



**ONTARIO
SOCCER.**
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Grassroots Festival Guide



January 2018

Play. Inspire. Unite.

Introduction

Purpose

In support of Long-Term Player Development , “Festivals” are the only form of competition for players in the Under-8 age group and form of competition for the U9-U12 age groups. This document has been prepared to assist District Associations, Clubs and Academies to understand why a festival playing format is of a greater benefit to individual player development and, most importantly, ensures all young players have fun. Please use this document and other associated resources (outlined below) to help educate coaches and parents alike so they understand that these changes are in the best interests of their children that play soccer.

Philosophy




“No Scores, No Standings and No Trophies” At this stage, individual player development is paramount. Coaches and teachers should create a stimulating learning environment where the atmosphere is “Freedom and Fun” without the players and coaches bearing the expectations of trying to win games and prioritizing results of games over individual player development. The philosophy underlying the Festival format is to focus on FUNdamentals and emphasize skill development and movement through games and activities that promote a feel for the ball, while teaching basic principles of play within a fun but structured environment.

This document is supported by other Ontario Soccer Documents:

- **Recreation and Development Matrices**
- **Field Organization Guide**
- **A Guide to Festivals in Ontario**
- **Retreat Line Presentation, Game Leader Presentation, FUNdamentals Document**



Which Festivals are Age Appropriate?

Development Stage	Age	Event Types	Game Format (includes GK)
 Active Start "First Kicks"	U4	Interactive games with family member.	Parent and Child
	U5	Interactive games with family member.	Parent and Child
 FUNdamentals "Fun with the ball"	U6	Club Festival Indoor Skills Sessions	up to 3v3 (no GK)
	U7	Club Festival Indoor Skills Sessions	5v5 or 4v4 with no goalkeeper
	U8	Festival* Exhibition Futsal Beach Soccer Indoor Skills Sessions	5v5 or 4v4 with no goalkeeper
 Learn to Train "The golden age"	U9	Festival* Exhibition Futsal Beach Soccer Indoor Skills Sessions	7v7
	U10	Festival* Exhibition Futsal Beach Soccer Indoor Skills Sessions	7v7
	U11	Festival* Exhibition Indoor League Outdoor League Futsal Beach Soccer Indoor Skills Sessions	9v9
	U12	Festival* Exhibition Indoor League Outdoor League Futsal Beach Soccer Indoor Skills Session	9v9

Festival - Includes; Club Festival - District Festival - Skills Festival - Season Festival
Indoor Festival - Fixture Festival - Futsal Festival - Beach Soccer Festival.

(see next)



Exhibition Game		
<p>An Exhibition Game (also known as an exhibition match, preparation match or friendly) is a game in which there is no competitive value of any significant kind to any competitor, regardless of the outcome of the game. The games can be held between separate club teams or between teams in the same club. Quality of play is generally valued over the result. Exhibition games also take the form of a handful of pre-season games that are intended to familiarize teammates with each other and prepare for an upcoming season. Exhibition games will count towards the 20 competition days per season.</p>		
Season Festival	Fixture Festival	Club Festival
<p>Festivals where local Club/Academy or District Association member teams play a regular schedule, same teams at a central location over the course of a season. These festivals would be arranged for preferably a Saturday or Sunday. Typically involving 20-30 teams playing 2 games each during the festival</p>	<p>A one-off festival where local Club/Academy or District Association member teams come together for one day of activity on either a Saturday or Sunday. Typically involving 20-30 teams playing 2 games each during the festival.</p>	<p>A festival that only teams from within the same Club/Academy participate in. This Club Festival would take place on a Saturday or Sunday.</p>
Futsal / Futsal Festival	Indoor Skills Sessions	Beach Soccer / Festival
<p>Futsal is a 5v5 indoor soccer game that is typically played in school gymnasiums. It takes the form of Futsal Festivals and leagues. Futsal leagues are usually managed by a Club or league. Festivals may be organized by Clubs, Districts or Leagues.</p>	<p>These are regularly scheduled practice or training sessions that take place in an indoor facility, typically during the indoor months. These sessions take the place of a competition or game.</p>	<p>Beach Soccer is a 5v5 game played on sand. It can take the form of a festival or league. These games could be organized by Club/academy, district association or facility managers.</p>
Outdoor Leagues	Indoor Leagues	Skills Festival
<p>A schedule of games over the course of an outdoor season, where Club or District based teams play at a variety of venues throughout the area. Teams play an equal number of home and away games over the course of a season. Leagues are scheduled and managed by the District Association or league operators on behalf of Ontario Soccer (no league tables or standings U12 and below). Leagues will follow development matrix.</p>	<p>As above, a schedule of games scheduled typically over a indoor period. Teams in the schedule would typically all play in the same facility. There are no home and away games. Games are scheduled and managed by the facility owners, club or league operators. These leagues usually involve teams from neighbouring Clubs. (No league tables or standings U12 and below). As per Recreational and development matrix as off 2015/2016 indoor season.</p>	<p>One-off festival for local Club/Academy or District Association member teams. This is a mixture of skill activities, coaching sessions and games on a Saturday or Sunday. Typically involving 20-30 teams playing 2 games each during the festival plus the various fun activities taking place.</p>



