

BC Soccer Policy	
Policy Type	Operational Policy
Created	May 31 st , 2022
Revised	May 29 th , 2026
Reviewed	Annually
Policy Name	Small Sided Soccer Development Policy

Policy Statement

BC Soccer supports and promotes the principles of Long Term Player Development (LTPD) and the Grassroots Standards developed and produced by Canada Soccer establishing the developmentally appropriate small sided game formats to support individual player and team development for the respective age groups

Purpose

To provide direction and guidance to BC Soccer's members and affiliated organizations in creating responsible and beneficial age-appropriate game and training environments for Canada Soccer's LTPD stages, being:

Stage	Name	Age Group
1	Active Start	Under 6 & younger (Grassroots)
2	Fundamentals	Under 6 to Under 9 (Grassroots community)
3	Learn to Train	Under 10 to Under 13
7	Soccer for Life	Under 14 & Older

Standards

BC Soccer members and affiliated organizations, and registered referees must comply with the '[BC Soccer Small-Sided Referee Guidelines](#)' for small sided soccer. No game results and/or standings are to be recorded or posted for the registration year for players/teams participating in Under 13 and younger age groups for their soccer activity.

The following stages of LTPD must be followed by all members and affiliated member organizations:

- Stage 1 - Active Start: adult and children play together informally with no goalkeeper and no competitive games.
- Stage 2 - Fundamentals: game format includes a goalkeeper or reduction of goal size.
- Stage 3 - Learn to Train: - game format includes a goalkeeper.

Under 13: 9v9 to commence: August 1st, 2023, for Coastal Season and April 1st, 2024, for Interior Season.

Stage 1 – Active Start

Age Group	Game Format	Game Duration	Field Dimensions	Goal Dimensions	Ball Size
Under 6 & Younger	Informal	Informal	Informal	Informal	3

Stage 2 – Fundamentals

Age Group	Game Format	Max Game Duration	Max Field Dimensions	Max Goal Dimensions	Ball Size
Under 6 to Under 7	3v3	30 minutes (2x15min or 4x7.5min)	22m x 30m	1.22m x 1.83m (4ft x 6ft)	3

Age Group	Game Format	Max Game Duration	Max Field Dimensions	Max Goal Dimensions	Ball Size
Under 8 to Under 9	4v4 (No GK) 5v5 (w/GK)	40 minutes (2x20min or 4x10min)	30m x 36m	1.83m x 3.65m (6ft x 12ft)	3 or 4

Stage 3 – Learn to Train

Age Group	Game Format	Max Game Duration	Max Field Dimensions	Max Goal Dimensions	Ball Size
Under 10 to Under 11	7v7	50 minutes (2x25min or 4x12.5min)	36m x 55m	1.98m x 5.64m (6.5ft x 18.5ft)	4

Age Group	Game Format	Max Game Duration	Max Field Dimensions	Max Goal Dimensions	Ball Size
Under 12 to Under 13	9v9	70 minutes (U12) (2x35min or 4x17.5min) 80min (2x40min or 4x 20min)	55m x 75m	2.13m x 6.55m (7ft x 21.5ft)	4 (U12) 5 (13)

Stage 7 – Soccer for Life

Age Group	Game Format	Max Game Duration	Max Field Dimensions	Max Goal Dimensions	Ball Size
Under 14 & Older	5v5	70min	30m x 36m	1.98m x 5.64m (6.5ft x 18.5ft)	5
	6v6				
	7v7		36m x 45m		
	8v8				
	9v9		55m x 75m		

Source: [Canada Soccer Field Dimensions](#)

The Retreat Line will be implemented as follows

Stage	Name	Position of Retreat Line
1	Active Start	N/A
2	Fundamentals	Halfway Line
3	Learn to Train U10-U11	1/3
	Learn to Train U12-U13	None

Definitions

Retreat Line: A tool that assists with the development of players and teams whereby limiting offensive player pressure in game start situations in defensive zones (i.e., goal kicks).

Applicable Operational Procedures

Retreat Line: The retreat line is initiated when the ball has gone out for a goal kick. All opposing players will 'retreat' to the retreat line and cannot pursue the ball until:

- The ball is received by a teammate OR,
- The ball travels over the retreat line OR,
- The ball leaves the field of play

There is an encroachment of the retreat line if:

- The defending team encroaches across the retreat line before an opposition player touches the ball, then the referee blows the play stopped and issues a re-take of the goal kick.
- Players repeatedly infringe the retreat line; an indirect free kick shall be awarded from the place where the offence occurred for not respect the restart.

Team Formation

Members and affiliated clubs must form teams from all registrants each year in a manner that is player first and respects the participation and developmental needs of all participants. Below provides the recommended team formation process for the respective age group.

Stage & Age Group	Active Start Under 6	Fundamentals Under 7 to Under 9	Learn to Train U10-U13
Process	Open Rosters: Random or Balanced		Open Rosters: Random, Balanced or Streamed

Guidelines

Player Evaluation Process

For all members and affiliated clubs, it is recommended to support and promote a responsible, ongoing, progressive evaluation and assessment process for player identification, selection, and placement. To remove any reference and promotion of the "TRY OUT" mentality within their club and team atmosphere. All evaluations and assessments should be:

- Conducted under the direction and guidance of the technical lead and supported by experienced and trained coaches.
- Implemented using a universal non numbering system, to avoid subjectively, which identifies player's competencies over a period of time and in multiple environments.

Applicable Operational Procedures

Ongoing Evaluation Sessions are the preferred process to support coaching staff in their player assessments. These evaluation sessions should be held throughout the season to support player placement in ongoing programming and for the follow season's programming and/or teams. In addition to ongoing evaluation sessions, BC Soccer recommends the following three additional processes to support effective evaluation, selection, and placement of players.

1. Match Play and Team Training Environments: providing coaches the opportunity to evaluate and assess players in environments where the player is comfortable, realistic, and there is appropriate dilemma and problem-solving requirements within the technical, tactical, physical, and emotional categories.
2. Open Evaluations Environments: open to a maximum number of players, to ensure a responsible process, who desire an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to participate within the proposed age group and level.

3. Invitation Only Evaluations Environments: inviting a set number of players to be assessed for the specific age group and level, with a responsible player to coach ratio being a minim of one (1) coach to every sixteen (16) players.

Forming of Small Sided Teams

Team Formation: Random Process

- At the discretion of the Club, players are placed on teams through no formal evaluation process.

Team Formation: Balanced Process

- At the discretion of the Club Technical Director or designated Technical Lead, players are placed on teams with other players of varying ability, dependent upon the club player evaluation process.
- Players can be moved from team to team, as per BC Soccer Transfer Rules, during the season, to match the identified developmental needs of the individual players.

Team Formation: Streamed Process (not permitted before U10)

- At the discretion of the Club Technical Director or designated Technical Lead, players are placed on teams with other players of similar ability, dependent upon the club player evaluation process.
- Players can be moved from team to team, as per BC Soccer Transfer Rules, during the season, to match the identified developmental needs of the individual players.

Compliance to BC Soccer Governing Documents

In accordance with BC Soccer's "Bylaws 3.4.a.ii" all member organizations must comply with the applicable Bylaws, Rules and Regulations, Judicial Code and Policies, other Policies, decisions and directives of BC Soccer and the statutes, bylaws, regulations, directives and decisions of Canada Soccer, FIFA at all times

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