



U8/9–U10 Grassroots Soccer

Key Benefits

- **Flexible Rosters**
Players rotate weekly across different teams
- **Balanced Competition**
Fair, engaging games with evenly matched teams
- **Consistent Coach Structure**
Same coaches guide training across all pods
- **Player Development Across All Themes**
Every player builds skills in ball mastery, passing, finishing, and game play



Agenda

- **Why Canada Soccer Introduced Grassroots**
- **Why Manitoba Soccer Adopts This Model**
- **Grassroots Soccer – Parent Information**
- **Open Roster Model – What It Is & Why It Works**
- **Adoption Across Canada**
- **SWCC Implementation & How the Roster Works**
- **Parent Communication & Resources**
- **Station Based Training**
- **Q&A**

Why Canada Soccer Introduced Grassroots

- Shift from winning-focused to development-focused
- Align with Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD)
- Reduce early dropout and improve engagement
- Open roster, equal playtime, small-sided games
- Develop better players, not early winners

Why Manitoba Soccer Adopts This Model

- Align with national (CSA) standards
- Improve grassroots player experience
- Increase player retention
- Promote balanced competition
- Inclusive, development-first environment

Grassroots Soccer – Parent Information

- Child-centered development model
- Focus on fun, learning, confidence
- No standings or pressure
- More touches, more involvement
- Every child plays
- FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS and More information

[MSA- https://manitobasoccer.ca/content/grassroots](https://manitobasoccer.ca/content/grassroots)

WYSA- <https://winnipegyouthsoccer.com/content/grassroots-programming>



How Grassroots Works (Parent View)

- Station-based training
- Weekly player rotation
- Festival game format
- Equal playing time (~50%)
- No fixed teams (UB8/9)

Grassroots Soccer – Open Roster Model

- Pod-based system
- 4-station training model
- Weekly rotation (UB 8/9)
- Aligned with Canada Soccer & Manitoba Soccer

Is Open Roster Mandatory?

- YES – Required under Grassroots Standards
- No fixed teams at U13 and below (This year only for UB8/9)
- Players must be able to move between teams
- Focus: Development over results

What is Open Roster (Player Pool)?

- Players grouped in a pool
- Weekly rotation between teams (only for UB 8/9)
- Equal playing time (minimum 50%)
- Flexible game-day team creation

Adoption Across Canada

- Ontario & BC – Early adopters (large systems)
- Alberta – Festival model (Calgary/Edmonton)
- Manitoba – Transitioning (WYSA aligned)
- National requirement fully enforced by 2026

Why This Model Works (Data & Outcomes)

- Canada Soccer: ~1M registered players nationwide
- Higher retention with equal playtime & inclusion
- Balanced teams = better game quality
- More touches → better development

SWCC Implementation & Benefits

- Pod-based system with weekly rotation
- 4-station training model (development focus)
- Improves retention & parent satisfaction
- Fully aligned with CSA/MSA standards

Parent Communication

- Why no fixed teams?
 - Equal development
 - Fair play
 - Better learning

OPEN ROSTER SYSTEM FOR 121 PLAYERS

FAIR PLAY. BETTER DEVELOPMENT. STRONGER PLAYERS.

121 PLAYERS TOTAL

GIRLS: 30 PLAYERS

- U8/9 - 18 Players
- U10 - 12 Players



BOYS: 91 PLAYERS

- U8/9 - 51 Players
- U10 - 38 Players

GIRLS PROGRAM

STEP 1: TRAINING POD

Players train in one girls pod.

