



*Excellence through Development*

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*President: Mike Synnuck*

## **Canada Soccer Grassroots Standards Implementation**

### **Background:**

On November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025 the LISA member clubs brought forward a recommendation to establish a sub-committee to review the [Canada Soccer Grassroots Standards](#) and recommend an implementation plan for the 2026-2027 LISA playing season.

Sub-committee Members:

- Ryan McQuillan – Bays United
- Steve Clout – Juan de Fuca
- Aaron Walker-Duncan – Gorge FC
- Dale West – Peninsula FC
- Tyler Winstanley – Prospect Lake
- Alexia Eiley – Westcastle
- Eddie Mukahanana – Westcastle
- Stuart Bancroft – Lower Island Soccer Association

The sub-committee met December 10<sup>th</sup>, January 12<sup>th</sup>, and January 26<sup>th</sup>. Stuart Bancroft held a subsequent meeting with BCSA Staff members Lisa White and Yasamin Alipour on January 20<sup>th</sup>.

### **Recommendation:**

The sub-committee supports Lower Island Soccer Association's full adoption of the Canada Soccer Grassroots Standards for the 2026-2027 Fall/Winter Season and recommends the following approach for implementation.

### **Guiding Principles:**

1. Development First - Grassroots soccer prioritizes learning, enjoyment, safety, and long-term participation over short-term results.
2. District Leadership, Club Flexibility - LISA sets the framework; clubs determine how best to deliver within their local capacity.
3. Supported Implementation - Alignment occurs over time, with supported measures and action plans to achieve full compliance.

4. Education Over Enforcement - Compliance is achieved through collaboration, clarity, tools, and communication.
5. Equity Across the District - standards should reduce disparities, not create barriers

## **Implementation Plan:**

### **1. Governance Alignment**

#### **Formal Adoption**

- Adopt a Board motion recognizing the Canada Soccer Grassroots Standards as the guiding framework for U4-U13 soccer within LISA.
- Establish a clear policy framework and update the LISA Rules and Regulations Document

#### **Clarify Roles & Responsibilities**

##### **LISA:**

- Governance and policy alignment
- League formats and competition structures
- Referee development and assignment frameworks
- Minimum CSA-aligned standards and oversight
- Overarching communication

##### **Member Clubs:**

- Program design and delivery
- Coach education (supported by LISA initiatives) and staffing
- Player development environments
- Parent and player communication

### **2. Communication and Education**

#### **Centralized Messaging**

- Lower Island Soccer is responsible for drafting and distributing unified messaging regarding upcoming changes and the implementation approach
- Messaging is supported and further distributed by member clubs
  - All club logos included in messaging
- Timeline:
  - Distribute initial messaging to all LISA participants currently participating in affected age groups before end of the current season

- Secondary messaging sent before the season start

### **3. Rules and Regulations Update**

#### **Rules & Regulations Review**

- Review and revise district Rules and Regulations to ensure they:
  - Uses language that promotes Grassroots Principals
  - Support age-appropriate small-sided formats
  - Not incentivize winning-first behaviours
  - Explicitly support equal playing time and player rotation principles
  - Define Minimum Standards for coaching/rosters/registrations
  - Ensure grassroots standards apply to ALL district-sanctioned programming:
    - House leagues
    - Inter-club competition
    - Festivals, Tournaments and development events
- See attached Rule Summary

### **Practical Implementation:**

#### **Season / Block Length**

A season can be comprised of more than 1 block

- **U4 - U7:** 6 - 16 weeks
- **U8 - U9:** 6 - 22 weeks
- **U10 - U13:** 10 - 22 weeks

⇒ *Minimum 2-week break between seasons/blocks for rest and multi-sport participation*

#### **Practice-to-Match Ratio**

- **U6 - U7:** 1:1 or 2:1
- **U8 - U13:** 2:1 or 3:1

#### **Practice Duration (Structured)**

- **U6 - U7:** 30 - 60 minutes
- **U8 - U9:** 45 - 75 minutes
- **U10 - U11:** 60 - 75 minutes
- **U12 - U13:** 60 - 90 minutes

### **Match Days per Week**

- Maximum 1 match day per week
  - Must respect practice-to-match ratios
- ⇒ *memorable events included in the ratio*

### **Memorable Events (Festivals/Tournaments)**

- **U8 - U9:** Max 2 per season
  - **U10 - U11:** Max 2 per season
  - **12 - U13:** Max 3 per season (1 per block: fall/winter/spring)
- ⇒ *Excessive travel discouraged*
- ⇒ *Memorable Events must mirror grassroots standards and be sanctioned*
- ⇒ *LISA to adapt LISA Events (Mini-Fest, U11-U13 Festivals) to align with requirements*
- ⇒ *Memorable events (festivals and tournaments) are included when considering overall training-to-match balance.*

