

North York Cosmos Soccer Club

Recreational Coaching Manual



Introduction



On behalf of everyone at North York Cosmos SC, we would like to thank you for stepping up to help volunteer this year. Without your time, dedication, input and feedback we would not be able to function successfully as a club!



The following manual will assist you as a volunteer and coach, provide a framework for your respective programs, and act as a valuable educational tool to further your development as a coach, mentor, and role model.

Looking forward to another great year out on the pitch!

Long-Term Player Development (LTPD)

- Launched in 2008 by the Canadian Soccer Association.
- Follows the principles of athlete development as laid out in the generic model Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD).
- The seven stage model provides a framework for development that ensures enjoyable lifelong playing opportunities for players of all levels of ability, as well as development of a pathway for elite players who pursue excellence.

Some of the key components relevant to soccer are below but for more information, reference the LTPD information made available through [Canada Soccer](#) and [Ontario Soccer](#).



LTPD Key Components

This the heart of the program: we are giving children of all ages and abilities the opportunity to experience and enjoy a new sport or build on the skills they have learnt in other areas.

Sometimes a soccer session comes around when it is not convenient for you as a coach. Work running late, plans have changed, or a host of other reasons. We are taking the time to plan out sessions to help you as a coach and the players you teach; as long as you bring the energy, the players will have a good time and come away from the session feeling like they have succeeded in learning.



We do this by including games that are both educational and fun. Each session will be delivered by you with animation, effort, and a sense of how important early experiences are to a child.

This is achieved by tailoring each of our sessions to ensure every player has a ball and gets to use it as frequently as possible. We minimize downtime between activities to maximize the amount of time the ball is moving during a session.

Always try to let the game be the teacher; the players learn more and have more fun when they are given extended time to play the game.

Every session that is included in this manual is age specific. We understand that players need appropriate space when playing to give the best learning environment and different age groups will need to have different field sizes.

Why Children Play Soccer

Children play soccer for a variety of reasons, including:

- To have fun
- To experience thrills
- To be with or make new friends
- To be challenged
- To feel good
- To feel accepted
- To improve and learn skills
- To be part of a team



As a coach, be aware that every child is different and what works for one child will not necessarily work for another. Therefore, make sure that every session is:

- Fun
- Safe
- Positive and Enjoyable
- Provides stimulating activities
- Has a well thought out plan (and a backup!)

Physical Literacy

Physical Literacy is defined as **the combination of mastering fundamental movement skills and fundamental sport skills.**

It is important that children are able to master basic movement skills before specific sport skills. As a result of learning this way, it will improve overall performance ability and provide a solid physical base useful in daily life and other sports. Getting children comfortable to a wide variety of movement types is more important now than ever before. Children are spending more time indoors engaged in non-physical activities, which is creating a gap in physical literacy skills that we can incorporate into our soccer practices.

Physical literacy can help a young athlete develop the foundation for a life time of sport participation and enjoyment.

Remember the ABCs:

Agility

Balance

Coordination



Four Parts of Player Development

At the youth age group, the main objective is to allow players to just play, and they will learn best by doing. Also at the youth level, children begin to identify with and learn from famous players so role modeling becomes important.

Physical – This is the optimal window for player development. Players will pick up skills quicker than before and have a good opportunity to improve speed of movements.

Technical

– Continue working on the basic soccer movements and start to build up their skill repertoire. Make sure the skills are learnt in game context.



Tactical — This is a good stage to improve decision making and start to develop simple combination plays.

Mental — Know as the golden age of learning, it is important to keep players focused on embracing their desire to play and increasing the demands of training

It is important that our Cosmos coaches concentrate on all four parts of player development to ensure the development of complete and confident players

Roles of a Youth Coach

As a youth soccer coach, you are required to wear many different hats. Everything from mentor and role model to part-time monster and zombie. You will need to show compassion and enthusiasm towards both the game of soccer and its participants.

It is important to remember that for a lot of the children you are coaching, it is the first time they have ever had to lace up a pair of cleats. As a result, you will need to fill your sessions with energy, excitement, and a willingness to adapt and be flexible. There will be times where discipline is needed, but the overriding factor should always be the element of fun to the game.

Being a player's first coach is often a larger responsibility than people realize; you will be shaping the child's views on an entire sport and will often have a lasting impact on their participation in the game. It is this responsibility that brings both the biggest challenges and the biggest rewards.