GIRLS POD (COMBINED)

U8/9 GIRLS
18 PLAYERS



U10 GIRLS
12 PLAYERS



STEP 2: MATCH DAY TEAMS

Balanced Teams
• Equal Playing Time

U8/9 GIRLS - 2 TEAMS
MAX 10 PLAYERS EACH



U10 GIRLS - 1 TEAM
MAX 10 PLAYERS



STEP 3: TRAINING DAY

STATION-BASED TRAINING (EXAMPLE)

4 Stations on Each Field
Station Size: 20m x 30m
Stations Rotate
Every 12-15 Minutes



TEAMS INCLUDE PLAYERS FROM THEIR POD
Balanced Age • Balanced Ability • Flexible Rosters

BOYS PROGRAM

STEP 1: TRAINING PODS

Players train in age-based boys pods.

U8/9 BOYS - POD 1
26 PLAYERS



U8/9 BOYS - POD 2
25 PLAYERS



U10 BOYS POD
38 PLAYERS



STEP 2: MATCH DAY TEAMS

Balanced Teams
• Equal Playing Time

U8/9 BOYS - 5 TEAMS
MAX 10 PLAYERS EACH



U10 BOYS - 4 TEAMS
MAX 10 PLAYERS EACH



STEP 3: TRAINING DAY

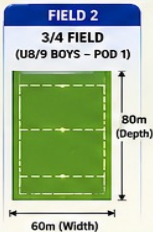
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PRACTICE GROUND LAYOUT - 4 FIELDS



STATION SETUP (ON EACH FIELD)



PLAYER ROTATION & BALANCE

- **Rotate Players Regularly**
Move 2-3 players between teams every few weeks to keep teams balanced.
- **Track Playing Time**
Monitor minutes to ensure equal opportunities.
- **Coach Collaboration**
Share observations and adjust teams together.
- **Keep It Development-Focused**
Rotation builds better players.

FINAL TEAM SUMMARY

GIRLS (30 PLAYERS)		
U8/9 GIRLS	2 TEAMS	9 - 10 PLAYERS
U10 GIRLS	1 TEAM	10 PLAYERS
BOYS (91 PLAYERS)		
U8/9 BOYS	5 TEAMS	9 - 10 PLAYERS
U10 BOYS	4 TEAMS	9 - 10 PLAYERS

TOTAL = 11 TEAMS | 121 PLAYERS

KEY BENEFITS

- ✓ Flexible Rosters
- ✓ Balanced Competition
- ✓ Equal Playing Time
- ✓ Better Development
- ✓ Stronger Players



211 Chancellor Matheson Road
 Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3T 1Z2
 Phone: 204-233-8899 Fax: 204-233-9121
 Website: www.winnipegyouthsoccer.com
 Email: wysa@wpsoccer.com

WYSA GRASSROOTS PROGRAM – COMPETITION INFORMATION

Match Days: U9 on Tuesdays, U10 on Thursdays, U8 on Sundays (or Saturdays).

Block 1 Member Match Days: May 5th, 7th, 10th, 19th, 21st, and 24th. June 2nd, 4th, 7th, 16th, 18th, and 21st.

Block 1 WYSA Match Days: May 12th, 14th, and 26th. June 9th, 11th, 14th, 23rd, and 25th.

Match Day Notes:

- May 10th is Mother’s Day and June 21st is Father’s Day, however these are not holidays and WYSA does schedule matches on these days. While neither are WYSA Match Days, it will be up to the Member Organizations to schedule matches on these days for the U8s.
- No WYSA Match Day on May 17th due to the Victoria Day Long Weekend. This WYSA Match Day will be played on May 10th instead.
- No WYSA Match Days will be scheduled on May 28th or 31st due to the Boston Pizza Players Tournament. Registration will be open to groups who wish to participate. These will be played on June 4th and 7th respectively.
- No WYSA Match Day will be scheduled on June 28th due to the U8 – U12 Recreational Jamboree taking place that weekend where each team will receive 2 matches. WYSA’s Jamboree events are large-scale festivals with hundred of matches throughout the weekend, various skills challenges, food trucks, and more!

