



SKILL CENTRES



SUMMER 2024

U10 & U11 FESTIVAL LEAGUE



Soccer Nova Scotia

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INTRODUCTION TO SKILL CENTRES

Every person involved in soccer in Canada deserves an enjoyable experience with the game, regardless of the role they play, their age, their level of experience or their ability. For young players, an enjoyable experience means that they have access to high-quality programs where they can have fun with their friends, learn new skills and play the game in an appropriate format. Clubs play an important role in this, as they are the primary providers of soccer programs where young players experience the game in Canada.

Canada Soccer has created the Skill Center Programs to guide clubs towards best principles in player

development by taking a nationally coordinated approach to developing young soccer players. Skill Center Programs provide a challenging, enjoyable environment for players to develop and nurture the skills required to succeed in the game of soccer.

By taking a structured, long-term approach to player development – based around the principles of Long-Term Player Development (LTPD) – our young players will develop the foundation of fundamental skills required to succeed at whatever level of the game they aspire to reach.



SKILL CENTRES GOALS

the best environment possible for as many young players as possible for as long as possible

1. Keep more young players involved in the game for longer by providing them with an enjoyable experience with the game

2. Produce clear training guidelines for clubs so they can deliver the best possible environment for young players in their region.

3. Produce better players across Canada by increasing opportunity & access to better training and competition for more young players.

Canada Soccer Skill Center Programs are aligned with the best principles of player development from around the world. The underlying aim of the Skill Centers Program is to provide the best environment possible to as many young players as possible for as long as possible

SKILL CENTRE PRINCIPLES

To ensure that a holistic development environment exists for players and coaches, Canada Soccer Skill Center Program will be guided by the following principles:

1. CONTACT TIME WITH A BALL WILL BE HIGH

For Canada to produce a consistent stream of high-caliber players, we must create more environments where players can develop their skills and comfort with a ball. Relevant, game-realistic skill development should be the outcome of all training sessions. This means that coaches should design challenging sessions that involve players manipulating the ball under various game-like conditions and tasks.

2. TRAINING WILL RESEMBLE THE GAME

Skills are not developed in isolation; for skill development to be most effective, the training environment must resemble the game. This means that the four moments of the game (attacking; defensive transition; defending; and attacking transition) must be present. This does not mean that coaches simply organize games; rather, the training session must involve game-like conditions and tasks that allow players to solve problems through perception-action coupling (the relationship between what a player sees and how he/she decides to act). This relationship is best developed through activities that closely resemble the game.

3. TRAINING WILL BE FUN FOR EVERYONE

When young soccer players were asked recently why they play soccer, the number one response was “I like playing the game because it’s fun.” Other reasons that children provided included “I like scoring or stopping goals”, “I like to show my skills” and “It’s important to be with my friends.” This information is important to adults because it must be used to create environments that will keep kids involved and engaged in soccer. Skill Center Programs must be operated with the principle that training should be fun and enjoyable for everyone, not just for a chosen few. This means that coaches must work equally with all players, encouraging them to develop their skills and to be creative in finding solutions to the challenges presented by the game..

SKILL CENTRE PRINCIPLES

4. SKILL CENTER PROGRAMS WILL BE ACCESSIBLE

One of the key ingredients in any successful player development program is opportunity – young players need to have access to good environments and good coaches. To ensure that all players have this opportunity, player registration for Skill Center Programs can be done in two ways: By invitation, where players are invited to register for a Skill Center Programs; and by open registration, where all players have access to register for the program on a first-come, first-served basis. No more than 50% of the places in a Skill Center Program can be allocated to players by invitation (at least 50% of the places must be allocated to players by open registration). Within the Skill Center Program training sessions themselves, coaches have the discretion to periodically group players based on competency, as appropriate, but coaches are strongly encouraged to design sessions that focus on developing all players, regardless of ability.

5. ALL PLAYERS AND PARENTS WILL RECEIVE MEANINGFUL FEEDBACK FROM COACHES

Parents have a crucial role to play in the development of their children in soccer. By clearly communicating the objectives of the Skill Center Program to parents and by providing them with meaningful feedback about the development of their children, coaches will develop a network of player development allies. By engaging the players in this process, they will develop a growth mindset, which is important for them to overcome the inevitable ups and downs of development in soccer.