The Festival

Game Format	Squad Size	Game Duration	Ball Size	Field Size		Goal Size (No larger than)	Playing time per player per festival
4v4	Max 8	2 x 20 min	3	12m to 30m	20m to 36m	5ft./1.52m x 8ft./2.44m	Max 60 minutes playing time
5v5	Max 10	2 x 20 min	3/4	20m to 30m	25m to 36m	5ft./1.52m x 8ft./2.44m	Max 60 minutes playing time
7v7	Ideal 9 (Max 12)	2 x 25 min	4	30m to 45m	35m to 55m	6f / 1.83m x 16f / 4.88m	Max 80 minutes playing time
9v9	Ideal 12 (Max 16)	2 x 30 min (Max 2 x 35mins)	4	42m to 55m	60m to 75m	6f / 1.83m x 18f / 5.49m	Max 80 minutes playing time

For further information on age appropriate competition formats see Ontario Soccer's [Game Organization Guide](#).

A Festival can be structured in many ways but must work within the parameters set in the development stage table above. The points below also give further guidance for Festival formats.

- 4 v 4, 5 v 5, 7 v 7 or 9 v 9 playing formats
- A Festival could take the form of a basic schedule of matches but no standings should be kept (taken from CSA's Wellness to World Cup Volume 1).
- In 4 v 4 playing formats a goalkeeper is not recommended. If playing 5 v 5 the use of a goalkeeper is optional, if you choose not to use a goalkeeper please reduce the goal size.
- All players must play equal time and try all team positions, including goalkeeper [if a goalkeeper is included in the playing format in 5 v 5].
- If the Festival format is purely game based the U8 games are to have Game Leaders and the u9-u12 games are to have referees. This would be a good introduction to match management and education of coaches and parents.
- The Retreat Line is in place in grassroots soccer. See the [Retreat Line](#) information.
- [Game Leaders](#) replace referees at u8 games.



Registration

All players participating in a Festival must be registered with their Club and District Association for the appropriate program. District Association residency rules still apply.

Team Travel

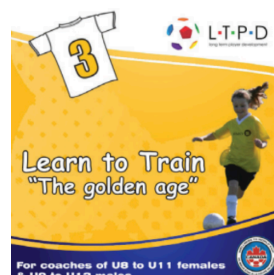
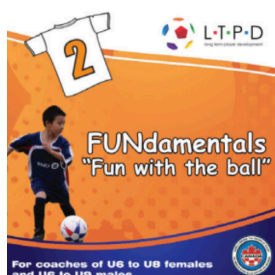
Player development and Festivals should occur only within a Club or District Association. There is no need for expensive, time consuming travel at these younger ages, that travel time is better spent with players training and developing within their local Club or playing other sports and being with friends.

The following team travel will be permitted by Ontario Soccer;

- **U8's** - Within District Only
- **U9-U10** - Neighbouring Districts up to 60 minutes from the district border. This should only be approved in circumstances where Clubs or District Associations do not have enough teams or there are practical travel benefits for the teams involved.
- **U11-U12** - Neighbouring Districts up to 60 minutes from the district border. This should only be approved in circumstances where Clubs or District Associations do not have enough teams or there are practical travel benefits for the teams involved.
- **Memorable events** - U11 & U12 programs have the option of travelling to four (4) memorable events, for cultural experiences and learning. Travel time controls are waived for these 2 memorable events. At least two (2) events must be LTPD compliant and within Ontario. U11 & U12 programs are permitted to use two (2) of their memorable events to travel to an event venue of their choice during the season. The two (2) events selected must take place in Canada or the USA. This event may not meet all Development Matrix requirements.

