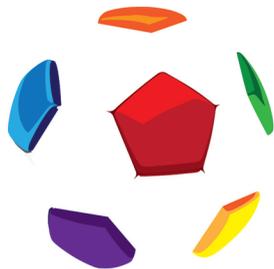


# ONTARIO SOCCER ASSOCIATION

## Field Organization Guide



L·T·P·D

long term player development



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## Foreword

This resource was designed and created to assist member District Associations, Clubs, Academies, Municipalities and Coaches in utilizing their available field facilities to accommodate the various sizes of fields that are required for our young players to play on in a successful transition to development-stage appropriate field sizes.

Players in the various stages of physical and cognitive development should play on fields that are designed to enhance their soccer experience whilst competing in games. By playing on fields sized to their physical and mental abilities, children will grow in confidence by being more involved in the game. Technical skills will improve and psychologically they will have a far more positive and rewarding experience.

By adopting the recommendations that follow, you will be able to utilize your current fields and very quickly and easily “convert” them into the appropriate size for the relevant age and stage of the players who will be playing on them.

It is understood that Clubs will have a variety of different size fields available to them. Some Clubs will have existing permanent 11v11, 9v9, 7v7, 5v5 and 3v3 fields, most will not. With some creativity and a will to get it done, an 11v11 field can accommodate all the sizes of fields required.

Around the province the various municipalities operate a variety of differing business models. Some municipalities work very closely with their community Clubs and Academies and will be accommodating to adjustments to field dimensions and goal sizes. Others are challenged by these changes. Districts, Clubs and Academies can work closer together to inform municipalities of the field and goal sizes and the need for this change and transition period—and how it benefits the players and the community.

You may find that independent schools and local school boards can be a little more accommodating. The changes and additions to their school soccer fields can in turn be used by school programs. This is an attractive benefit of providing portable goals on school soccer fields. Organizing a meeting with local school principals and explaining the rationale for the field additions (goals) may prove beneficial to both your Club and school programs. This is a win-win for both organizations. Work with them for mutual rewards.

\*Please note not all diagrams are drawn to scale.



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# SMALL-SIDED SOCCER: MEETING THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN

The main theme throughout small-sided soccer is to meet the needs of children and eleven-a-side soccer does not meet those needs.

Children need a modified game that fits their age and stage of learning and too often it's the children that are modified to meet the requirements of a game.

Small-sided soccer modifies soccer without losing the essence of the game, which is important for children and therefore is the appropriate introduction to the game.

All available research and observations show that children have more fun and learn more playing a game with smaller teams and modified rules. Small-sided soccer is a game children can actually play rather than struggling to understand a game created for adults.



Small-sided soccer aims to set realistic expectations. It focuses on the development of children rather than the result of the match.

For their future lives, children need to learn that co-operation is vital but also experience the joys that being part of a team can bring. Soccer is a fantastic and exciting game that can teach those life skills.

## Extract from The Future Game - The FA

Here are some of the reasons why we, as soccer coaches, administrators and parents must guarantee that our young soccer players play small-sided games:

1. Because we want our young soccer players to touch the soccer ball more often and become more skilful with it! (Individual technical development)
2. Because we want our young soccer players to make more, less-complicated decisions during the game! (Tactical development)
3. Because we want our young soccer players to be more physically efficient in the field space they are playing in! (Reduced field size)
4. Because we want our young soccer players to have more individual teaching time with the coach! Fewer players on the field and fewer players on the team will guarantee this! (Players need to feel worthy and need to feel important)
5. Because we want our young soccer players to have more, involved playing time in the game! (More opportunity to solve problems that only the game presents)
6. Because we want our young soccer players to have more opportunity to play on both sides of the ball! (More exposure to attacking and defending situations)
7. Because we want our young soccer players to have more opportunities to score goals! (Pure excitement)

These are the reasons why we adults must foster “Small-Sided Games” in our youth soccer programs. The “Small-Sided” environment is a developmentally appropriate environment for our young soccer players. It’s a FUN environment that focuses on the young soccer player.

It just makes sense, doesn’t it?

Posted with permission of [US Youth Soccer](#)

Mini soccer has been around in Canada since the late 80’s and numerous clubs and academies in Ontario have been successfully operating 3v3 to 7v7 programs for several years. These game formats are successful due to the young player’s natural progression to larger fields and goals as they themselves grow physically and mentally.



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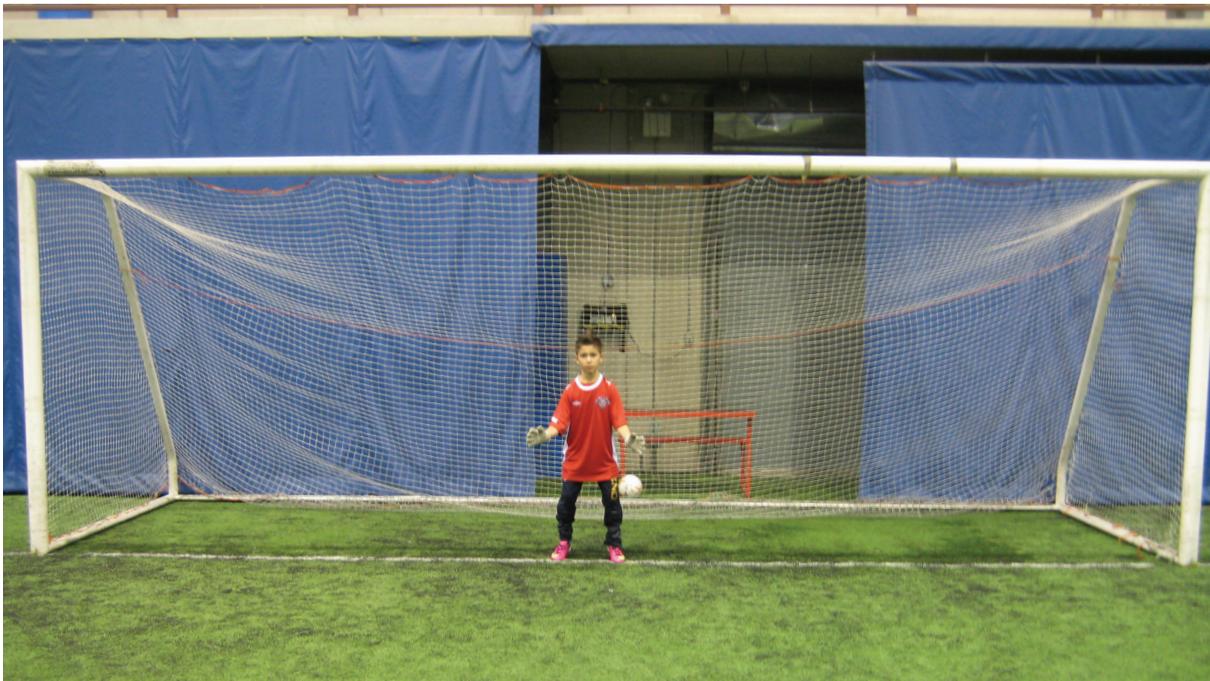
## The Even Playing Field Perspective

It is impossible for a 10-11 year old player to play “real soccer” on an 11v11 full size adult field. They are not big enough nor do they have the correct spatial conception of the field. They are playing soccer within a 10-15 yard radius of their present playing position.

An average child under the age of 10:

- Weighs less than half of what a mature (real) player weighs.
- Has less than half the strength and power of a mature adult.
- Is about three quarters the height of an adult.

Asking a 10 year-old player to play 11v11 on a full size field is like asking an adult to play on a field 250 yard long 150 yards wide, with goals 16 feet high by 48 feet wide. This would be physically impossible for us, yet we have asked our children to play on an adult-sized field.



What chance do I have? This is the same size goal that Gianluigi Buffon, Iker Casillas and Petr Cech defend against. And I'm only 11.