WHY SKILL CENTRE PROGRAMS?

The traditional model of team selection in Canadian youth soccer revolves around choosing a select number of players at a specific moment in time based on their current performance level, then having them compete against other teams to determine who is better. Unfortunately, this method of talent identification and development is flawed in several ways:

- IT DOES NOT ACCURATELY PREDICT POTENTIAL OR FUTURE PERFORMANCE
- IT CAN OFTEN TURN AWAY PLAYERS WHO MIGHT HAVE HIGH POTENTIAL BUT WHO ARE SIMPLY INEXPERIENCED AT THAT MOMENT RELATIVE TO THEIR PEER GROUP;
- EARLY SELECTION PRIOR TO PHYSICAL MATURATION IMPLIES THE EARLY EXCLUSION OF THE MAJORITY AND CAN DISCOURAGE PLAYERS WHO MIGHT OTHERWISE HAVE BECOME AS GOOD, OR BETTER, A LITTLE LATER IF GIVEN THE CHANCE TO DEVELOP;
- THE CHARACTERISTICS THAT DEFINE “TALENTED” ATHLETES AT AN EARLY AGE ARE NOT THE CHARACTERISTICS THAT DEFINE ELITE ATHLETES LATER IN THEIR CAREERS.

Unfortunately, this approach only serves to identify players who are advanced in relation to their peers, rather than identify players who have the potential to develop into proficient players if given the opportunity. This is exacerbated by the fact that the selection-based approach alienates a significant percentage of our player base and pushes kids away from the game.

Canada Soccer Skill Center Programs will address these challenges by taking a holistic, player-centered approach to player registration. Rather than basing registration on performance – usually assessed over a short period of time or via a “tryout” process – Skill Center Programs registration will be done via two methods: invitation and open registration.

INVITATION – Clubs may invite players to register for a place in their Skill Center Programs. This allows Clubs to offer a place in the program to players whom they feel would benefit from the opportunity and experience. Tryouts are not permitted in Skill Center Programs, and no more than 50% of the places in the Skill Center can be offered via invitation.

OPEN REGISTRATION – At least 50% of the places in a Skill Center Program must be available via open registration. This provides players who are keen to learn the game with an opportunity to register for a place in the Skill Center Program.

SKILL CENTRE FESTIVAL LEAGUE CONTRACT

The NSSL Skills Center Festival League is a Standards-Based League, therefore each club must apply to ensure their programs align with the Canada Soccer Skills Center Standards. Only clubs that operate Skill Center Programs will be accepted to participate in the NSSL Festival League. Club who have not previously participated in SC Festival League will be required to complete & sign the contract by April 27th. Any questions or concerns regarding the contract may result in a follow-up meeting with Zach Bauld, Director of Grassroots & Community Programming. Clubs will be audited once per calendar year- if clubs are failing to abide by Skill Center principles, they will be removed from the league.

April 27th



NSSL FESTIVAL LEAGUE DATES & LOCATIONS

The NSSL U10 & U11 SC Festival League will take place on Sundays, From June 9th- August 18th. (No Festivals on Holiday Weekends).

Dates	Divisions	Location
June 2nd	U10 & U11 Boys & Girls	BMO
June 16th	U10 & U11 Boys & Girls	BMO
June 23rd	U10 & U11 Boys & Girls	BMO
July 7th	U10 & U11 Boys & Girls	BMO
July 14th	U10 & U11 Boys & Girls	BMO
July 21st	U10 & U11 Boys & Girls	BMO
July 28th	U10 & U11 Boys & Girls	BMO
August 11th	U10 & U11 Boys & Girls	BMO
August 18th	U10 & U11 Boys & Girls	BMO
August 25th	U10 & U11 Boys & Girls	BMO



NSSL FESTIVAL LEAGUE STRUCTURE & ROSTER REQUIREMENTS

The NSSL Festival League will take place on Sundays. All participating teams will play a minimum of 2 games per festival.

