EMSA West OUTDOOR MINI SOCCER 2023

**U7 Community Soccer Program**

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EMSA West OUTDOOR MINI SOCCER 2022

**U7 Community Soccer Program**

**Overview of program**

Volunteer coaches - Thank you!!

Community coordinators (Recruit coaches, distribute team equipment, help resolve team issues)

Staff - Vanessa (Exec Director) Rosa (Finance) Kelly (PIC’s)

EMSA West Volunteer Board - Set priorities for West Zone, manage finances and planning.

EMSA West Zone Club is West Warriors (U9 and up)

Edmonton Minor Soccer Association - Parent organization (ASA, CSA)

**What is mini Soccer?**

**Mini soccer** includes activities and games designed to improve our young players appreciation for the game of soccer. We want them to have fun!! Playing fun games, focusing on developing basic movement skills such as running, jumping, landing, skipping, kicking, throwing and catching – in a fun setting built around informal play and positive reinforcement is key.

Mini soccer is

* A place where Basic soccer skills are developed
* A place where fair play is instilled
* A place to have fun and form new friendships
* A place to develop good sportsmanship
* A place to develop teamwork
* A place where all children are accepted regardless of gender or cultural background
* A place where they will enjoy soccer in a pressure free environment

Mini soccer – What is it is NOT

* A place for form rep-like teams
* A place where scoring is kept. NO STATS RECORDED
* A place where discouragement takes place due to player not participating in the games or practices because they are not good enough
* A place where coaches pare paid or gain financially
* A place where winning is the only goal.

**Philosophy**

EMSA West philosophy towards mini soccer is twofold.

1. **Fun**

The area of focus of this age group is to make the experience of playing soccer fun. We want to make this a positive experience and encourage children and parents to return to soccer in future seasons.

1. **Skill development**

The second area of focus is on individual athletic and skill development.

**Team Rosters/ Game Schedules/ Team communication format**

Teams play two evenings (Monday & Wednesday at 6:15 pm, subject to change) a week from the beginning of May through to the end of June. (Weather Permitting)

Players must be registered with an EMSA team to participate in games or practices.

The development of any athlete starts with physical literacy and their ability to run, skip and jump. So, the first 30 minutes of each game consist of skills and drills, including, Physical Literacy – The ABCs of movement (Agility, Balance and Coordination)

A 30-minute game is then played, with two 15-minute halves. Field dimensions are reduced and rules of the game are limited to enable the players to continue to focus their attention on developing movement patterns, rather than game and tactics.

**Accessing schedules and rosters** – notification by email from office/coordinators when schedules are ready. Coaches will locate their schedules and team rosters in Portal.

**Who provides team equipment?**

T shirts, Balls, Discs, PUG nets - Community Coordinators distribute equipment.

U7 Jerseys are sponsored by Tim Hortons

**Tournaments**

### 2023 MINI-FEST

**Saturday, June 10, 2023 (Rainout Sunday June 11)**

**Location**: TBA

Cost $FREE

**This event is scheduled into your regular season game schedule.**

Each team will have one 30 minute fun soccer game and at the end of their game each player will have a medal officially presented to them. There will fun bouncers and face painting for the players (10 am – 4 pm) Format will be 5v5 with a goal keeper.

**What to expect from U7 players**

Coaching children is a lot of fun! Their enthusiasm knows no bounds. They will turn up in the most severe weather conditions (assuming their parents get them there) and smile all the time!

**The wonder years**

* Attention span is not at a ‘competitive” stage
* Inclined towards small group activities
* Always in motion
* Easily bruised psychologically. They will remember negative comments for a long time. Shout praise. Give “hints”. They want everybody to like them.
* Encourage constantly.
* Developing physical confidence. Lack sense of pace. Go flat out until they drop. Skeletal system growing rapidly – often results in apparent lack of coordination. Heart rate peaks quickly – make sure they get adequate breaks.
* Will be able to follow 2 or 3 step instructions and are starting to have a good understanding about what it means to play a “game”.
* Beginning to cooperate with their team mates. Will occasionally pass the ball on purpose.
* A drink of water is a great cure for tears.

**The Coach**

**Soccer coaches wear many different hats** when training young players. Leading fun activities, reining in a distracted player, dealing with tears all require flexibility. Your personality and enthusiasm will have the biggest impact on your players. Make sure the experience is lots of fun for all your players so they will want to come back the next time.

EMSA West Community soccer is built on volunteers. Thank you for stepping into this role!!

**Resources for the Coach**

EMSAWest.com website under

Season Info Coaches corner Coaches Tool Kit

* Training Sessions EMSA West, EMSA, ASA
* New coaches will have a one year grace period to take a course to be certified for U5, U7 & U9. Additional information on the website regarding courses.

