



Grassroots soccer is not about the amount of trophies you win. It's about the difference you make to a young person's life.

THE GOALS OF GRASSROOTS SOCCER

- To ensure this first experience is fun and enjoyable and revolves around child-friendly soccer. Most of all, it is to have them fall in love with the game.
- To provide an opportunity for players to use their imaginations, be creative and learn through trial and error. Mistakes are OK.
- To offer age and stage appropriate development activities with improved playing formats such as 5v5, 7v7 and 9v9 with ball, goal and field size appropriate to physical and cognitive stage development.
- To educate coaches so they will make the soccer experience a challenging, positive and nurturing one for all young players regardless of ability, that leads to Soccer for Life.



YOU ARE ON TRIAL!

The very thought of attending a trial puts fear into most of us adults. Think how you feel when you go for a job interview. Can you imagine what a child feels?

One of our guiding principles in Grassroots Soccer is that there are opportunities for all. We want all children to be allowed access to programs that they have decided that they want to join. During their Grassroots Soccer years, if a child decides that they want to be a part of a development program and the family can meet the added time, financial, travel and practice commitment, they should be allowed to. If they want to be the best that they can be, then allow them to be that. Don't deny children opportunities to participate in programs." Lets include as many children as possible in our Development programs. They want skills, lets give them skills.

For more information visit www.ontariosoccernet/grassroots

"Grassroots is the most important part of the player pathway. This is where we give children their first experience in soccer. Ensuring that this experience is fun and enjoyable and revolves around child-friendly soccer (LTPD) is essential. The coaching objective here is simple: have them fall in love with the game."



PHYSICAL LITERACY?

You may be unfamiliar with the term Physical Literacy. What does it mean?

Simply put: Physical Literacy is acquiring skills and confidence that allows individuals to enjoy a variety of sports and physical activities.

Developing Fundamental movement skills such as hopping, skipping, running, jumping, balancing, twisting/turning, throwing and stopping are all base-level skills required to enjoy playing and being successful in sports.

In Grassroots Soccer we are concerned with teaching physical literacy as these fundamental movement skills. Once successfully mastered it will lead into fundamental sport skills.

FUNDamental sport skills in soccer could be: dribbling, passing, shooting, tackling, catching (goalkeeper).

To help with learning fundamental movement skills and becoming physically literate we encourage our young athletes to participate in other sports and activities.

Being able to shoot well requires good balance, being able to dribble the ball requires agility and flexibility. Passing the ball requires good balance and flexibility.

Sports such as: swimming, gymnastics, skiing and skating will all expose our young athletes to many of the fundamental movement skills that have been indicated above.

4 CORNER DEVELOPMENT MODEL

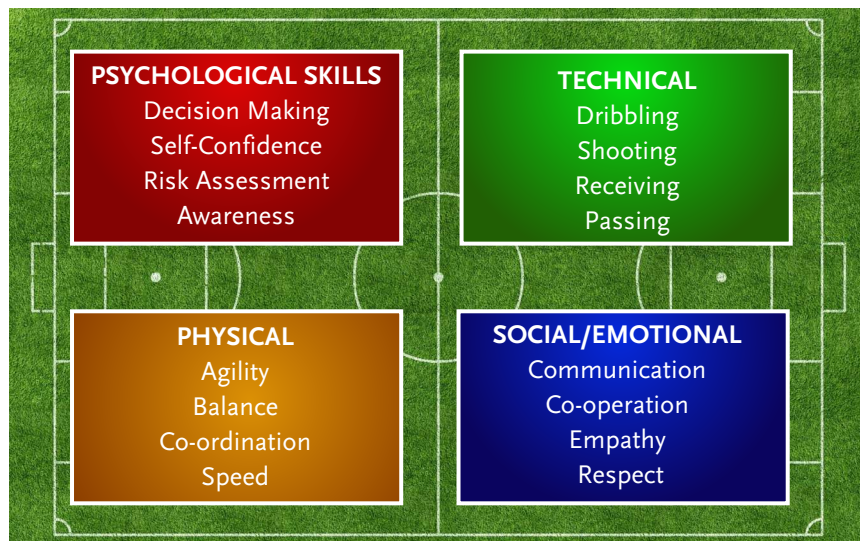
Technical, Physical, Social/Emotional and Psychological



The four corner development model, as illustrated above, is a change in thinking or approach for some soccer coaches. In the past, we have focused most, if not all, of our information and learning in the Technical and Physical areas of our sport. Very little has gone into developing a player's Psychological or Social /Emotional skills and qualities.

As we develop our young people to become athletes, and most importantly good people, it's vitally important that the whole person is developed. Soccer can be used as a vehicle for this development. Each practice session or game can be used to develop a child in all four corners. The four corner or holistic approach to developing the whole person is shown in detail in the Grassroots Coaches Curriculum available for download from the OSA website.

Some Examples are:



PHYSICAL LITERACY

Just like reading and writing, children have to learn how to move

“You don’t coach soccer. You coach Elizabeth that wants to play soccer. I’m sure you know soccer well, but do you know Elizabeth well?”



