

MSI 1st Grade 4 v 4 – Program Model and Rules of the Game

Players: 2 teams of 4 field players; no goalkeepers

Officials: Game Leaders (2 Volunteer Parents per Team)

Playing Field: 28yds x 18yds; , PUGG pop-up goals at each end.

Equipment: Players must wear MSI-issued uniforms. Shirts are tucked in. Jewelry is to be removed or secured with tape to avoid loss or injury. Shinguards are worn under socks. Watches are removed. Long hair secured w/soft ties.

Duration of Games: Four 10-minute quarters (2 minute rest between quarters, 5-minute break at the half).

Objective: To get the ball into the opponent's goal and have fun!

GAME DESCRIPTION

To begin, Game Leader rolls ball to one of the two teams. After a goal is scored, re-start from goal line. Goals can only be scored from the attacking half and must pass below the height of the goal posts.

Re-Starts: Opponents should be at least 3 yards away on all re-starts. Following goal, a player can dribble in or play an “indirect” ball from the end line while the opposing team withdraws to its own half. If a team is having trouble advancing the ball from its own half, game leader is to begin play at midfield. Ball going out of play, whether over the end or sideline, is dribbled in or played in by opposing team with an indirect kick. No throw-ins or goal kicks. Corner kicks are taken by the attacking team when the ball has been last touched by the defense and goes over the defending team’s end line.

Substitutions: “On the fly.” Coach is not permitted to delay game to get things organized; kids came to play.

Infringements: Deliberate tripping, handling, etc. may result in an indirect or penalty kick being awarded to the other team. Game leaders will take the time to explain the “fair play” point to offending player. A penalty kick can be taken 15 yards from goal with no opponents between ball and the goal. There is no off-side in 4 v 4 soccer.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Game Leader: #1 Priority: THE FUN OF THE CHILDREN

Be enthusiastic! Leaders are urged to be as flexible as possible. Make all final decisions about interpreting the rules; stay out of the way of play; explain rules as the game proceeds; keep the game flowing - do not stop play unless necessary; demonstrate re-starts; and take re-starts immediately. Be prepared to restrain, politely but firmly, over-enthusiastic parents. Main focus: Let children enjoy the game!

The Coach:

Protect the “spirit of the game”. Dress appropriately and smartly, be on time for practices and games; prepare for practice sessions and the games (substitutions & pre-game interaction); give players equal opportunity & equal time; know emergency procedures - ambulance, telephone numbers, first aid. Set a good example by welcoming other coaches and parents. Be courteous to Game Leaders; listen to the players; appoint a team manager and help structure his/her responsibilities; know the rules of the game and pass that knowledge on to young players; hook them on the game and work miracles on a regular basis!

The Manager:

Assist your coach by organizing the team list (addresses & phone numbers), cancellation procedure, practice & game schedules. Designate Game Leader rotation (in consultation with coach).

The Player:

Bring a size 3 ball and water to every practice; wear your Montgomery Soccer uniform and shinguards to every game; keep soccer shoes clean; arrive at practice on time.

Have fun.... have fun.... have fun... have fun!

The Spectator:

Allow the children to play freely; be enthusiastic, and not critical; be friendly with the opposing team's players and spectators; inform your coach if a player cannot attend practice or a game. Be positive by focusing on what children CAN do and do not let winning and losing determine your attitude toward the children or the game.

4 v 4 ADVANTAGES

Montgomery Soccer's Player Development Program offers its entry level players an introduction to the game with skill clinics and small-sided games which focus on technical development. All available research and observation shows that children have more fun and learn more playing a game with smaller teams and modified rules. 4 v 4 is a game children can actually play. The advantages to a small-sided games approach are compelling:

- Fits the game to the child's needs, not vice versa
- Is simple and fun to play
- Offers a successful* introduction to soccer
- Improves technique with frequent ball contact
- Increases concentration; the ball is always close
- Improves fitness - lively and dynamic tempo
- Creates awareness - situations constantly repeated
- Develops flexibility - all play offense and defense
- Builds confidence as many goals are scored
- Introduces children to the world's greatest game in an enjoyable way
- ***The children enjoy the experience!***

First grade children are essentially self-oriented, with no feeling for teamwork. They are too frolicsome to approach soccer as seriously as some parents might expect.

Parents are encouraged to allow the children to play freely. Your role at these earliest stages is to provide them with an environment that is safe and fun; and hook them on the game. Free play in a limited area teaches good ball control and propels players into a high number of one against one match-ups to develop skill.

What Adults Can Expect from Children

Adults should not expect success unless they reduce the importance of the outcome of the game. Children will not respond well to highly critical adults; their anxiety levels increase and their decision making becomes less effective, so it is important that adults do not become another hurdle to be overcome while the child is playing.

General Principles -

Children, at all ages, are expected to show respect and good manners to all involved (players, game leader, spectators and coaches).

What Can Be Expected of 5 - 7 Year-Olds

Attitudes

- Children will be largely self-centered and cooperation is very difficult.
- They do not compete but merely imitate competition.
- They will not remember the result, will not understand the concept of winning and therefore believe everyone can win!

Looking/Watching/Scanning

- Young children will only watch the ball. They do not look for open space to run into.
- They do not understand the concept of space and any encouragement to "spread out" is pointless.
- They will react too quickly to the flight of the ball.

Understanding

At this age, children will "play at" soccer by imitating rather than playing soccer. It will not be helpful to place children at this age into playing positions.

Are attackers generally trying to score? Are defenders generally attempting to prevent the opposition from scoring? Is there a realization that the situation has changed when possession moves from one team to another? If this is so then adults should merely reinforce what is occurring.

REMEMBER... IT'S THEIR "TURF" YOU ARE ON - PLEASE RESPECT IT

What Children Can Expect from Adults

To make soccer a special, positive experience, adults have a vital role to play. The process of building upon the individual child's experience is vital. The game provides the teaching - the role of the adult is to reinforce the successful discoveries the child makes. Give these children the game, and you will be a fine coach. Be patient, do not expect the impossible from children - they are not small adults.

Children Can Expect Adults To -

- Help, encourage, and support (coach, players, game leader, the process).
- Praise effort and performance more than results with positive statements and actions.
- Set good examples - give them a clear idea of the behavior expected.
- Praise good behavior quickly and repeatedly to show that adults value it.
- Emphasize players first and winning second. The result should be your third or fourth question. The real winning is PLAYING THE GAME.
- Display patience.
- Allow the children to discover the game.
- Let him or her be what he or she is — a child.

Children Can Expect Adults NOT To -

- attempt to "coach" or "manipulate" players while at play
- use any jargon or dictate tactics
- shout, argue, swear, become violent, or use sarcasm
- ignore children who need help
- assess players by their incompetence
- cause any child to feel embarrassed or self-conscious