

Canada Soccer Grassroots Standards

Lower Island Soccer
Implementation

What are the Canada Soccer Grassroots Standards?

Canada Soccer Grassroots Standards:

- Are a mandated set of standards designed to provide the best possible learning and development environment for young players in Canada
- Based on Sport for Life's Long-term Athlete Development (2005) and Canada Soccer's Long-term Player Development (2008) as well as global best practice while considering the realities of Canadian soccer
- **Will become mandatory for all member organizations (clubs, academies, districts/regions, leagues) in Canada in advance of the 2026/2027 playing season.**
- **[CSA GRASSROOTS STANDARDS DOCUMENT](#)**

What is Grassroots?



Canada Soccer Grassroots:

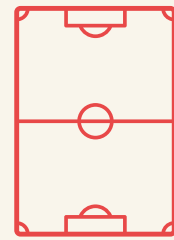
- Within the Canada Soccer Ecosystem, including Lower Island Soccer Association, Grassroots is defined as all programming up to Under 13.
- This includes the first three stages of Long-term Player Development; Active Start, Fundamentals, and Learn to Train.
- Participants compete in small-sided games, with fewer than 11 players per team using modified rules as outlined in the Canada Soccer Grassroots Standards.
- The focus of these programs is on building a love of soccer, sport, and physical activity, skill development, and fostering a sense of belonging within a positive learning environment.

Guiding Principles



APPROPRIATE PROGRAMING

Programing focused on age and stage appropriate programing for all players



APPROPRIATE FIELD AND MATCH FORMATS

Matches played on fields, with goals and balls, following a match format that is developmentally appropriate



QUALIFIED COACHES

Coaches have the greatest impact on the experience of players. Every child deserves a properly qualified coach



MORE TIME PLAYING

Teams should strive for fair playing time and limited travel



DELAYED TALENT IDENTIFICATION

Talent ID and selection should be delayed as long as possible to provide as many players with the best possible environment for as long as possible



REDUCED FOCUS ON RESULTS

Match results should not be the focus as this restricts player development and negatively impacts player experience

What is Changing?

**LISA Season Structure,
Match Formats, Coach
Education, and Player
Evaluations**

Practical Season Structure

Season Blocks Offer Flexibility

Age groups have tailored season lengths and built-in breaks

U4 - U7: 6 -16 Weeks

U8 - U9: 6 - 22 Weeks

U10 - U13: 10 - 22 Weeks

Balanced Practice-to-Match Ratios

U6 - U7: 1:1 or 2:1;

U8 - U13: 2:1 or 3:1

Age-Appropriate Practice Durations

Sessions range from 30 to 90 minutes, increasing with age

Memorable Events Enhance Experience

Festivals and tournaments are limited and aligned with standards



Player Grouping and Match Formats

Open Rosters & Inclusive Grouping

- Players can move between teams within their club; no rigid roster locking.
- No tiering before U11; focus on development.

Age-Appropriate Match Formats

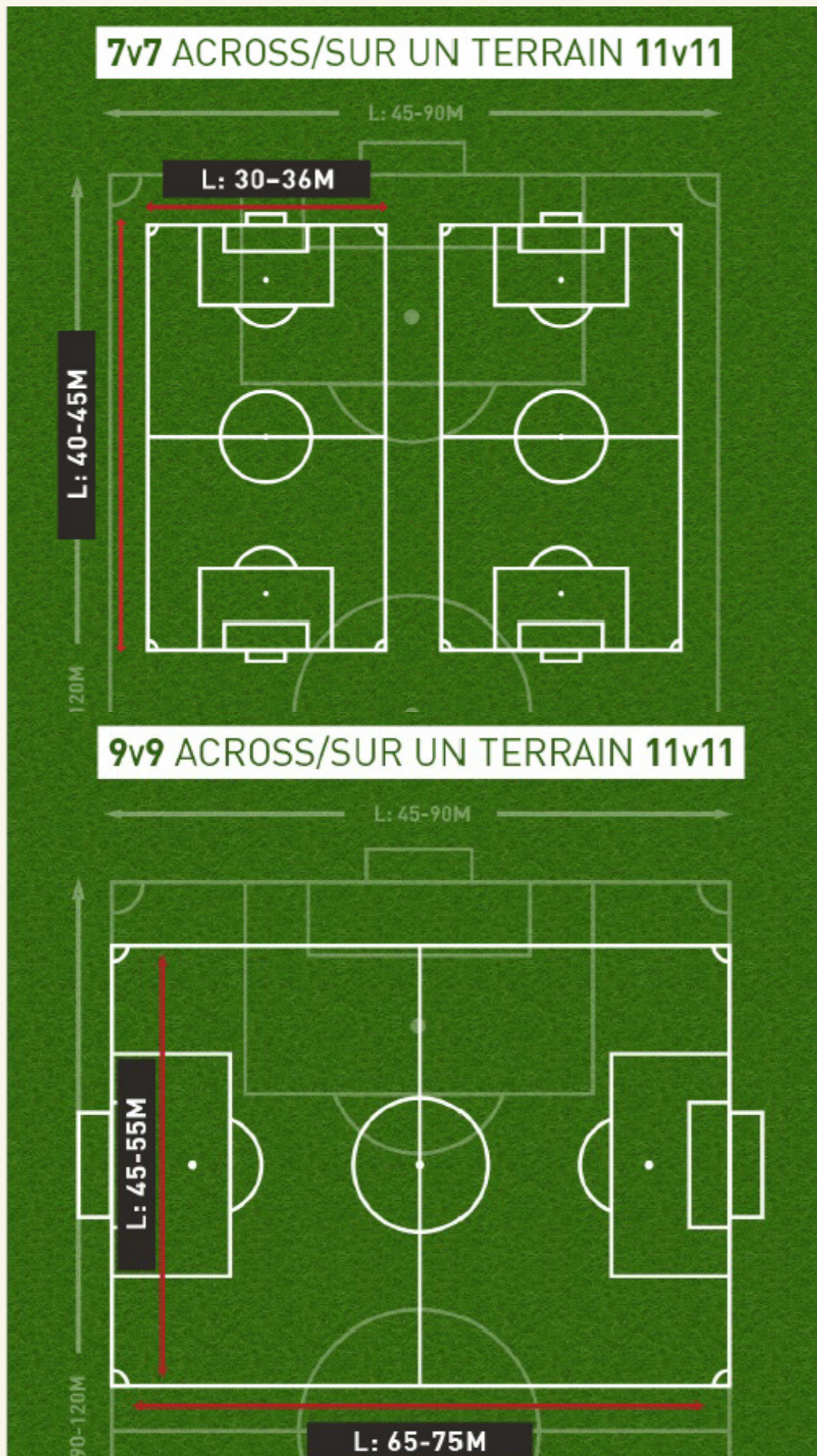
- U4 - U6: Informal Games
- U6 - U7: 3v3
- U8 - U9 4v4 (no GK) or 5v5 (with GK)
- U10 - U11: 7v7
- U12 - U13: 9v9