## Working Together Equals Success

The information presented in this Field Organization guide ties directly back to the information shown in both the recreation matrix and the development matrix. Ideally we would like both recreation and competitive soccer programs to adopt the matrices as soon as possible. The OSA will be mandating the implementation of the Development Matrices across the province in all competitive soccer from 2014. The OSA will then be working with Districts, Clubs and Academies and tightening up on the implementation of the development matrices over the years to follow.

If Districts, Clubs and Academies can make that transition now, in both recreation and competitive matrices, it is strongly recommended to do so; it will ensure the players are in a significantly improved learning environment.

The implementation and success of any program can be strengthened and solidified if people and organizations work together; therefore it is important that Districts, Clubs and Academies work closely with their local Municipalities and school boards in this transition into various formats of the Small-Sided game.

Flexibility, creativity and sharing of resources and ideas are always encouraged but especially during this important transition period. Playing formats must be adopted e.g. 5v5 at u8, but some reasonable flexibility in field sizes and goal sizes is understood as we transition. As further explained in this document, fields can be marked out with cones and flags and goal sizes may not be perfect. Communication and understanding are key to ensuring there is a level playing field.

The OSA is trusting that Districts, Clubs and Academies will do the right thing and ultimately what is best for the developing player. Education is the key to success at all levels, so parents, players, coaches, administrators, referees, boards, leagues and municipalities all understand the benefits and rationale behind this transition, and how it is being implemented.

The only additional cost that organizations will incur is the purchasing of goals. Again, with Districts, Clubs and Academies working together with municipalities and school boards, these goals could be purchased in bulk, therefore reducing the cost. This investment in correctly sized goals will go a long way in the player's enjoyment of the game. Understand that there is a three-year allowance period for organizations to have the correct size of goals.



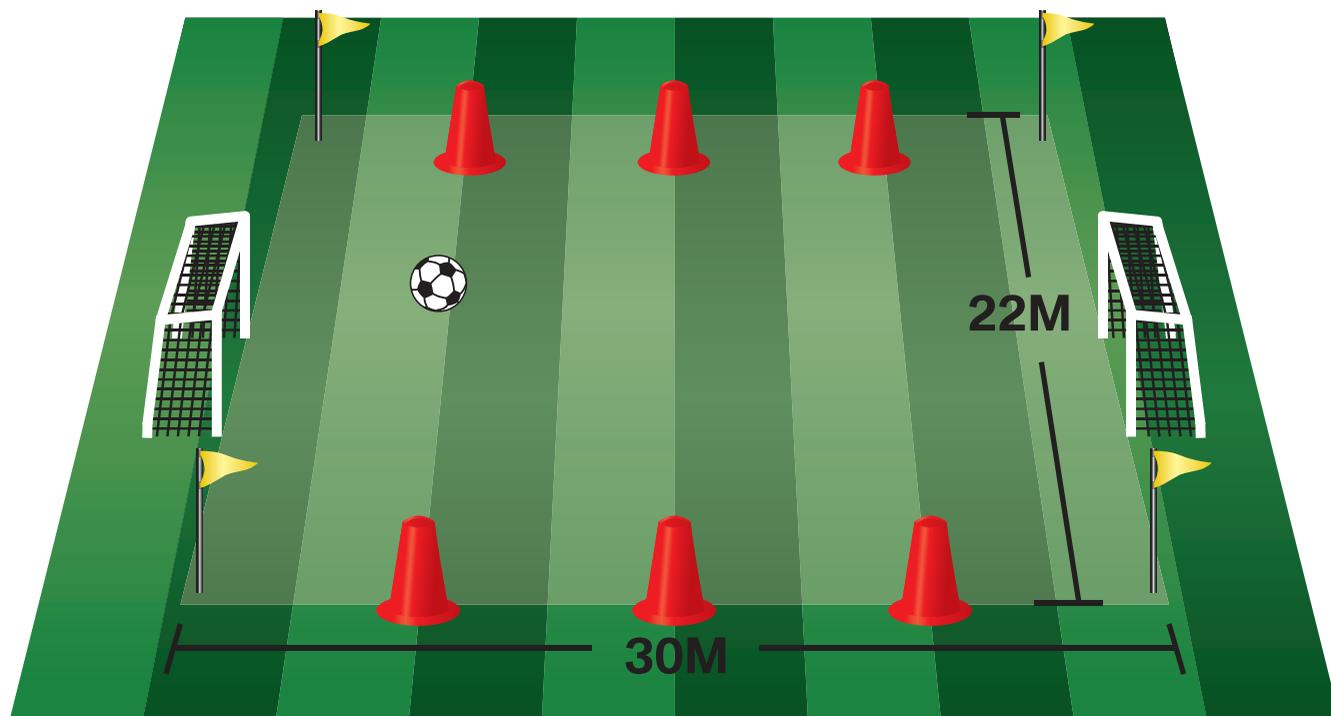
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## 3v3 Fields

3v3 soccer is an introduction to young FUNdamental players to directional soccer with targets. This is their first introduction to playing with teammates and playing against opposition other than their parents. There are no inter-Club games at this age group.

Age	Ball	Min Field	Max Field	Roster	Team	Goals	Game
U6	3	18m x 25m	22m x 30m	Max 6	3 no GK	5ft x 8ft	30 min



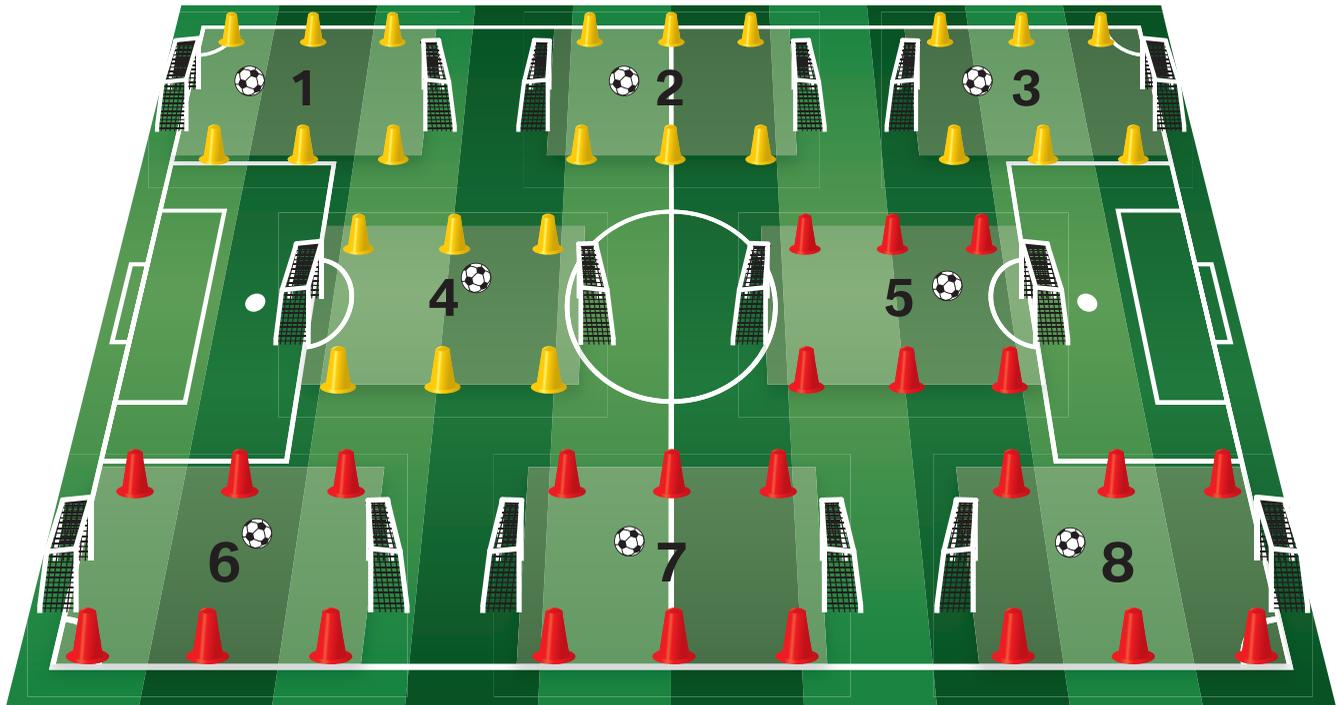
**DIAGRAM 1**

The above, diagram 1, shows a 3v3 soccer field at its maximum dimensions, 30 m x 22 m. The goals are portable and should be no larger than 5ft x 8ft. Pop up nets (Pugg) are recommended. There is no need for any other field markings. These 3v3 fields can be placed on an existing soccer fields or on any available space. Several of these fields can be placed on a 7v7 or 11v11 field.