WHAT IS A GAME LEADER ?

Game Leaders is not a new concept in Ontario. In fact, many clubs have had a similar type of program running for many years. In Ontario, Game Leaders are required in games that involve players up to and including U8's.

The Game Leader program has been formally introduced to improve a child's first entry into team sports and competition. The Game Leader will provide support and encouragement to the young player as they compete in what could be their first ever team competition. The role of the Game Leader differs from the role of the traditional referee. The Game Leader is trained to communicate and explain the decisions he/she has made and to also help the young players with understanding the game and restarts.

The rules in small sided games have been greatly reduced and simplified to aid in the children's enjoyment of the game. This also benefits the Game Leader as there are less rules to learn and implement. The Game Leader program is also a useful introduction to officiating and/or coaching.



The requirements to be a Game Leader are:

1. Love Soccer and love working with and being around children
2. Friendly and Positive
3. Be 12 years of age or older
4. Successfully complete the OSA online training module

Game Leader training is available from the OSA website. It's available online and takes no longer than 30-40 minutes to complete. We are hoping that Team Coaches will complete the training and become Game Leaders. This will allow the coaches to be with the players on the field and pass on encouragement and support to the players. Also older players, Club executives and referees can become Game Leaders.

The OSA's Game Leader program is fully supported by CSA and the Referee and Coaching Development Departments.

RETREAT LINE

The retreat line has been put into place as a teaching tool to help our young players build play. In the past, typically, the goalkeeper would receive the ball and he or she would boot it as far up the field as possible and then see what happened. There was not a lot of thought put into this and it certainly did not help with improving player's technical abilities and/or decision making.

With the retreat line in place the young goalkeeper has the option of playing the ball to a teammate who is in space and has time to take a touch and pass to a teammate. This should lead to more successful multi pass combinations and a possession mentality with in our young grassroots players. Through the analysis and findings gathered the retreat line generates a higher success rate for creating passing sequences from the goalkeepers distribution compared to when a line is not used. The success rate is more than 10 per cent higher when the retreat line was used.

Note: A passing sequence is three or more passes. Results have also shown that the first pass played when playing a retreating line is essential when trying to create a passing sequence. The results found that if a short pass is made from the G.K.'s distribution, compared to a long pass, the opportunity to create a passing sequence is far greater. For more information on the retreat line or for a district or club education session please contact: grassroots@soccer.on.ca



GRASSROOTS COACHING WORKSHOPS

Are you interested in hosting a Grassroots Coaches workshop? The workshop is designed to give attending coaches the tools required to run effective and productive programs with their grassroots players ages u6-u12. Classroom and field work includes: preferred training model, characteristics of children, coaching styles, four corner development, small-sided games, LTPD, technical activities and more.

Contact: grassroots@soccer.on.ca for information



GRASSROOTS PLAYERS SURVEY

The OSA recently completed a survey with over 1,000 male and female grassroots players from Windsor to Ottawa and from Thunder Bay to Scarborough. A total of 34 clubs participated. Some of the results from the children are:



When asked: Why do you play soccer ?

1. Trying my best is more important than winning
2. To be fit and healthy
3. I like scoring or stopping goals
4. I like playing other teams
5. Meeting new friends
6. I like wearing my uniform
7. Learn new skills and tricks
8. To win trophies

When asked - I play soccer because.....?

1. It's Fun
2. To be fit and healthy
3. I like scoring or stopping goals
4. Show my skills
5. Be with my friends
6. To win the league
7. To win trophies
8. Because my parents want me to

As you can see from the children's responses above there are similar responses when asked similar questions. It's noticeable that the main reasons for playing are: to have fun and try my best to be healthy. Of lesser importance are winning leagues and trophies, yet for many years we adults have put the emphasis on winning trophies and less emphasis on having fun and doing your best.

Here are a few other thoughts from the children who participated in the survey
What is your least favourite thing about soccer?

My least favourite thing about soccer is when you make a mistake people criticize you.

If you could give your coach, Mom or Dad any soccer advice what would it be?

My parents must remain calm and save their opinions till after the game

What about soccer is your most favourite thing?

My most favourite thing about soccer is ~~that~~ that you have fun and be with your friends

If you could give your coach, Mom or Dad any soccer advice what would it be?

I think parents/coaches are way too caught up in winning titles that they forget to focus on improving their players

OSA Resources



- OSA Recreation Matrix
- OSA Development Matrix
- OSA Grassroots Curriculum Vol. 1
- OSA Game Organization Guide

- OSA Field Organization Guide
- OSA Guide To Festivals in Ontario
- OSA Game Leader Fundamentals

Please ensure this brochure is read in conjunction with other OSA LTPD Documents that are found on the OSA website: www.ontariosoccer.net/grassroots

For more information on grassroots soccer in Ontario please contact: grassroots@soccer.on.ca or visit www.ontariosoccer.net/grassroots