It is important to note that every player is unique and you will need to be flexible in your coaching style to get the best out of all your players. This may involve being loud and boisterous to the main group and immediately having a quiet word in the ear of a child who is feeling shy being away from their parents.



Roles of a Youth Coach...



The main roles and responsibilities of a youth coach are:

- To provide a fun and safe atmosphere for players
- To be a positive role model
- To arrive with enough time to set up before the players begin to filter in
- To have a plan for each session
- To bring the correct equipment to conduct a fulfilling soccer session
- To nurture player's their love of the game
- To be a point of contact for players and parents
- To make sure the parents and players understand what is expected from them and what you will provide

NORTH YORK COSMOS HL FORMAT MATRIX

	Tyke	Mini	Squirt	Atom	Mosquito	Peewee
Age	U5	U6	U8	U10	U12	U15
Format	4v4	4v4	5v5	7v7	6v6	11v11
Ball	Size 3	Size 3	Size 3	Size 4	Size 4	Size 5
Nets	Pugg	Pugg	Skillz 1	Skillz 2	Skillz 2	Full
GK	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Referee	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Parent On-Field	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Offsides	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Throw Ins	Kick-in	Kick-in	Kick-in	Kick-in	Throw-in	Throw-in
Retreat Line	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Game Time	15 min halves	15 min halves	25 min halves	30 min halves	35 min halves	35 min halves
Playing Time	Equal playing time for every player across all divisions					
Subs	On the fly	On the fly	On the fly	Any stoppage	Any stoppage	Any stoppage

Please Keep In Mind

As a recreational coach, you are often going to be working with limited resources, as field size, equipment, player attention and time will be tough to come by. The best way to counter these constraints is with preparation and a good attitude! Come prepared with a plan and a positive mentality, as everyone (including yourself) should be having a good time. Given that you are going to be working with players that are mostly new to the game of soccer, the programs must focus exclusively on game play, preferably with lots of room for breaks and socializing to help keep the children engaged and having fun.

Please note, at events and games, coaches are expected to wear the shirts provided to them by the club.

EVEN PLAYING TIME & BALANCED TEAMS: Our objective is to have a balanced and enjoyable league for all. Your job is not to win. Your job is to ensure your team is having a good time, is safe and that everyone is getting an equal opportunity to contribute.

We want a balanced league - if teams aren't even it leads to bad experiences for players. The Cosmos will make changes to teams in order to balance as needed. We try to do all balancing in the first two weeks of the season, but reserve the right to do so at any time, if needed! If you see an imbalance in your league, you must let us know!

Coaches are not expected to run their own, private practices. You should prepare pre-game activities for your team - that is it. All players Squirt and above are encourage to participate in the Cosmos Development program on Saturday mornings.

Summer Development Program

All Youth House League participants are registered to participate in the Summer Development program for free!

Please encourage all of your players to come join the sessions in order to help develop their skills!

Program dates: June 1st to August 20th @ Roywood Park. Please note: June 29th and August 3rd sessions are cancelled due to holidays.

The summer schedule will be as follows:

Squirt, Mini, Tyke - 9am Session @ Roywood Park

Atom - 10am Session @ Roywood Park

Mosquito & Pee wee - 11am Session @ Roywood Park

Tyke and Mini HL Structure

These divisions will play once a week.

Arrival for: 6:45pm, with session starting at 7pm.

Early arrival game

Duration: 5-10 mins

Your players will not be arriving in one uniformed group. As a result it is a good idea to pick an activity that players can join in easily while the rest of their team arrives.

Activity 1

Duration: 10 mins

Select a warm up activity to get the group active, engaged and having fun. This is a great way to also build some team chemistry and get all players comfortable for the game!

Game

Duration: Tyke - 12 min halves, Mini - 15 min halves

Just let them play. There is no game official, so coaches are expected to help guide game play and keep the appropriate time (including a 5 min halftime between the two halves). The game should be really informal. If the ball goes out of play, coaches should just guide the ball back in. If a goal is scored, coaches should take the ball and have the game start back up at half (with the team that conceded the goal getting possession). Player changes can be made on the fly. Players are encouraged to sit with their parents while resting.

Squirt HL Structure

These divisions will play once a week with an optional Saturday practice run by the Cosmos Development team.

Arrival for: 6:45pm, with game starting at 7pm. Each coach is expected to setup their Skillz net for every game.

Early arrival game

Duration: 5-10 mins

Your players will not be arriving in one uniformed group. As a result it is a good idea to pick an activity that players can join in easily while the rest of their team arrives.