The field above has been delineated using marker cones. In the absence of lines, cones are perfectly acceptable and suitable to create a mini soccer field. Flags have been put in place to show the corners of the field.

“I never look at results. I mean, which player scored the most goals and even which one runs the fastest. These factors can only have meaning according to the relevant stage of progress of the young player. I mostly watch how the players run; for example, whether he runs lightly. Creativity with the ball is also important and of course, the willingness to play as well as the love of the game. I think that those factors are crucial in forecasting how a player will present himself in the future”

Wim Jonk, AJAX Head of Youth Academy



**DIAGRAM 2**

The above, diagram 2, shows eight, 3v3 fields arranged on a 11v11 field. Using existing lines and cones with portable pop-up nets, several 3v3 fields can quickly be placed ready for the kids to play. Various layout options are available but consideration of permanent goalposts, spectator access and viewing have to be considered.

## 5 v 5 Fields

### The five benefits of five-a-side soccer (FIFA Grassroots)

- 1 The children discover football through the variety of games offered
- 2 Opportunity for boys and girls to play in considerable numbers
- 3 Festival atmosphere (festivals, training sessions, activities, parties)
- 4 Helps with the development of the children's intellectual, emotional and motor skills
- 5 The priority is on play rather than winning

### Examples of Organization (FIFA Grassroots) Principles

Four to six 5-a-side pitches can be arranged on a full-size football pitch (11 a side)

Matches can take place simultaneously on these pitches

Two or three 5-a-side pitches can be arranged on a half size football pitch.  
Matches can take place simultaneously on these pitches

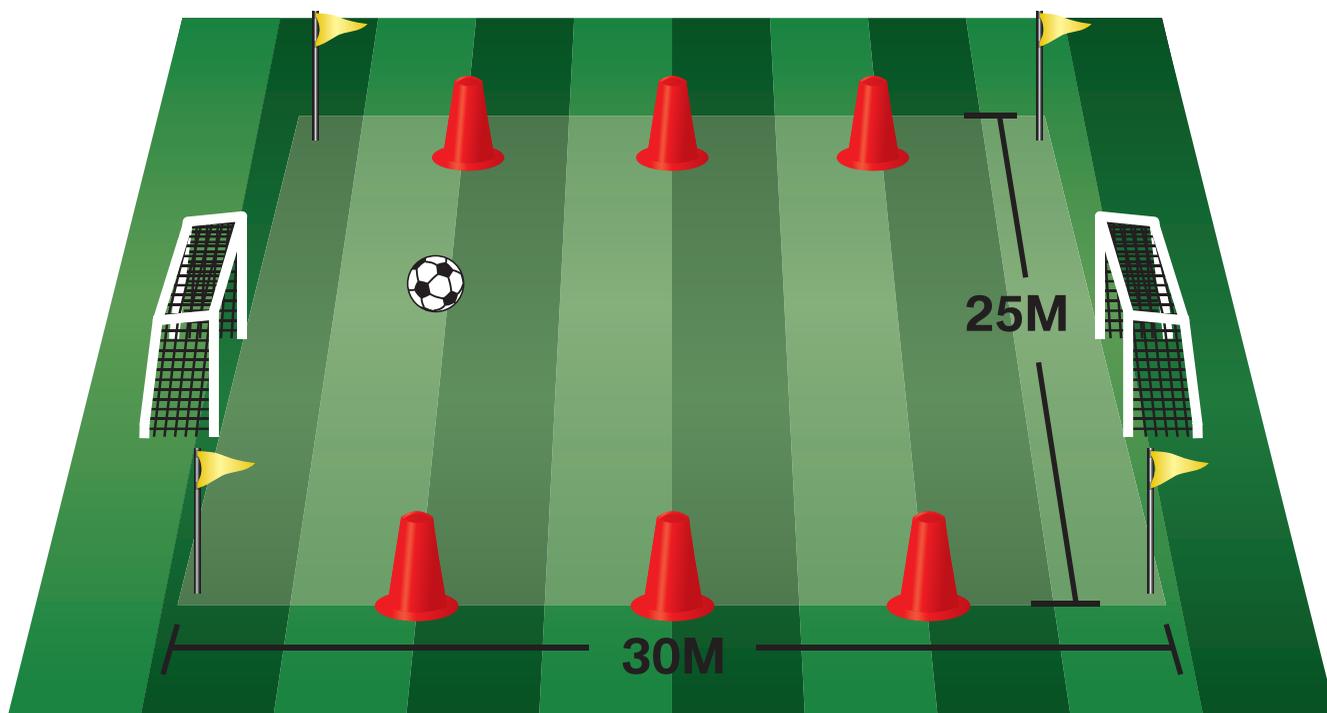
### It is recommended that;

The existing lines are used, including touchline and goal line, goal area of the 11-a-side pitch

Cones are used to finish marking out the 5-a-side areas (additional lines need not be drawn)

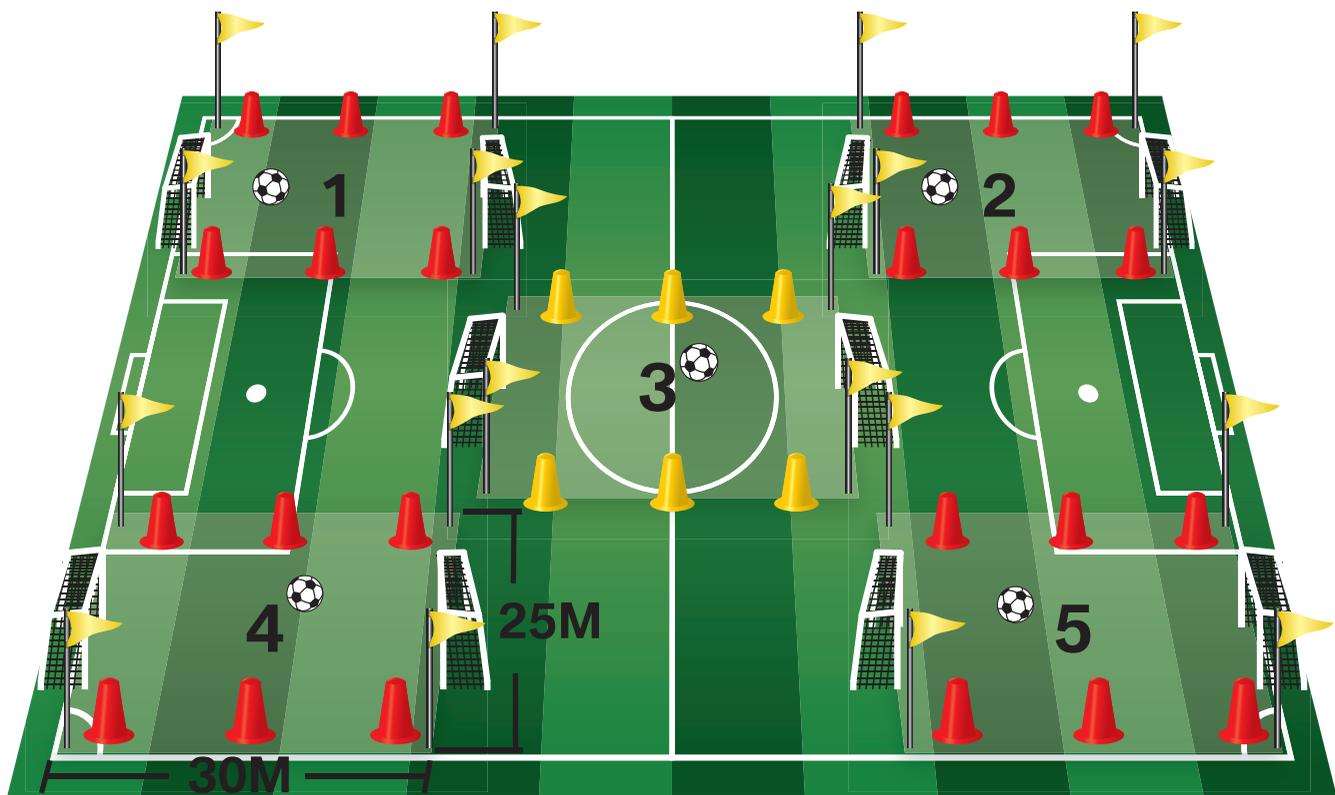
5V5 fields have been designed to be used by under 7 and under 8 players. These players are in stage 2, the FUNdamentals stage of development. This is the “Fun with the ball stage”.