	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
May	3	4	5	6	7	1	2
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
	31						
	June		1	2	3	4	5
7		8	9	10	11	12	13
14		15	16	17	18	19	20
21		22	23	24	25	26	27
28		29	30				

WYSA Match Day Format: WYSA Match Days will follow a festival format with teams playing two games each: one at 6:00 PM and another at 7:00 PM. Each match will last 25 minutes.

WYSA Match Day Groupings: Groups can expect to be scheduled to play with groups from areas further away than they may normally expect to play, with one group serving as the host or home group. As there is some expectation that Organizations may decide to work together for Member Match Days, the WYSA Match Days will pair Organizations together who may not be the ‘closest neighbour’. Scheduling will be done with geographic considerations, however we understand that there are certain areas with higher and lower densities of membership, so there may be some expectations of travel above 5km.

UPDATED APRIL 16, 2026





CANADA SOCCER GRASSROOTS STANDARDS

	ACTIVE START	FUNDAMENTALS		LEARN TO TRAIN	
CRITERIA	U4-U6	U6-U7	U8-U9	U10-U11	U12-U13
Principle: Grassroots Programs should be appropriately structured for the age and stage of the participating players and allow for the opportunity for multi-sport participation, activity sampling, and life balance.					
Match Day Roster	N/A	Ideal: 6 players Maximum: 9 players	Ideal: 8-10 players [depending on game format] Maximum: 12 players	Ideal: 10-12 players Maximum: 14 players	Ideal: 14 players Maximum: 18 players
Player-to-Coach Ratio	U4: One-with-One (child-with-adult informal play) U6: Ideal: 4:1; Maximum 8:1	Ideal: 6:1 Maximum 9:1	Ideal: 8:1 Maximum 10:1	Ideal: 8:1 Maximum 12:1	Ideal: 8:1 Maximum 14:1



MANITOBA SOCCER GRASSROOTS GUIDELINES

STAGE	FUNDAMENTALS		LEARN TO TRAIN	
Age Group	U6/U7	U8/U9	U10/U11	U12/U13
Playing Format	3v3	5v5 (Including GK)	7v7 (Including GK)	9v9 (Including GK)
Coaching Requirements (2019)	FUNDamentals + MED + RIS	FUNDamentals + MED + RIS	Learn to Train + MED + RIS	Learn to Train + MED + RIS
Roster Size (Recommended)	Ideal: 6	Ideal: 8	Ideal: 10	Ideal: 14
Game Duration	Player Festival	40 Minutes	45 Minutes	50 Minutes
Referee/Game Leader	Game Leader	Game Leader	Referee	Referee
Throw ins	No (Pass or Dribble in)	No (Pass or Dribble in)	No (Pass or Dribble in)	Yes
Offside	No	No	No	Yes
Substitutions	Unlimited (any stoppage or on fly)	Unlimited (any stoppage or on fly)	Unlimited (any stoppage)	Unlimited (any stoppage)
Field width/ field length	Width: 18-22m / Length 25-30m	Width: 25m-30m / Length 30-36m	Width: 30-36m / Length 40-55m	Width: 42-55m / Length 60-75m
Ball Size	3	3 or 4	4	4 (or 5 light)

Manitoba Soccer has aligned its grassroots guidelines with [Canada Soccer](#)





STATION-BASED PRACTICE NIGHT GUIDE (S1-S4 MODEL)

GRASSROOTS COACH SIDELINE CHEAT SHEET

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

- U8/9 Practice Night – Tuesday
- U8/9 Practice Night – Thursday
- U10 Practice Night – Monday
- U10 Practice Night – Thursday

ROSTER SIZE

- U8/9 = 8–10 players per team
- U10 = 10 players per team

EACH TEAM HAS

- 1 Head Coach (Team Lead)
- Supports player development, communication and game experience

IF PLAYERS ARE ABSENT

- 1 Use rotation player assigned that week
- 2 Borrow from nearby team if needed
- 3 Inform field coordinator if short players

ARRIVAL CHECKLIST (ARRIVE 15 MIN EARLY)

- ✓ Check station number (S1–S4)
- ✓ Confirm player attendance
- ✓ Welcome players
- ✓ Run 5–10 minute warm-up
- ✓ Start practice on time

FOUR STATION MODEL

Each station runs a mini field for one team.

