



## Program Guidelines (Fall, 2016)

### **Objectives**

The objective of the CESA Recreational Program is to introduce kids to the game of soccer and to develop their individual skills. As such, we do not maintain division “standings” or win-loss records. Micro Soccer, or “small-sided” games, are played in the Under-6 thru Under-9 divisions in order to provide each player with as many opportunities to “touch” the ball as possible. The beauty of the small-sided game is that players have numerous opportunities to get involved with the play and, consequently, practice the skills covered in their weekly practice.

The focus of our efforts should first be on the players’ individual skills, and secondly, on “team play,” or tactics. Tactical skills should be developed, but not at the expense of individual skills. Players will learn tactics through playing the game, as they learn to create space in order to receive passes, or pass to space to efficiently develop an attack, etc.

### **League Structure**

Outlined below are the basic elements of the game, by age division. As players get older, they play on progressively larger fields, with larger goals, and more players on the field. Modifications may be made to accommodate the number of players or the number of teams.

Age Div.	Players/ Team	# Of Fields	Players/ Side	Size of Pitch (yards)	Goal Size (feet)	Time Periods (min.)
U-6	12	3	3 v 3	20 x 30	2 x 3	4 - 8 Minute quarters
U-7	12	2	4 v 4	20 x 30	4 x 9	4/5 - 8 Minute quarters
U-8	14	2	4 v 4	25 x 35	4 x 9	4 - 10 Minute quarters
U-9	9	1	6 v 6	30 x 40	6 x 12	2 - 20 Minute halves
U-10	12	1	8 v 8	50 x 70	7 x 21	2 - 25 Minute halves
U-12	12	1	9 v 9	50 x 80	8 x 24	2 - 30 Minute halves

### **Field Layouts**

Fields for U10 and U12 have standard markings. Fields for U6 through U9 include:

1. Outer perimeter, defined by Touch Lines and Goal Lines.
2. Two lines running parallel to the goal lines; marking the attacking third, middle third, and defending third of the pitch.
3. Under 6 – Under - 9 will kick off from the center of the mid-field. (No markings)
4. Corner arcs with flags.

Fields will be laid out so that the coaches and the “Team Bench” can be located in the center of, or between, the pitches where the games are being played. Parents and spectators should observe the game from the outside boundaries of the field. Each team can have up to three coaches on the “bench” to observe, make substitutions and provide encouragement & direction.

### **Micro Soccer Guidelines**

#### **Game Day Organization**

Approximately twelve (12) players will be placed on a team, which will practice together, as a team. On game days, each “team” plays multiple, simultaneous games. U-6 teams play three simultaneous games; U-7 and U-8 teams play two simultaneous games.

**Player Groupings** - Players should be grouped according to their ability. For example, in a U-7 game,

three groups will be created:

Red Team	“A” Team	4 better players
White Team	“B” Team	4 middle players
Blue Team	“C” Team	4 less developed players

The purpose of this grouping is to allow players to play against players of similar abilities; thus providing a greater chance for all players to experience success. A player will quickly become frustrated when playing with or against players at a considerably different ability level. This is not to suggest that a player should always play in the same group. Only that you should avoid placing players in a situation in which they cannot possibly experience success.

Generally speaking, it is usually fairly easy to identify your 2 or 3 most advanced players and your 2 or 3 less developed players. The ones in the middle can be more difficult to place. Because of this, coaches are encouraged to move players from one group to another *from week to week*. Please refrain from doing this on any given game day, as it may take on the appearance of trying to manipulate the line-ups in order to win all of your games that day.

**Game Structure** - Respective groups, from each team, play each other as outlined below:

	<u>Team “A”</u>	<u>Team “B”</u>
Pitch #1	Red Team	Red Team
Pitch #2	White Team	White Team
Pitch #3	Blue Team	Blue Team

**Setting your line-ups on Game Day**

Player groupings on game day will obviously be based on the number of players on the team that show up for the game.

We strongly encourage coaches to work out their line-ups before they get to the field. Doing so makes life a lot easier on game day and helps things go more smoothly. At the same time, all of your work can be disrupted when a player unexpectedly doesn’t show up for the game. Thus, the need for parents to let you know if “Johnny” is not going to be at a particular game. Outlined below are several examples of how to group your players.

Twelve (12) Players on a Team

	3 v 3 Games			4 v 4 Games			5 v 5 Games		
	*****			*****			*****		
	Plyrs/	Plyrs		Plyrs/	Plyrs		Plyrs/	Plyrs	
	Group	on Fld	Subs	Group	on Fld	Subs	Group	on Fld	Subs
	*****	*****	****	*****	*****	****	*****	*****	****
Red	4	3	1	6	4	2	6	5	1
White	4	3	1	6	4	2	6	5	1
Blue	4	3	1						

Given the above: in 3 v 3 games all of the players play 3 quarters; in 4 v 4 games, 4 players play 3 quarters and 2 players play 2 quarters; in 5 v 5 games, 2 players play 4 quarters and 4 players play 3 quarters. Coaches should try to rotate players from week to week in an attempt to provide equal playing time over the course of the season.

You may not have all players at all of your games, for a variety of reasons. If the total number of players on a team is something other than 12, adjustments have to be made. Some examples are outlined below.