Age	Ball	Min Field	Max Field	Roster	Team	Goals	Game
U7	3	25m x 30m	30m x 36m	Max 10	5 incl' GK	5ft x 8ft	40 min
U8	3	25m x 30m	30m x 36m	Max 10	5 incl' GK	5ft x 8ft	40 min



**DIAGRAM 3**

Diagram 3, above, shows an individual 5v5 field, 30m x 25m. Cones and corner flags have been used to delineate the field. Portable goals have been assembled and placed. There are no requirements for any other field markings on a 5v5 field.



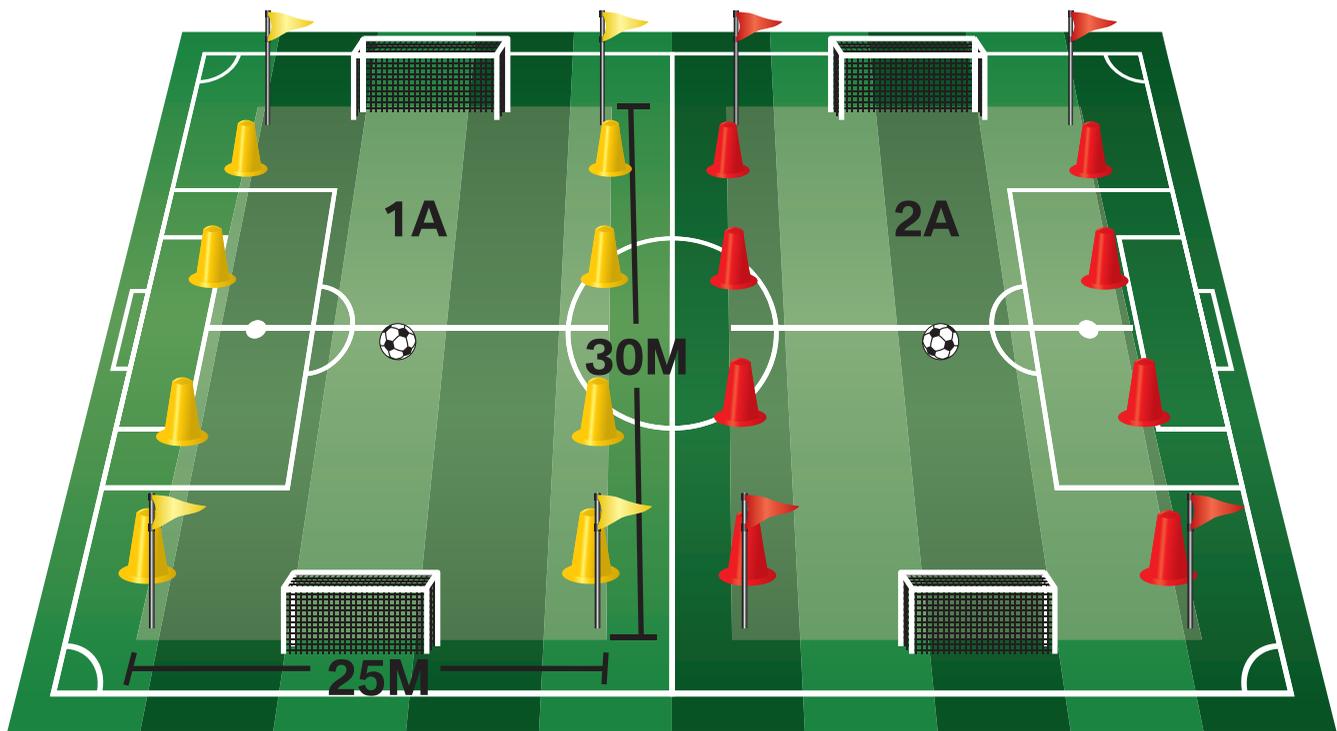
**DIAGRAM 4**

The field layout, diagram 4 above, shows a method of temporarily installing 5, 5-a-side fields on an 11-a-side field. As you can see the 11v11 field touch line and goal lines have been utilized for four of the fields. This would allow ten teams, or 50 players to be active on this playing area simultaneously. Cones and corner flags have been used to distinguish lines and corners. Parents would be on the outside edges of the 11v 11 field with coaches and players on the “inside” of the field. Players and coaches should be on the opposite side of the field from spectators and families.

“As a coach, I like five-a-side because it’s easy to organize and it develops all the qualities that are important to the modern game. It’s fast, so it improves your vision, agility and movement and because you touch the ball so often, your technique improves too. Today, every player should be able to defend and attack so this game is essential for a player’s development.”

Arsene Wenger- Arsenal FC

**“Children are not just miniature adults”**



**DIAGRAM 5**

Diagram 5 above shows two 5v5 fields (1A & 2A) placed on a 7v7 field. Cones have been used to delineate the field, corner flags show the corners of both fields and portable goals have been placed. In the example above players and coaches would be in the centre of the field (centre circle) and parents and spectators on the outside of the field alongside the permanent goalpost.

The same arrangement could be used if you had a permanent 9v9 field.

“The dimensions of the pitch are an important consideration. The pitch must be suited to the age, skill and number of players.

A small pitch with a large number of players is difficult to play on and requires great technical skill and vision. In general, we cannot presume that children aged 6-12 have these skills.