PRACTICE TIME EXPECTATIONS

Coaches should aim for:

- ✓ Equal playing time
- ✓ Position rotation
- ✓ Encourage decision making
- ✓ Support confidence
- ✓ Start practice on time

OPEN ROSTER REMINDER

Players move teams weekly to support development. This helps players:

- ✓ Build confidence
- ✓ Make new teammates
- ✓ Experience leadership roles
- ✓ Improve decision making

COACH PRACTICE NIGHT ROLE

Each team will have

- Head Coach (Team Lead)

Responsible for:

- Player development
- Communication
- Rotation & playing time
- Positive environment

Each station (field) will feed 3–4 teams and will have 3–4 Head Coaches.

S1 S2 S3 S4

Example per station:

- S1 = 1 Team, 1 Head Coach
- S2 = 1 Team, 1 Head Coach
- S3 = 1 Team, 1 Head Coach
- S4 = 1 Team, 1 Head Coach

EACH STATION (FIELD) WILL FEED 3–4 TEAMS

Each station supports 3 to 4 teams. This means each station will have 3–4 Head Coaches working together.

EXAMPLE PER STATION

S1 = 1 Team 1 Head Coach	S2 = 1 Team 1 Head Coach	S3 = 1 Team 1 Head Coach	S4 = 1 Team 1 Head Coach
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Every station runs one team at a time.

WHY THIS MODEL WORKS

- ✓ More playing opportunities
- ✓ More coach involvement
- ✓ Stronger player development
- ✓ Positive practice experience

QUICK REMINDERS

- Arrive early and be organized
- Communicate with other coaches
- Keep environment positive
- Have fun and model respect

STATION SETUP EXAMPLE

GIRLS FIELD EXAMPLE

BOYS FIELD EXAMPLE

MULTIPLE TEAMS, MULTIPLE COACHES, ONE GOAL.
 Each station (field) feeds 3 to 4 teams throughout the practice. Each team has one Head Coach. Coaches work together to support player development and a positive experience for all.

KEY VALUES

- RESPECT** Players, Coaches, Referees
- SAFETY** First Always
- TEAMWORK** Together We Grow
- FUN** Enjoy the Game!





PLAYERS
8–10 Players
per Station



AGE GROUP
U8–U10



TOTAL TIME
60 Minutes



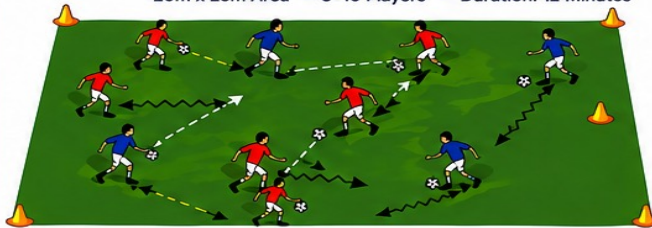
FOCUS
Fun • Development • Engagement



OUR VALUES
Respect • Teamwork • Effort • Fun

1 STATION A – GENERAL MOVEMENT

20m x 25m Area • 8–10 Players • Duration: 12 Minutes



FOCUS: FUN – All players are engaged
ORGANIZATION: 20m x 25m area.
PROCEDURE: Players move freely in the space using different movements (jog, skip, side shuffle, back pedal, hop, crawl). Coach calls out movements. Add tag or ball if appropriate.
OBJECTIVE: Improve movement skills, change of direction and reaction time.

