13 soccer. The offside line will be on each third of the field.

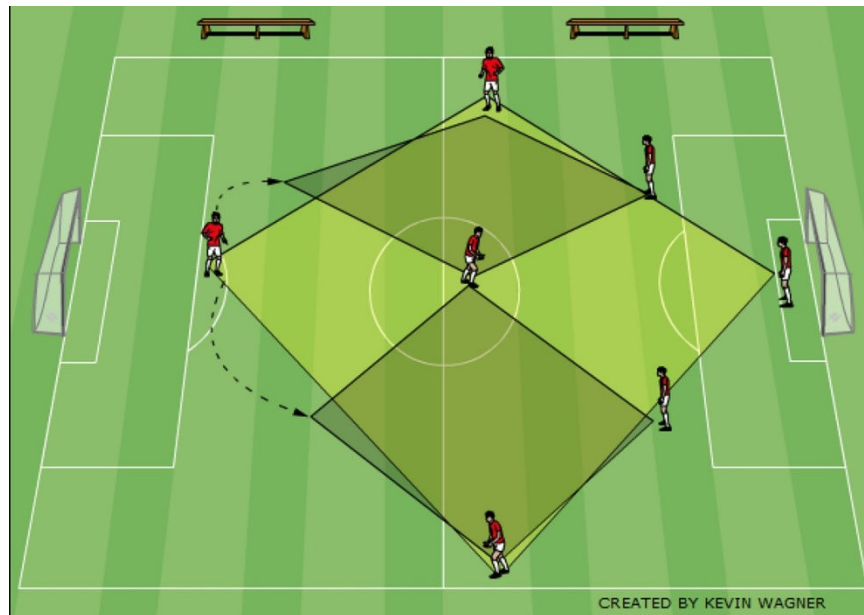
**LAW # 10 – FOULS AND MISCONDUCT-regular FIFA rules apply**

- FIFA laws of the game still prevail when addressing fouls, yellow cards, and red cards.
- Referees and coaches, be conscious of this and provide clear communication to your players, coaches, and referees if a player’s behaviour doesn’t change.
- **SLIDE TACKLES ARE ALLOWED** in soccer. Players can leave their feet or “go to ground” to win the ball from the opponent.



**U17 REC CO-ED LEAGUE GUIDELINES AND RULES**

Players at U17 are in the “Active for Life” stage of long-term player development. These players enter the recreational stream and play for recreation development and enjoyment of the game. They will not practice and will play two games/week. We will play 7 v 7 this OUTDOOR season, which will foster more touches and enjoyment and be a game that fits the makeup of our local City League play. The majority of players at this age have matured enough to be able to think in a complex manner. As young adults, we need to provide a positive environment for all our athletes and recognize a way to foster fact development and purpose for them.



GAME STRUCTURE: 2 x 25-minute half of play. A Goalie is used. Allow those with interest to play goal. Do not force those who aren't interested to play goal

FIELD LOCATION: VLA Soccer Fields

BALL SIZE: SIZE 5

SPECTATORS: Spectators sit on opposite side of player's bench.

RESTARTS: Throw-Ins, Corner kicks, Goal kicks

SCORING GOALS: Encourage all players to score.

SUBSTITUTIONS: Need to ask referee to enter field

STANDINGS: Not kept

**U17 DEVELOPMENT:** The next step in development is 7 v 7 in the OUTDOOR season. The game of 7 v 7 allows players to develop in a progressive manner. With a foundation of diamond soccer creating natural width and depth, the play can now be facilitated through 2 diamonds and a GK. This game allows players to have five times more touches on the ball than the game of 11 vs. 11. The approach is developmentally prudent as we build the numbers up as the players get older. The U13-17 version of the soccer game is how the players consider how their individual and group decisions and movements on the field affect teammates and opponents. All games this outdoor season are to be played 8 v 8, including the GK. There are offsides in the 2/3 area of the pitch. It is recommended that each player play at least 5 minutes prior to being substituted. There will be two 25-minute halves facilitated by a referee.

**COACHING:** In these age groups, we are looking for supervisors more so than Coaches. We are looking for people who can manage players and Parents through the scheduled games. When to make subs, manage players and playtime in a safe and fair manner. During games, inspire players to dribble and keep possession of the ball.

#### **THINGS TO CONSIDER**

- At U17, the level of competition should be comparable and competitive with each other. We want players to experience both failure and success. Not one or the other.
- Give players time on the field to learn prior to substituting them (10 minutes).
- The league, facilities, and structure also need to be comparable and compatible with the players.

#### **Player Equipment and Jerseys**

- MSA will provide scheduling of games and jerseys to be worn for games.
- Players are responsible for the purchase of their shoes, shin pads, socks and shorts.

## UNDER 17: OUTDOOR SOCCER

### RULES OF PLAY

#### LAW # 1 – FIELD OF PLAY

##### FACILITIES:

Games will be played at VLA Soccer Fields on grass Fields.