Children have different characteristics depending on their physical and technical development. For these reasons, not all small-sided games are recommended for all ages. It is important to follow a logical development in which children move on from 4-a-side games (without goalkeepers) to eventually play 9-a-side football...” FIFA Grassroots

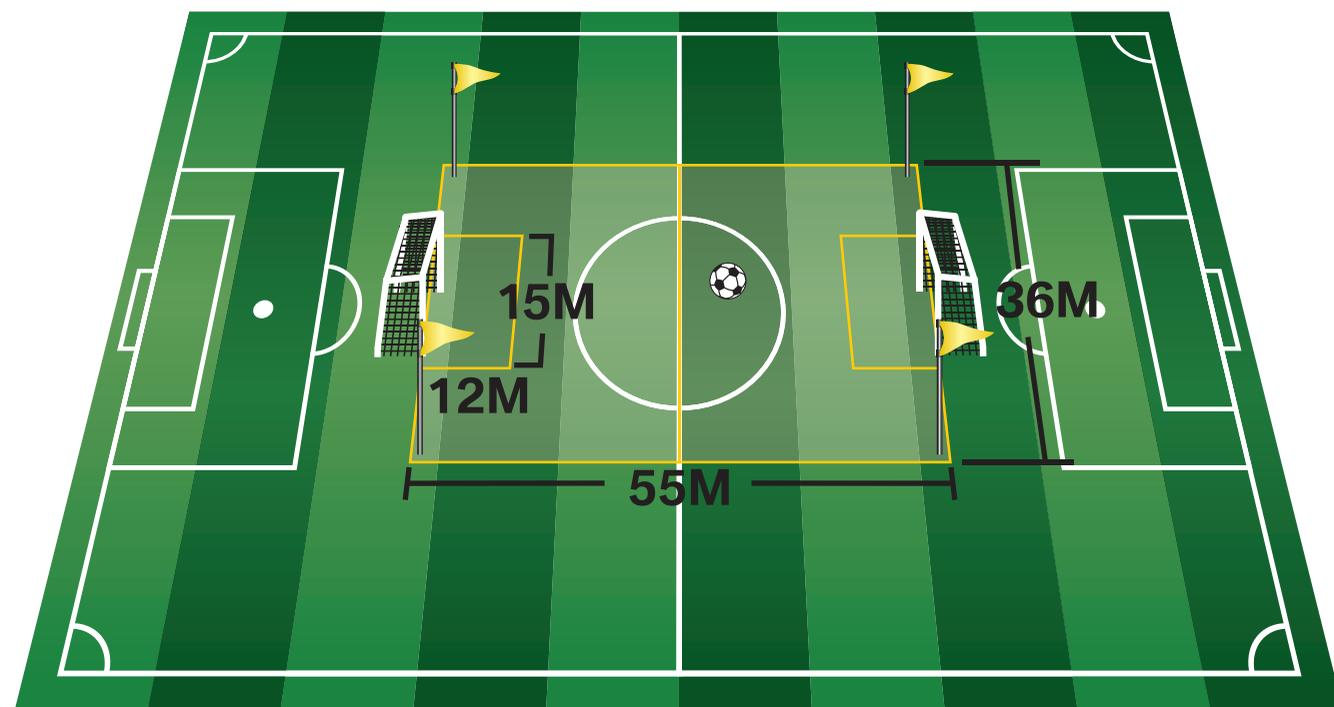
## 7v7 Fields

7V7 fields are designed to be used by children 9 and 10 years of age. These players are in Stage 3, the Learning to Train stage of development. This is the “golden age of learning”.

### ADVANTAGES OF PLAYING 7v7 SOCCER

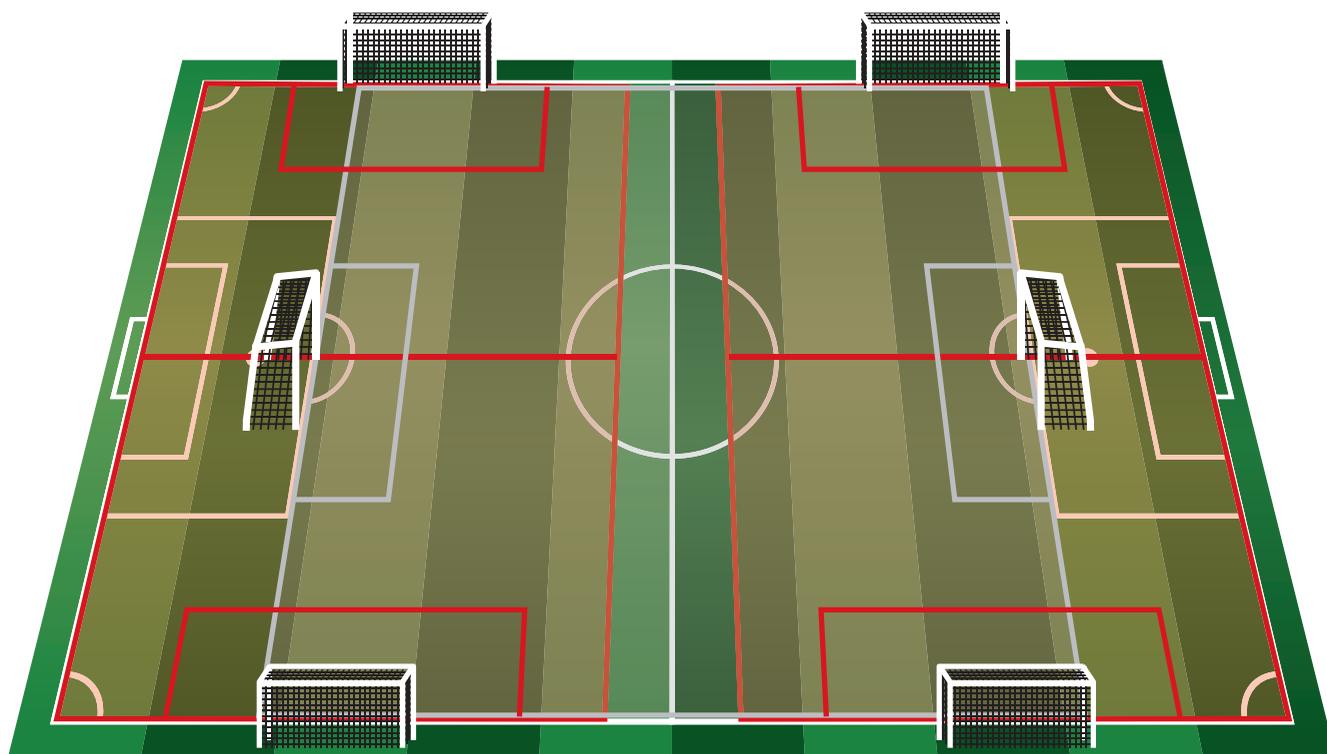
- More time with the coach
- Energetic workouts due to playing both offense and defence
- More efficient use of field space
- Matches can be played simultaneously across a full-size field
- Children are physically more efficient in smaller space
- Children are actively involved for a longer period of time
- It takes less time to score a goal or advance to goal
- Greater success rate for the players
- More shots on goal
- More saves from the Goal keeper

Age	Ball	Min Field	Max Field	Goals	Roster	Team	Game
U9	4	30m x 40m	36m x 55m	6ft x 16ft	Max 12	7 incl' GK	50 min
U10	4	30m x 40m	36m x 55m	6ft x 16ft	Max 12	7 incl' GK	50 min



**DIAGRAM 6**

7v7 soccer has been played in Ontario for many, many, years. Therefore there are many 7v7 fields available for use. If temporary 7v7 fields are required they can be installed along an 11v11 field, using different colour paint (or cones) and portable goals.



**DIAGRAM 8**

Diagram 8 above, shows another alternative for 7v7 and 9v9 on an 11v11 field. White lines: 11v11, Red lines: two pitches for 7v7, Grey lines: chalked extra lines for 9v9. All goals are portable.

