



Grassroots Standards Competition Structure – One-Pager



Who This Is For: Coaches, Club Technical Staff, Districts

Why It Matters: A developmentally appropriate competition structure ensures that young players are motivated by learning and enjoyment rather than pressure to win. By removing standings, scores, and elimination formats, we foster an environment where creativity, decision-making, and love for the game can flourish. This approach aligns with child development principles and supports long-term player retention and growth.

Purpose: To define the appropriate competition formats and structures for grassroots soccer.

Key Standards:

- No Scores or Standings.
 - U6–U9 must use a Festival Format with no elimination games.
 - U10–U13 may use League Format but must not include standings or scores.
 - The goal of grassroots soccer is to create the best possible learning and development environment for all young players in Canada. While the removal of scores and standings does not diminish children’s desire to compete, it shifts the focus of grassroots matches from the adult concept of rewarding performance measured by result toward development and the participant experience, which are more appropriate emphases in children’s sport.
- No promotion or relegation is permitted in grassroots soccer.
- All players should experience fair playing time and try all positions.
- Must support “Open Rosters” that allow the movement players between teams on a regular and ongoing basis.
- Teams cannot be formed using try-outs or other similar evaluation methods.
- Tiering of players is not permitted before U10.
- No provincial/territorial or regional select teams before U14.

Open Rosters Tips

Open Rosters allow players to move between teams within a club on a regular and ongoing basis. This flexible approach replaces the traditional fixed-team model, where players are assigned to one team for an entire season.

What It Looks Like in Practice

- Weekly or Biweekly Shuffling: Players may be reassigned to different teams each week based on attendance, development needs, or to balance competition.
- Festival Format: Teams are formed for the day of the event, often mixing players from different training groups.
- No Tryouts or Cuts: Players are not selected for teams based on performance evaluations. Instead, they are grouped randomly or in balanced ways.
- Shared Coaching: Coaches collaborate across teams, ensuring consistent messaging and support for all players.