Activity 1

Duration: 10 mins

Select a warm up activity to get the group active, engaged and having fun. This is a great way to also build some team chemistry and get all players comfortable for the game!

Game

Duration: 25 min halves

Just let them play. There is a game official, so let them do their job and run the game. Coaches are still allowed to be on the field and it is important that you look to aid your players out on the field (positioning, encouragement). This is not the time to include lots of coaching points, it is the player's opportunity to have fun!

The game should be formal. Player changes can be made on the fly. Players are encouraged to sit with their parents while resting.

Atom HL Structure

These divisions will play once a week with an optional Saturday practice run by the Cosmos Development team.

Arrival for: 6:45pm, with game starting at 7pm. Each coach is expected to setup their Skillz net for every game.

Early arrival game

Duration: 5-10 mins

Your players will not be arriving in one uniformed group. As a result it is a good idea to pick an activity that players can join in easily while the rest of their team arrives.

Activity 1

Duration: 10 mins

Select a warm up activity to get the group active, engaged and having fun. This is a great way to also build some team chemistry and get all players comfortable for the game!

Game

Duration: 30 min halves

Just let them play. There is a game official, so let them do their job and run the game. Coaches must remain on the sidelines at all times. The game should be formal. Player changes should only be made at stoppages. Players are encouraged to sit with their team while resting.

Mosquito & Peewee HL Structure

These divisions will play once a week with an optional Saturday practice run by the Cosmos Development team.

Arrival for: 6:45pm, with game starting at 7pm. Each coach is expected to setup their Skillz net for every game.

Early arrival game

Duration: 5-10 mins

Your players will not be arriving in one uniformed group. As a result it is a good idea to pick an activity that players can join in easily while the rest of their team arrives.

Activity 1

Duration: 10 mins

Select a warm up activity to get the group active, engaged and having fun. This is a great way to also build some team chemistry and get all players comfortable for the game!

Game

Duration: 35 min halves

There is a game official, so let them do their job and run the game. This is a typical soccer game played in a small-sided format to encourage touches on the ball.

First Night Game-Plan

Prior to the first night, All coaches are expected to stop by the clubhouse to pickup their team kits, balls and team net (net must be handed back at the end of the season!).

The first night is always a challenge - the primary objective is to make every player feel comfortable and excited for the upcoming summer season of soccer. Please ensure that you have contacted every member of your team prior to the first night to introduce yourself and let them know exactly what is going to happen on this first night!

All games on the first week will be delayed to a 7:15 start and all officials will be cutting the games short.

Equipment:

All players will receive a team jersey, shorts, a ball and socks - please hand this out right away. We will provide a variety of sizes and so please match them to the appropriate players. All players are expected to bring shin guards and soccer cleats! (not provided by Club)

Time For Team Intros:

Teams will be given time to run their own team "ice breakers" and get in an extended warm up prior to starting the games.

Balancing:

We are aiming to balance the teams so all teams have an enjoyable time. All coaches are required to judge their team/opponent and provide the Club with an honest, truthful assessment of the team balance.

Additional Items

Conduct:

Spectators are not permitted behind the goal area during a game. They are also expected to keep 5 feet (1.5 m) away from the sidelines. The coaches and conveners are responsible for ensuring that spectators do not challenge the referees or their decisions. Abusive or foul language will not be tolerated. Anyone so doing will be warned only once. Repeat violators will be required to leave the field.

Medals and Team Pictures:

All leagues will conclude with a final tournament and all players will receive a medal. Team pictures are taken in the middle of the season, with exact dates to be passed along at the start of the season.

Recourse in Case of Noncompliance:

If a player does not comply with the club rules, the player will be discharged from the club at the discretion of the NY Cosmos executive. Dues paid will not be refunded.

If a coach does not comply with the club rules, he or she will be asked to resign at the discretion of the NY Cosmos executive.

Goalkeepers (Squirt & Up):

We encourage teams to rotate team goalkeepers, unless one individual has taken a keen interest. We recommend switching the keeper at every half.

Communication:

If you have an issue - we want to hear about it. We are here to support you and will do everything in our power to ensure a smooth and enjoyable volunteer experience!

Points of Contact at the Cosmos

All League Related Matters:

Jenna Kollias, Club Manager

info@northyorkcosmos.com

All Financial Matters:

Becca Lane, Treasurer

becca@bell.net