AGE	DURATION	FORMAT
U10 & U11	2 x 25 minute games	7v7

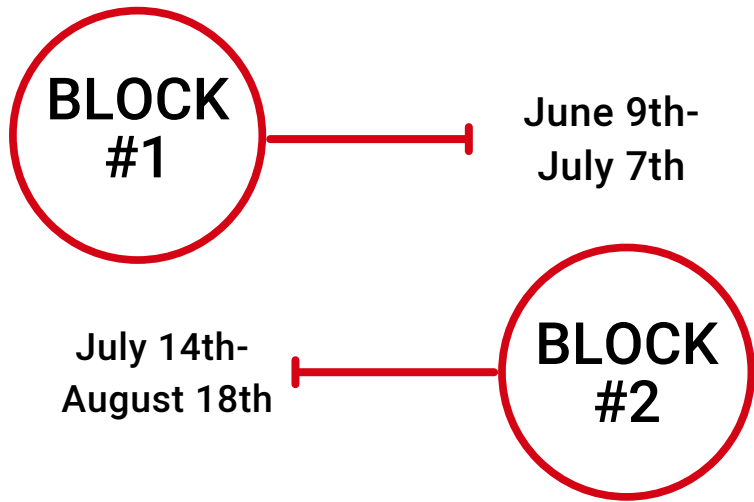
All teams entered into the U10 & U11 divisions will be made up by “like with like” as determined the club. Teams will entered into pools where they will compete against other teams of similar ability.

All 10 NSSL SC Festivals will take place at BMOSC and are open to all clubs in Nova Scotia. There may be additional Skill Center Festivals hosted outside of the HRM. These festivals will be organized by VU & SSU with the support of Soccer NS and will be open to all clubs in the province.



ADDING/DROPPING TEAMS & ROSTER SIZES

The season will be split into 2 blocks. Clubs will submit their teams at the declared NSSL league deadlines. Roster minimum for U10 & U11 teams must have a roster size of no less than 12. Teams who do not meet these minimum numbers by the roster deadline will not be included in block #1 of the schedule.



Team deletions or additions for Block #2 due by June 30th.

Exceptional circumstances on roster sizes may be granted, but must be approved by Zach Bauld, Director of Grassroots Programming & Chris Lurette, NSSL Manager.

NSSL FESTIVAL GAME RULES



Goal Kicks

Goal kicks happen when the ball exits the end of the field last touching the attacking team in that half. Goal kicks can be taken anywhere within 5 yards from the goal and unopposed. Retreat lines are also in effect. The Retreat Line is set at 2/3rds for U10/11 games.



Stoppages/ Restarts

Restarts should be done as quickly as possible. After a goal is scored, restarts happen from the middle of the field and should be done as quickly as possible to maximize time on task. Handballs and fouls are rewarded with a direct free kick. Pass back to GK is rewarded with a direct free kick from the sideline.



Corner Kicks

Corner Kicks are in effect and should be treated similarly to when the ball goes out the sidelines. Corner kicks can be passed in or dribbled into the field of play.



Throw-Ins (Kick-Ins)

Throw-ins will not take place. Instead, restarts will happen with either a pass-in or dribble-in from the ground. This encourages quicker restarts, more successful restarts, and fewer stoppages in a game for error throw-ins.



Substitutions

Substitutions can take place on the fly (during the game) while the game is ongoing, or during any stoppage. All players should get even playing minutes and goalkeepers should not be left in the goal for the entire game.



Power Play Rule

The Power Play permits a team that is trailing by 4 or more goals to place an additional player onto the playing field, ensuring that they have an extra player. The Power Play can be used at any time by a team that is trailing by 4 or more goals (4-0, 5-1, 6-2 etc.)



Coaches

Coaches are encouraged to actively engage in the game. Therefore, there will be no rule to stay isolated on the bench and actually are encouraged to move around during the game to help players throughout the game without negatively impacting the flow of the game.

FOR INQUIRIES, ABOUT NSSL FESTIVAL LEAGUE CONTACT US



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SKILL CENTRE PRINCIPLES

01

BALL CONTACT
TIME WILL BE
HIGH

TRAINING WILL
RESEMBLE THE
GAME

02

03

TRAINING
WILL BE FUN

PROGRAMS
ARE
ACCESSIBLE

04

05

MEANINGFUL
FEEDBACK FROM
COACHES