Please visit the Ontario Soccer website to download the appropriate Coaching Brochure designed to support coaches that work with players in each development stage. Additional documents are also available on line:

- [Game Organization Guide](#)
- [Field Organization Guide](#)
- [Grassroots Curriculum](#)
- [Grassroots Workbook and practice plans](#)
- [Game Leader](#)
- [Retreat Line Info](#)
- [What is Grassroots Soccer](#)
- [Indoor and Outdoor Recreation and Development Matrix](#)
- [Fast Tracking Documents](#)



Frequently Asked Questions

Can we give the participants mementos?

Yes, as long as each participant gets the same memento and it is deemed to be a 'Participatory Memento'. Practical items are recommended e.g. ball, t shirt .

Do we have to guarantee each team the same number of games?

Yes, each team and each player should expect the same amount of playing time.

Can we have two divisions and have the first two teams play in a final game?

No, as this would be a 'play-off' format.

Can we have two divisions and have the second-place teams play in a final game?

No, as this would suggest teams are being ranked at the end of the regular games.

Can Festivals be 2-day events?

Festivals are one-day events.

Does a team require a Travel Permit when going to a Festival outside of their District?

In the odd occasion where inter-District competition may occur between neighbouring District teams , then a Travel Permit is required. A team travelling out of District needs a Team Travel Permit. Inter District travel is not encouraged at this development stage.

How does a Club apply and have a Festival approved?

Approval of the Festival is a District Association responsibility. A Festival Application Form (FAF) must be used when applying to host a festival. The Festival Host Organization requires the approval of the District Association which the Festival Host Organization is affiliated with, as well as the District Association in which the Festival is being played, if different from the Festival Host Organization's affiliated District Association.

Can U4 –U6 age groups play in Festivals?

There should be no Festivals, tournaments or exhibition games from U4 - U6.

Do we still require Player Registration Books?

Player Registration Books are not required for U8 Festivals . Clubs and/or districts may waive the requirement for u9-u12 games. For detailed information see Procedure 6.0 - Ontario Soccer. Registrant Book and Ontario Soccer. Identification Card. What is critical as stated earlier is the odd exception where players from neighbouring Districts participate in a Festival. This must be approved by both Districts via a Travel Permit.

Where can we get u8 Festival rules?

Please see the guidelines on page 3 or visit the Ontario Soccer Website and view [the Game Leader guide](#).

Can boys and girls play on the same team?

Yes. Boys and girls can play on the same team.

How much should we charge for a Festival?

Affordability and lowering the barriers to participation is most important. The objective for hosts should be covering their costs for a Festival.

Can we use U7 or U6 players in an U8 Festival?

Under-7 and Under-6 players are not eligible to play in Under-8 Festivals.


How do we mark out a field for a Festival?

There are a variety of ways to mark out a Festival Field and the most simple and effective manner is to mark the field out with cones. Other ideas within existing fields could include using different colour paint. Half way lines and goal boxes are not essential at this development stage. [The Field Organization guide](#) can be found on the Ontario Soccer website here.

What is a Game Leader? Who can be a Game Leader?

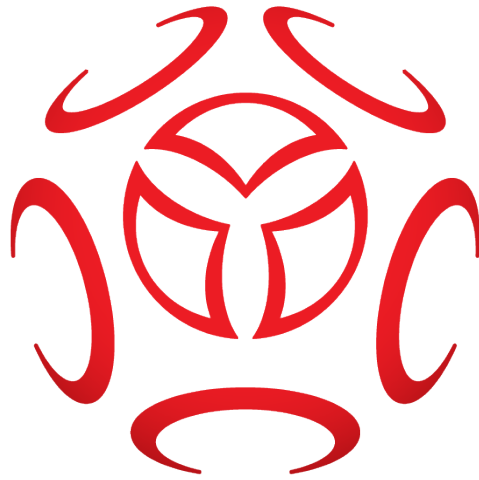
A game leader is a person who has been successfully trained by Ontario Soccer to supervise U8 games. A Game Leader can be a coach, parent, club executive or older player who has taken the GL training.

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