## **Coaching Qualifications:**

### **Coaching Stream Certifications**

- Active Start: Online + Practical
- Fundamentals: Online + Practical
- Learn to Train: Online + Practical

### **Safe Sport Roster**

- Criminal Record Check (Vulnerable Sector) – **Prioritize**
  - Respect in Sport - Activity Leader – **Prioritize**
  - NCCP Emergency Action Planning – **Prioritize**
  - NCCP Making Headway
  - NCCP Rule of Two
  - NCCP Make Ethical Decisions
- ⇒ *Prioritize Paid, Technical, and Staff Coaches to complete Safe Sport Roster*
- ⇒ *Identify Gaps in Club Coach Certification pathway for all volunteer positions*

### **Player-to-Coach Ratios**

- U6: Ideal 4:1, Max 8:1
- U8 - U9: Ideal 6:1 - 8:1

- U10 - U13: Ideal 8:1, Max 14:1

### **Playing Time**

- Minimum target: 50% playing time for every player
- Players must experience multiple positions

## **Player Grouping and Talent Identification:**

### **Open Rosters**

- Players must be allowed to move between teams
- Rigid roster locking is discouraged

### **No Early Selection**

- No tryouts or evaluations
- No tiering before U11 (Expected to change to U10)
- No Provincial or Territorial select teams before U14

## **Match Formats:**

### **Match Format (Maximum)**

- U4 - U6: Informal games
- U6 - U7: 3v3
- U8 - U9: 4v4 (no GK) or 5v5 (with GK)
- U10 - U11: 7v7
- U12 - U13: 9v9

### **Field Dimensions (Maximum)**

- Must fall within [Canada Soccer size ranges](#) for each age group
- U4-U6 – N/A (Informal Games)
- U6-U7 – W: 18M-22M, L: 25-30M (10 mini-fields per standard pitch)
- U8-U9 – W: 25-30M, L: 30-36M (8 mini-fields per standard pitch)
- U10-U11 – W: 30-36M, L: 40-55 (4 mini-fields per standard pitch)
- U12-U13 – W:45-55, L: 65-75 (2 mini-fields per standard pitch or 1 mini-field 18-yard box to 18-yard box)

### **Goal Size (Maximum)\*Expected to change\***

- U6 - U7: 3ft x 5ft
- U8 - U9: 5ft x 8ft
- U10 - U11: 6ft x 16ft
- U12 - U13: 6ft x 18ft

### **Ball Size**

- U6 - U7: Size 3
- U8 - U9: Size 3 or 4
- U10 - U12: Size 4
- U13: Size 5

### **Match Duration (Maximum)**

- U6 - U7: 30 minutes
- U8 - U9: 40 minutes
- U10 - U11: 50 minutes
- U12: 70 minutes
- U13: 80 minutes

### **Rest & Substitutions**

- Unlimited substitutions
- Minimum rest between matches is equal to one match duration

### **Retreat**

- U6 - U10 (Half-way line, No Offside)
- U11 (One Third), No Offside
- U12 - U13 (No retreat line)

### **Side-line Restart**

- U4- U11 - Dribble in/pass-in
- U12/U13 - Throw-in

### **Offside**

- U4-U11 – No Offside
- U12-U13 - Offside introduced

## **Dispensation and Support:**

### **Dispensation Framework**

- Dispensation provides a temporary mechanism to identify gaps and implement a structured action plan to achieve compliance
- Establish a transparent process for clubs unable to meet specific standards
- Dispensations Process:
  - Process supported by LISA
  - Outline actionable steps to achieve full compliance
  - Time-bound
  - Based on good-faith effort

- BCSA will actively audit NYCL and MA2 Members

**Support Mechanisms:**

The LISA subcommittee has identified Coach Education and Safe Sport Roster requirements as the largest barrier to full compliance. The sub-committee recommends LISA prioritize Coach Education at a District level.

Suggestions of practical support include the initiation of a “Grassroots Coach Education Day”. Held the weekend prior to the small-sided season start date, LISA operate and offers all four on-field practical grassroots sessions to LISA members.

As clubs work through Club Licensing renewal and upgrades, establish a District database of Coach Certifications to better understand needs and requirements.

Further recommendations from BCSA suggest LISA member clubs explore options such as “She Can Coach”, “BMO Camps”, and “Sinclair Soccer Summit” as these programs provide support and access to education and certification.