“A 10 YEAR OLD CHILD IS NOT HALF A 20 YEAR OLD AND THEY NEED A GAME AND FORMAT THAT REPLICATES THEIR STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT.”  
The FA

“The school of football is also the school of life”

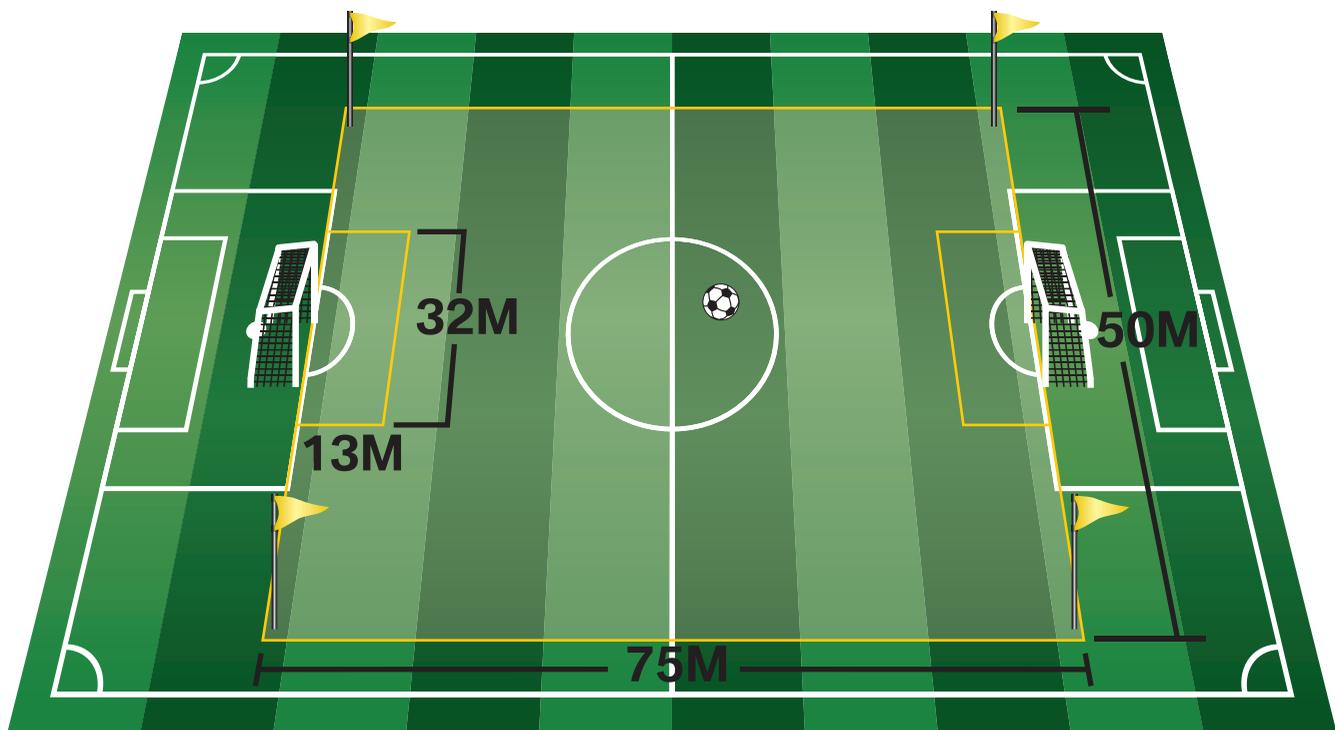
FIFA –Grassroots



## 9 v 9 FIELD

9v9 fields are designed to be used by children who are 11 and 12 years of age. They are in Stage 3, the Learning to Train development stage.

Age	Ball	Min Field	Max Field	Goals	Roster	Team	Game
U11	4	42m x 60m	55m x 75m	6ft x 18ft	Max 16	9 incl' GK	70 min
U12	4	42m x 60m	55m x 75m	6ft x 18ft	Max 16	9 incl' GK	70 min



**DIAGRAM 9**

Diagram 9 above shows how a 9v9 field can be placed on an existing 11v11 field. The field has been placed between the two 18 yard boxes. The field above has been lined in different colour paint but other delineation options are to use cones or markers.

Field Max Length	Field Min Length	Field Max Width	Field Min Width	Penalty Area	Goal Area	Penalty Spot	Goal Size
75m	60m	55m	42m	13m x 32m	14m x 4m	9m	6ft x 18ft

Like all soccer fields a range of sizes is allowable. The above is a suggested range, but it's understood that we have to work with existing fields and facilities. It is the aim to meet the sizes as shown above but reasonable flexibility is allowable. For competitive soccer permanent field lining is preferred.

## RETREAT LINE

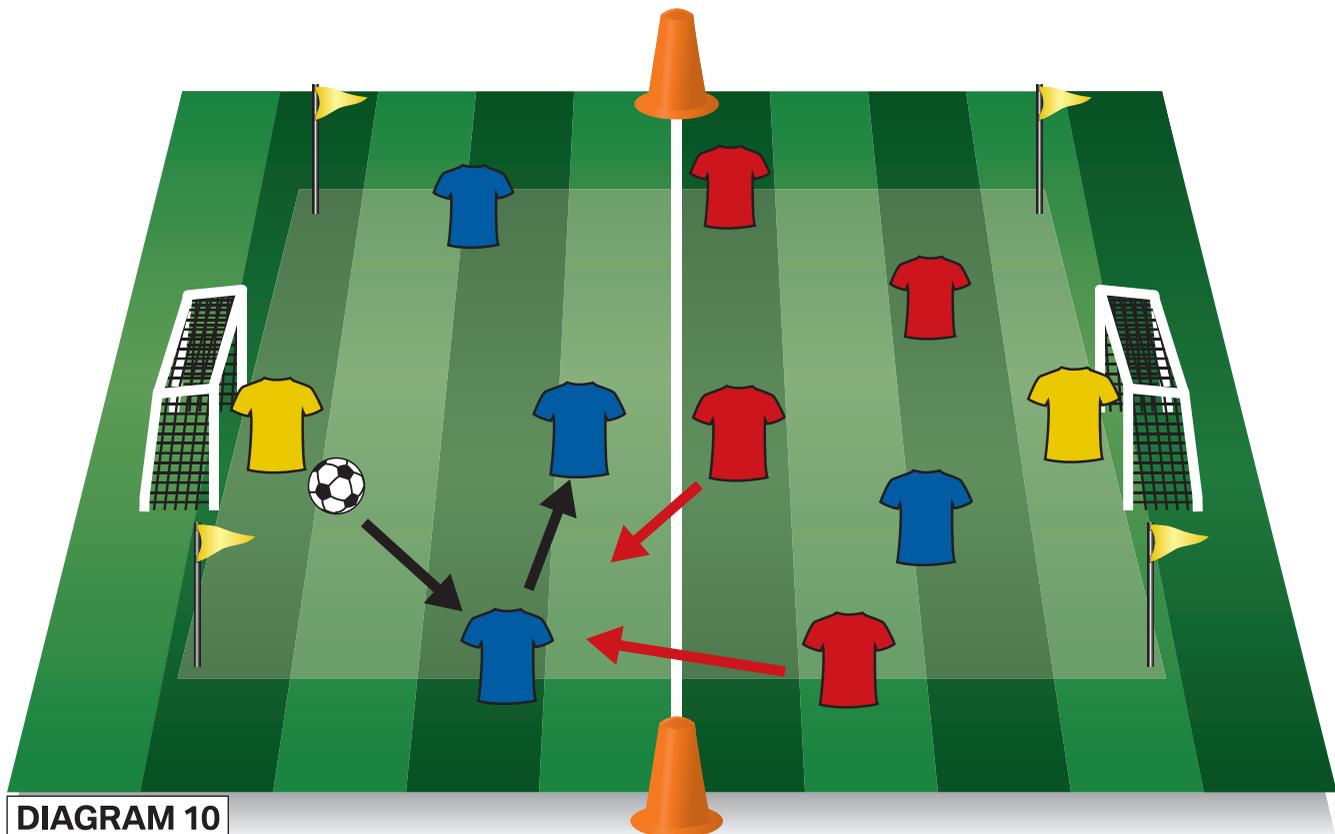
To allow our young players to learn and gain confidence in how to play the ball out from the back and build an attack, as opposed to the goalkeeper kicking it aimlessly up the field, the concept of the retreat line has been introduced in mini soccer. To see young goalkeepers aimlessly boot the ball up the field in the “hope” that one of his or her teammates gets the ball is not effective in producing skilled, confident players who love to play.