Eleven (11) Players on a Team

	3 v 3 Games	4 v 4 Games	5 v 5 Games
	*****	*****	*****

	Plyrs/ Group *****	Plyrs on Fld *****	Subs ****	Plyrs/ Group *****	Plyrs on Fld *****	Subs ****	Plyrs/ Group *****	Plyrs on Fld *****	Subs ****
Red	4	3	1	6	4	2	6	5	1
White	4	3	1	6	4	1	5	5	0
Blue	3	3	0						

Ten (10) Players on a Team

	3 v 3 Games *****			4 v 4 Games *****			5 v 5 Games *****		
	Plyrs/ Group *****	Plyrs on Fld *****	Subs ****	Plyrs/ Group *****	Plyrs on Fld *****	Subs ****	Plyrs/ Group *****	Plyrs on Fld *****	Subs ****
Red	4	3	1	5	4	1	5	5	0
White	3	3	0	5	4	1	5	5	0
Blue	3	3	0						

Nine (9) Players on a Team

	3 v 3 Games *****			4 v 4 Games *****			5 v 5 Games *****		
	Plyrs/ Group *****	Plyrs on Fld *****	Subs ****	Plyrs/ Group *****	Plyrs on Fld *****	Subs ****	Plyrs/ Group *****	Plyrs on Fld *****	Subs ****
Red	3	3	0	5	4	1	5	5	0
White	3	3	0	4	4	0	4	5	-1
Blue	3	3	0						

As outlined above, when fewer than 12 players show up for a game, situations begin to emerge where some groups will not have substitutes, to the point where some groups won't even have enough players to field a team on one or more of the pitches. When this happens, adjustments have to be made at the fields. A variety of measures can be taken to play and maximize each player's playing time.

1. When one field has no substitutes, play without subs on that field, or rotate the subs you do have from one field to the other.
2. Reduce the number of fields from 3 fields of play to 2 fields of play.
3. Modify the number of players on the field. For example, play 3v3 on one field and 4v4 on another; or play 4v4 on two fields; or play 5v5 on one field and 4v4 on another; etc..
4. Borrow players from the other team.

*When circumstances such as this occur, remember our objective is **To let the kids play and have fun!***

**Substitutions**

Each player must play at least half of the game.

Coaches should make every effort to provide EQUAL playing time to all players.

**Under 6 – Under 8-** Substitutions are made between quarters (unless agreed upon by the coaches and referee before the game begins).

If a player is injured and comes off the field the player can return to the game once the coach receives permission from the referee. The referee will allow the player to return during the next stoppage of play. Injury substitutions should be minimal. Please do not abuse this procedure. The procedure is allowed to maximize each player's time on the field. It is not there for coaches to use as a game strategy.

**Under 9 – Under 12 -** Free Substitutions are allowed during stoppages of play as indicated below.

Substitutes should report to the center flag and wait for the referee to allow them onto the field. For the most part, the referees check during stoppages of play to see if there are substitutes waiting to enter the game.

1. A throw-in for your team

*If a player for the opposing team is at the mid-field flag waiting to be a substitute when the team that is awarded a throw-in has a substitute to enter the game, the substitute for the opposing team may also enter the game. If the team that has been awarded a throw-in, does not have a substitute, then neither team may substitute a player.*

2. Goal kicks

3. Kick offs

4. Player injury

If a player gets injured, a substitution can be made for that player, at the discretion of the referee. If a substitution is made, BOTH teams are allowed to make substitutions.

### CESA Mercy Rule – Under 9 – Under 12 Divisions

The purpose for the CESA Mercy Rule is twofold:

1. To attempt to create a more fair and equitable match.
2. To remind coaches that the objective of the League is for the kids to have fun.

Please familiarize yourself with the rule:

1. If a team gains an advantage of 4 goals, the losing team may place an additional player on the field. If the advantage goes below 4 goals, the losing team must remove the extra player from the field.
2. If the advantage goes to 6 goals, the winning team must remove a player from the field. If the advantage goes below 6 goals, the winning team may return the removed player on the field.

The intent of the rule is NOT to penalize players of the winning team by reducing the number of players on the field, and subsequent playing time, after the goal differential goes to 6. Rather, the intent is to remind coaches that when they go up by 4 goals it is time to start taking measures to make goal scoring more challenging for their team, BEFORE the goal differential goes to 6 goals and they have to reduce the number of players on the field.

There are numerous “restrictions” that the coach can impose. Moving “defensive players” up front is usually not one of them. This tactic usually results in even more goals being scored. On the other hand, “restrictions” such as requiring the ball to be touched by 5 players ( or 4, or 6, whatever) before a shot can be taken can develop the team’s passing abilities, while not humiliating the other team. Requiring the team to pass the ball back into the defensive end and then bring it forward two times (or 3 times, or whatever) before a shot can be taken, can increase the defensive players’ comfort with handling the ball in their defending third. Numerous other examples could be cited. The point is, **sometimes it becomes necessary for coaches to modify their players’ behavior in order to not run up the score**. However, this can be done in such a way as to increase the players’ abilities in other aspects of the game.

While we all “play to win”; winning the match is not the objective of playing the game at the recreational level. Frankly, winning or losing a match by an overwhelming margin is the antithesis of the League’s objectives. By learning to impose some fairly easy “restrictions” of play when the score does get overwhelming can be an opportunity for our players to develop other skills. It also reinforces the concepts of sportsmanship and fairplay.