##### FIELD MARKINGS:

- All fields are marked.
- Goalkeeper can use hands inside the large crease area.
- Goal kicks will be taken anywhere inside the Goal lined area.

##### THE GOALS:

Goals will be on site, with netting.

We want to offer the kids the experience of scoring a goal, which is one of the most rewarding experiences in soccer. The more goals, the better. There is no goal limit for a player. Goals can be scored from anywhere on the field.

#### LAW # 2 – THE BALL

- Size 5
- The home team provides the game ball.

#### LAW # 3 – THE NUMBER OF PLAYERS

- Format of play: **7 v 7** (including the goalkeeper) on the field at a time.
- There is a goalkeeper who can use their hands in the goalkeeper area and will wear a goal-keeping jersey distinguishing them as the goalkeeper.

##### SUBSTITUTIONS:

- Substitutions are required to be made at half-field. The players exit and enter the field of play at half on the same side as the team benches.
- Substitutions can only be made in a stoppage of play. The Coach must “call for a sub” by asking the referee for a sub when the ball goes out of play.

- Have the players on the bench ready to go on. This should be a quick process, so it doesn't bring the game to a half.

#### **LAW # 4 – THE PLAYERS EQUIPMENT**

- Players wear equipment that is safe for both them and others. This includes shin pads that are **covered by soccer socks**. This is done in case the shin guards have edges to them that may hurt their fellow players.
- Each team will wear colours that are different from each other's team. If both teams are the same colour, then the coach can put the team into bibs for that game.
- Players are not allowed to wear hats during play on the field. (safety issue).
- Goalie equipment is necessary. A different coloured bib will do if required.

#### **Player Equipment and Jerseys**

- Meridian Soccer will provide scheduling of games and jersey tops to be worn for games.
- Players are responsible for the purchase of their shoes, shin pads, socks, and shorts.

#### **LAW # 5 – THE REFEREES**

- Slide tackling from the front is allowed.
- Both coaches and referees should consult with each other if a player's behaviour becomes dangerous.
- Yellow and red cards can be used for the referee to manage the game.
- Coaches are encouraged before each game to talk with their counterparts concerning any issues or concerns. Be proactive.
- Make sure that these rules are followed and that the Fair Play nature of the game is followed.

#### **LAW # 6 – DURATION OF THE MATCH**

- Two twenty-five-minute halves.
- Teams do switch halves after halftime.

**NOTE: Due to the busy schedule, please be on time and respect others' time on the field. Use common sense and be considerate of problems that arise. Work them out and be a good example for the kids!**

#### **LAW # 7 – KICK-OFF AND RESTARTS OF THE GAME**

- Always takes place from the center point (marked or not marked) of the halfway line of the playing area.
- At the kick-off to start the game and after a goal is scored, the opposing team will retreat behind the center circle.
- When a team kicks off, they are at half and pass the ball forward to a teammate to begin play.

#### **LAW # 8 – THE BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY— THROW-IN, GOAL KICK AND CORNER KICK,**

- The ball is considered out of play if the ball goes over the sideline or end line (touchline). Field marked by lines and or cones. The team who didn't kick the ball out then gets to restart play.
- **Throw-in: There are throw-ins in U17 soccer. When the ball goes over the sideline (side of the field), it is restarted quickly, with the opposite team taking a Throw.** The opposition must back up 2 meters to allow time for the team to pass the ball in.
- **Throw-In:** There are throw-ins (using hands) in soccer. Feet on or behind the touchline. Using both hands, the ball must be played over the head.
- **Kick-in When a Foul is committed and called by the referee, the opposite team will get a free kick where the foul occurred.** If the foul is in the large crease area, a penalty shot is awarded.
- If the ball goes over the end line anywhere outside the goal area, depending on which team has touched the ball last, the game will be restarted with one of the following two scenarios:

**Goal Kick:** if the attacking team was the last team to touch the ball, it was taken anywhere on the small crease area. The ball is required to be passed in to begin play. The opposition should retreat 8 meters.

**Corner Kick:** if the defending team was the last one to touch the ball, taken by the opposition from the corner of the field on the side, the ball went out of play. The ball will be passed in using their feet.

Opponents must be at least 6 yards away from the ball on all the above, and 2 yards away on throw-ins.

#### **LAW # 9 – SCORING AND OFFSIDE**

- There is offside in U17 soccer. The offside line will be on each third of the field.

**LAW # 10 – FOULS AND MISCONDUCT-regular FIFA rules apply**

- FIFA laws of the game still prevail when addressing fouls, yellow cards, and red cards.
- Referees and coaches, be conscious of this and provide clear communication to your players, coaches, and referees if a player’s behaviour doesn’t change.
- **SLIDE TACKLES ARE ALLOWED** in u17 soccer. Players are allowed to leave their feet or “go to ground” to win the ball from the opponent.