What would happen is as follows: when the goalkeeper has the ball at a goal kick or after making a save the opposing team members would “retreat” to a predetermined area of the field. Once all the opposing players have retreated to the line the goalkeeper can successfully throw or pass the ball to one of his/her teammates.

Once the teammate has received the ball the opposing players can then start to apply pressure to the player with the ball. This gives the player on the ball the time and space required to have a look, receive the ball and choose to dribble or pass to a teammate without being marked or under immediate pressure.

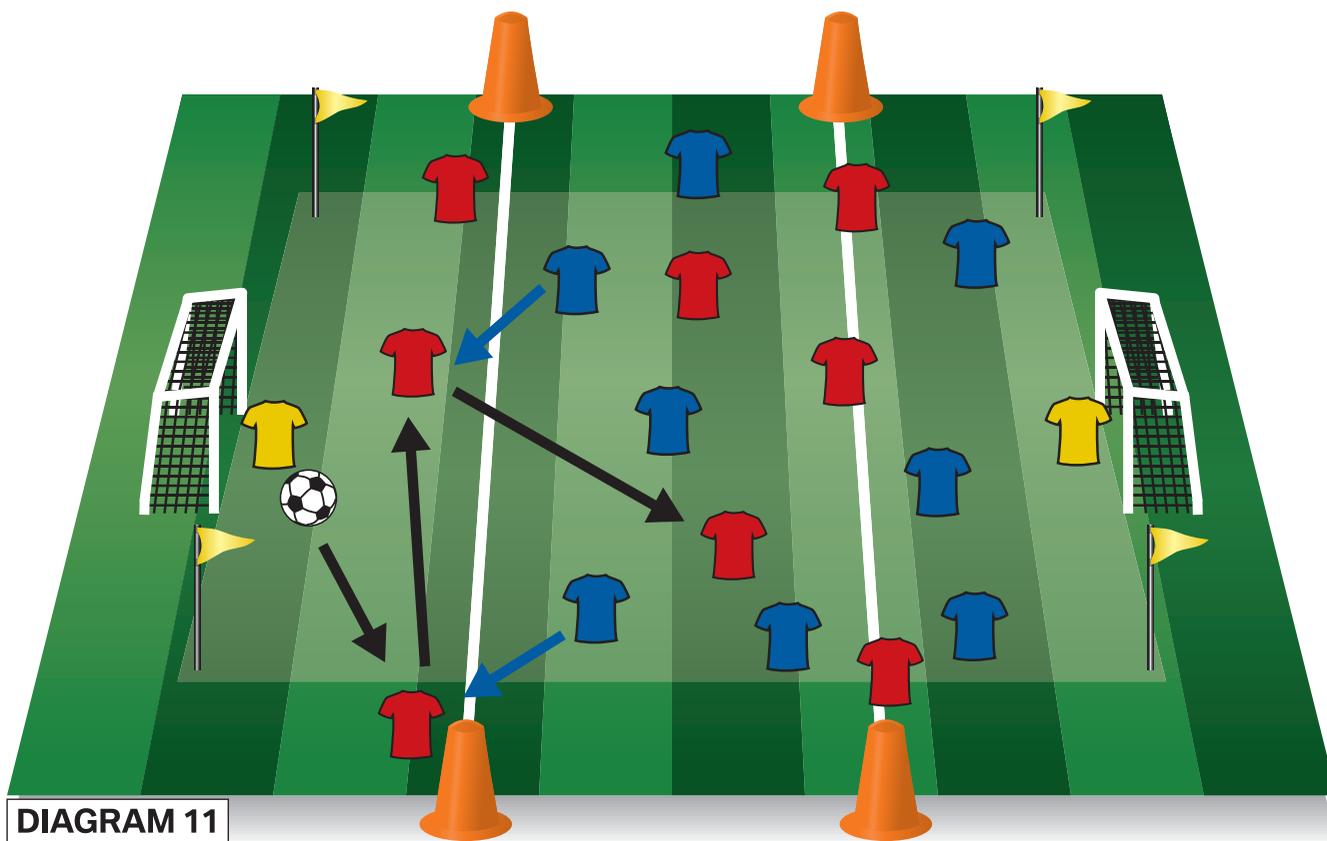
In the 5v5 game the retreat line can be the halfway line. As most temporary 5v5 fields will not have a halfway line, corner flags at the side of the field can act as an indicator to the players where the halfway line is. If flags are not available three cones laid in line on each side of the field can indicate the retreat line. Note: Do not put cones on the field as players may trip or slide on them.

In the 7v7 and the 9v9 game the halfway line can also be used as a retreat line. Another option is to create 1/3rds lines on the field. (Where, as above, the opposing team retreats to the middle third of the field when the goalkeeper has possession.)



**DIAGRAM 10**

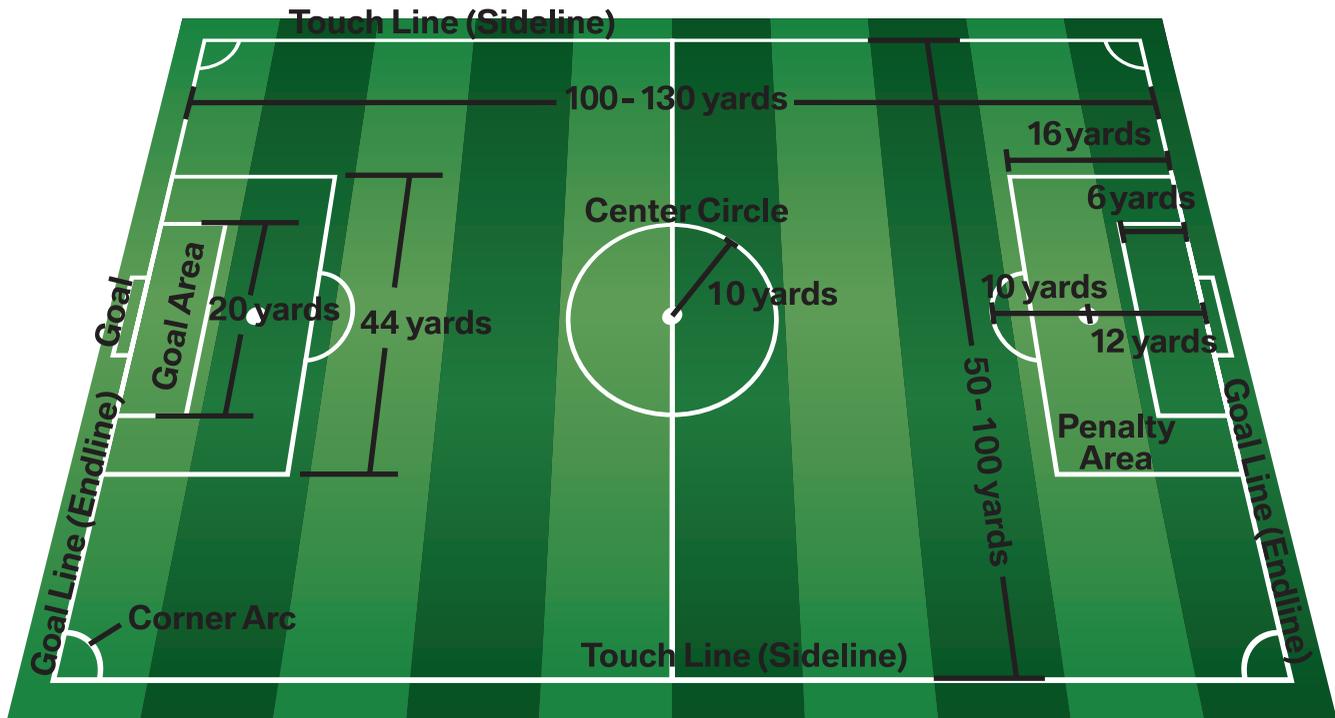
Retreat line example - 5v5. In Diagram 10 above you can see a retreat line installed using cones at halfway. The red team has retreated allowing blue to pass the ball from the GK to a blue teammate and build an attack.