Unlimited Substitutions & Fair Play

- Unlimited subs ensure rest and participation.
- Minimum 50% playing time for every player; multiple positions encouraged.

No Scores or Standings





Field Size and Match Length

Field Dimensions must fall within ranges (Maximums):

- U4 - U6 - N/A (Informal Games)
- U6 - U7 - W:18-22M, 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)

Match Duration (Maximums)

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

Key Rules and Regulations Updates



Retreat Line

- U6 - U9 - Enforced from Halfway Line
- U10 - U11 - Enforced from One-Third Line
- U12 - U13 - No Retreat Line

Restart of Play

- U4 - U11 - Dribble-in or Pass-in
- U12 - U13 - Throw-in

Offside

- U4 - U11 - No Offside
- U12 - U13 - Offside Introduced

Coach Education and Player Groupings

**Coach Qualifications,
Playing Time, and
Grouping Players for
Match Play**

Coach Education and Safe Sport Requirements

Required Coaching Certifications

- Active Start (U4-U6), Fundamentals (U6-U9), Learn to Train (U10-U13): Online Theory + Practical Workshops mandatory for appropriate level of play

Player-to-Coach Ratios

- U6: Ideal 4:1, Max 8:1;
U8-U9: Ideal 6:1, Max 8-1
U10-U13: Ideal 8:1, Max 14:1

Safe Sport Roster Essentials

- Criminal Record Check, Respect in Sport, Making Ethical Decisions, Making Headway, Emergency Action Planning, Rule of Two

Playing Time

- Minimum target of 50% playing time for every player and an environment in which each player experiences multiple positions

Coaches have the greatest impact on the experience of players and serve a vital role that involves mentoring, leadership, and personal development in addition to teaching skills and tactics.

Grouping Players for Match Play

Identification Process - Removing Stressors

Talent identification and placement can be extremely stressful for young players. In addition to being stressful

- The traditional model of "tryouts" are not the most effective way to evaluate players. Evaluating players on an ongoing basis over an extended period of time, preferably in an environment in which the player is comfortable is a better approach. **For these reasons, tryouts or other similar evaluation events are not permitted in grassroots soccer in Canada up to U13**

Grouping for Match Play

- Players can be grouped for match play in many different ways. Tiering is not permitted before U10 and players should be grouped using a balanced approach. LISA will continue to operate U11, U12, and U13 tiered Interlock divisions for match play within the District.

Open Rosters

- Children learn best when they are exposed to different learning environments. Open rosters allow players to be moved between teams on an ongoing basis rather than the traditional approach of fixed rosters. This provides more opportunities to play with friends, make new ones, and help facilitate meaningful competition between teams.

Key Takeaways and Next Steps

- **Grassroots Standards Drive Development**
Focus on learning, enjoyment, and long-term participation
- **Coaches & Clubs: Key to Success**
Education, communication, and collaboration are essential
- **Changes are mandated by Canada Soccer**
Implementation is guided by LISA and its member clubs
- **Standards are Club, District, Province, and Nation wide**
Canada Soccer's goal is to cultivate an atmosphere conducive to as many Canadians as possible!