TECHNICAL
Awareness
Creativity

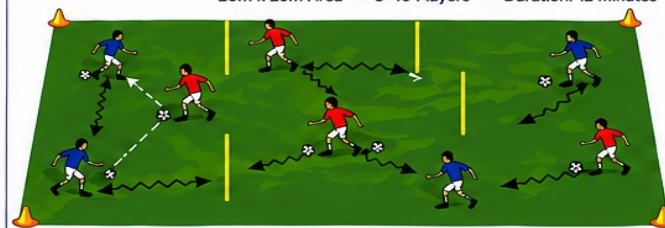
PSYCHOLOGICAL
Confidence
Teamwork

PHYSICAL
ABC's
Change of Direction

SOCIAL
Active
Peer Interaction

2 STATION B – COORDINATION (WITH BALL)

20m x 25m Area • 8–10 Players • Duration: 12 Minutes



FOCUS: Running with the ball – Spatial awareness
ORGANIZATION: 20m x 25m area with poles/cones.
PROCEDURE: Players dribble through the area, around poles, perform turns and change direction. Encourage head up, close control and creativity.
OBJECTIVE: Improve dribbling skills, coordination and control.

TECHNICAL
Dribbling
Running with the Ball

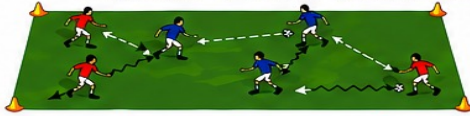
PSYCHOLOGICAL
Confidence
Teamwork

PHYSICAL
Agility
Balance

SOCIAL
Peer Interaction
Proactive

3 STATION C – SOCCER TECHNIQUE

20m x 25m Area • 8–10 Players • Duration: 12 Minutes



FOCUS: Passing, receiving, control
ORGANIZATION: 20m x 25m area.
PROCEDURE: Players work in pairs or small groups. Pass and move, receive and return. Add a defender or target if ready.
OBJECTIVE: Develop passing accuracy, first touch and communication.

TECHNICAL
Passing
First Touch

PSYCHOLOGICAL
Confidence
Concentration

PHYSICAL
Coordination
Speed

SOCIAL
Teamwork
Communication

4 STATION D – SMALL SIDED GAME

20m x 25m Area • 8–10 Players • Duration: 12 Minutes



FOCUS: FUN – Game play
ORGANIZATION: 20m x 25m area. 3v3 or 4v4 (no GK or small GK).
PROCEDURE: Let the game flow. Encourage players to try skills learned in session.
OBJECTIVE: Apply skills in a game, decision making and teamwork.

TECHNICAL
Decision Making
Application

PSYCHOLOGICAL
Focus
Enjoyment

PHYSICAL
Endurance
Speed

SOCIAL
Teamwork
Respect

FIELD SETUP

Use 3/4 Field – 4 Stations



EACH STATION: 20m (W) x 25m (L)
8–10 PLAYERS PER STATION

SESSION STRUCTURE (60 MINUTES)



TOTAL TIME: 60 MINUTES
12 Min per Station + 3 Min Break

COACH TIPS



- ✓ **BE POSITIVE:** Encourage and praise effort. Create a fun and safe environment.
- ✓ **DEMONSTRATE:** Show the activity clearly and keep instructions simple.
- ✓ **OBSERVE & SUPPORT:** Move around, give feedback and help players succeed.
- ✓ **CHALLENGE:** Adapt activities to match players' ability and keep them engaged.
- ✓ **ASK QUESTIONS:** Use questions to help players think and make decisions.
- ✓ **KEEP IT MOVING:** Manage time well and minimize downtime.



DEVELOPMENT OVER OUTCOME



EVERY PLAYER EVERY TIME



MAKE IT FUN MAKE IT POSITIVE



GUIDE - ENCOURAGE - EMPOWER NOT OVER-COACH



RESPECT - TEAMWORK INTEGRITY

COACH TIP: Keep it positive, simple and fun! Let players explore, make mistakes and enjoy the game.

Manitoba Soccer Association – Grassroots Development