**DIAGRAM 11**

**Retreat line example - 9v9.** In Diagram 11 above you can see a retreat line installed with cones at 1/3rds of the field. The blue team has retreated into the middle 1/3rd allowing the red GK to pass/throw the ball to a red teammate and build an attack. Once the red players first touch of the ball, blue can start to apply pressure on him/her.

# 11v 11 FIELD



**DIAGRAM 12**

Diagram 12, above shows an 11v11 full size soccer field. This field will be used by players 13 years and older in Stage 7, the Soccer for Life phase. These fields are readily available, in natural grass and a growing number of accessible field turf facilities..

Putting multi-colour lines on a grass field to identify 3v3, 5v5, 7v7 or 9v9 fields is easily achieved if you have the proper knowledge, tools and equipment. It is more difficult to put lines on an artificial turf field. Using cones, markers or temporary lines is the likely way to go on artificial turf fields.

As mentioned previously our children are very used to playing games on gymnasium floors that are utilized for many sports. These school sports gymnasiums and sport halls are lined for the different sports in a variety of colours to identify the various game marking and boundaries.

## Field Inspection and Safety

A thorough inspection of the field by a coach or official prior to the start of every practice or game is essential.

- The dimensions of the field should conform to the specifications established by OSA and indicated in this document.
- The entire playing field should be free of any holes, depressions, raised sprinkler heads and other hazards.
- Clear the field of stones, pieces of glass and other objects or debris.
- Make sure spectator areas are a safe distance from the field of play; a minimum of 5 feet. Do not allow spectators to be on the playing field. Spectators are to be on the opposite side of the field from players and coaches.
- Light stanchions, fence posts, and trees that are near the field of play should be properly cushioned or protected, and always be designated as “out of play” areas. All “out of play” areas should be cushioned or fenced off or, at minimum, marked by paint, cones or chalk lines.
- Portable goals are to be properly installed and fixed as per the manufacturer’s instructions. Following play, the goals are to be chained together and locked or if designed to be dismantled, removed from the playing field.
- If the field is used for other sports, inspect for fixtures or equipment that may have been left by the previous user.

### IMPORTANT NOTE:

- NEVER allow players or others to play on, hang from or move the goalposts. Portable soccer goals are prone to tipping over, and have been responsible for catastrophic injuries and fatalities in recent years.
- Determine where the nearest shelter is from the field in the event of serious weather or other emergency conditions. Note that small, open shelters typically found on playing fields or parks will not provide adequate protection in the event of lightning. A house or substantial building offers the best protection from lightning strikes.
- Locate the nearest landline telephone to the field and note its phone number.
- Locate the nearest medical facility, whether on-site or off-site.



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# Appendix ONE

## FIELD LAYOUT - EQUIPMENT

The equipment required to prepare a field for play can be collected quite simply. The following is a list of equipment and resources and also where it can be purchased or found.

### Field Lining Machine

A field-lining machine is used for spraying the paint on the field to create the various lines. Machines are available from local sports suppliers. They are simple to operate and no special training is required. A standard machine will be in the \$175.00 range.



### Field layout Tool

To calculate and layout the field dimensions this on-line tool makes the job very easy. <http://www.athleticfieldmarker.com/docs/SoccerFieldCalculator.xls>

### Measuring Tape or measuring wheel and chalk line

Use of a 300-foot measuring tape or measuring wheel and chalk line will ensure that your field's dimensions are correct and fields are symmetrical. Measuring tapes, wheels and chalk lines can be purchased relatively cheaply at any local hardware store.

### Field Marking Paint

Field marking paint is used with a field lining machine to mark the grass with the lines required for your field. Paint is available in a variety of colours to help distinguish one field from another. (E.g. 5v5 field could be painted with yellow lines and 9v9 could be painted with red lines.) This will help players and officials to identify the field they are using. Paint is available from approx \$9.00 per can or in cases of 12 for approx \$72.00.



**Note:** Children are very familiar with and comfortable playing sports in areas with multiple coloured lines. As we all know school gymnasiums and sports halls use multi lines to distinguish the variety of sports being played in the same space. Also artificial turf fields, indoor and outdoor, typically have more than soccer lines painted on them.

### Field Lining Kit

Field lining kits are available to make the layout and marking of soccer fields a little simpler. These kits contain all the materials required to easily and accurately lay out various sizes of fields. Cost is approx \$150.



### Field Layout Video

This video explains how to lay out a soccer field. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=q9RvqXhsFeA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q9RvqXhsFeA)

### Field markers (cones, discs)

When lining of a field is not an option an alternative method is to use field markers. Field markers are used to create temporary lines that establish your field. The markers would create the perimeter of the field that you are creating. Markers can be placed quickly and retrieved quickly at the end of the games. Cones are priced from 50c each.

### Corner Flags

Corner flags are used to show players and officials where the 4 corners of the field are. (They can also be used as goal posts in the absence of goals.) Although not a requirement in small-sided games, they are a very useful visual clue to the participants. They are easy to install, remove and simple to transport. If transporting the flags by car you may consider purchasing the folding type. For turf field flags, a sand-filled base instead of a typical spike is required. In the absence of goals, flags can also be used as goal posts. Flags can be purchased at most sports suppliers. Flags range in price from \$6 to \$20



### Portable Field Lines

Another alternative field lining method is to use temporary or portable field lines. These are lines that are rolled out to the dimensions required and then fastened into the grass; they are easily installed and removed.

### Portable Goals

Portable Goals come in a variety of sizes and materials of manufacture. Some goals are telescopic and 2 or 3 sizes can be created from the same goal frame. Some goals are designed so they can be removed from the field and transported by car, while others are manufactured and designed to be kept on site. The choice of goals that you select will be down to personal preference and the arrangements that you have with the field owners. Goals are manufactured from aluminum, fibreglass, PVC and other materials. Costs can vary from \$200 - \$1,000.



### Field Numbers

When creating several fields in the same area, to aid players, officials and spectators to find the correct field, field numbers should be placed adjacent to each field. The numbers should be large enough and clear enough to be seen from a distance.



## Appendix TWO

The following checklist can be used to ensure that you have all the equipment available to successfully create your various sizes of temporary or permanent soccer fields.

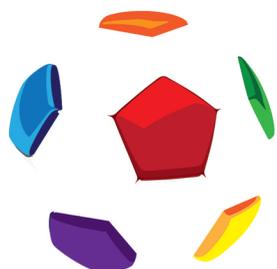
No	Item	✓
1	300 ft tape measure or measuring wheel	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	String or Chalk Line	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Line Marking Machine	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Line Marking Paint	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Cones or markers or temporary lines if not using paint	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Corner flags (4 per field)	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Portable goals (2 per field)	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	Stakes (minimum 6)	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Mallet or hammer (to install stakes)	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Field Numbering Signs	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	Portable goal anchors (where required)	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Appendix THREE

- Recreational Matrix
- Development Matrix
- “Wellness To World Cup” Brochure
- League Management Guide
- Game Management Guide
- U8 Festival Guide
- Active Start Brochure
- FUNdamentals Brochure
- Learn to Train Brochure
- Soccer For Life Brochure
- CS4L LTAD for parents
- OSA LTPD Video

**All of the above resources, and others, are available on the OSA website**

<http://www.ontariosoccer.net/LTPD/LTPDResources.aspx>



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**For any LTPD questions please email**

[ltpdquestions@soccer.on.ca](mailto:ltpdquestions@soccer.on.ca)

**To contact the Ontario Soccer Association**

905.264.9390

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