Extra activities can be found at   
Canada Soccer Pathway Coach’s Tool Kit: Stage One – Active Start

Canada Soccer Pathway Coach’s Tool Kit: Stage Two – FUNdamentals

(lots of diagrams in colour)

**Tips for successful coaching**

1. Be prepared when players arrive – have your lesson plan and name tags ready.
2. Be welcoming, enthusiastic, and remember to smile.
3. Keep explanations simple – short and clear with as few steps as possible
4. Use your player’s names.
5. Be inclusive, involve all players.
6. Use encouragement and praise (rather than negative words)
7. Reward positive behavior with positive attention
8. Have a plan with backup activities in case things move along quickly (or an activity does not work out).
9. Avoid lineups to keep their interest.
10. Alternate game, activity, game

**Structuring a Practice or game**

Successful coaching begins with planning.

**Organization**

* Learn the names of all children on the roster – help the children learn each other’s names too
* Have at least one ball per child
* Be organized and prepare for when children arrive (cones set up, ready to goa0
* Get a parent to be your manager – they can be responsible for many duties and help make your coach job easier.
* For game situation: have a blanket where all the children sit while awaiting their turn to go on the field.

**Routine**

* Create a routine that you follow when starting practice or games. Children pick up on this quickly and it will be easier to organize them when they recognize the start up activity.
* Start simple, practice the routine, and then add to it. It is easier to add levels of complexity to an existing activity than to introduce new activities from scratch.

**Attention**

* They cannot learn from you if they are not paying attention.
* Create some kind of signal that indicates you need the children’s attention and use it only to indicate that (count to three, clap in a pattern, etc)
* Make eye contact with them and give instructions when they are paying attention.

**Cultivate Desirable Behavior**

* Reward desired behavior with positive attention (I will call on children who are quite and have their hand up)
* Be fair
* If an undesirable behavior is minor, or designed to get your attention: ignore it.
* Deal with inappropriate behavior immediately: sitting a child out (minutes equivalent to age, or until they are calm. Poor sportsmanship, name-calling, hitting, etc fall into this category.
* Keep the children occupied – down time gives undesirable behavior time to spawn.
* Children that are out of breath have a hard time talking over you.

**Instructions**

* Keep them short and clear. Demonstrate the activity.
* Have as few steps as possible. If you want the children to execute a multi-step procedure, build to it over a few activities or sessions
* Involve them in the process by asking leading questions
* They will learn best by “doing”

**Activities**

* Alternate simple drills with “fun” games that build on those skills. Skill drills often have a lower element of fun, but can be reinforced after initial instruction with games. At this age, skill drills need to be extremely short or made into something fun.
* Avoid drills or activities that have an elimination element or leaves children standing in line waiting. Standing around means they are not learning and boredom leads to behavior problems.
* Keep activities short or change parameters often. Switch children around, add elements)
* Demonstrate correct techniques. Avoid fossilization of errors (eg kicking).

**Coaching Team Strategy or Positional Play at U7**

**“The Swarm”**

* This is the hallmark of mini-soccer: a horde of children chasing the ball around the field.
* This. Is. OK.
* Children very quickly understand that the goal is to get the ball. They have a harder time understanding that moving into space and not having the ball is also important.
* Adults see the bunch of players as unorganized – not as a team. That’s the first problem, because, at this point, it’s really not a team.
* To parents, this is a mess on the field. They want the kids to spread out – so that the one player with any skill have the space to dribble around everyone else like cones.
* A good coach will definitely have to adjust these players’ instincts, as they get older, but surprisingly not much. The game itself makes them smarter as they continue to play more and more.
* Another reason why “bunching up” is ok for young players – the kid in the center of that bunch is learning early no how to play in tight spaces and not be afraid of traffic or contact. Allow this to happen. Watch what the children naturally do – some will attack aggressively, others will be more protective of their own goal.

**Beginnings of Positional Play**

U7 is four on four with a goalie. Ideally, every child should have the opportunity play each position. However, they may gravitate towards certain areas on the field. As the coach, it is your job to cultivate their strengths, - watch them, where they naturally go and help them understand what they are doing.

To help them to understand where to go:

* Get on the field with them (in a game-play practice or game) and tell them or physically move them.
* Small sided drills and games (caution – they will have difficulty applying principles learned in one situation to another)

Allow them to figure out the basics of the game and slowly add strategy or complexity over time.

**Skills Focus**

At this age, focus on the basic skills first. Build complexity over time, after they have competently acquired prerequisite skills. Below is a selection of games and drills and the related skills. Pictures in appendix. The internet is a wealth of information as well.

**Warmups**

These are not necessarily ball or even soccer focused – they should be fun and get all kids moving and in a positive frame of mind.

* Frozen tag (and variations)
* Simon says
* Stretches (gentle basic stretches)

**Basic touch (ball control) and dribbling**

* Taps, roll overs, pull backs and forward
* Pirates
* Shark attack
* Bum Balls
* Explode
* Red-light, Green light
* What time is it Mr. wolf
* British Bulldog
* Clean-up
* Dribble through the gate
* Relay races

**Passing**

* Mosquito
* Partner passing
* Group of three passing (timed)
* 5 v 1 (circle keep-away)

**Shooting**

* Mosquito
* Dribble and shoot
* Hit the cone

**Jockeying, closing down, tackling**

* Gauntlet
* One-on-ones

**Shielding**

* Pirates
* Shark attack

**Movement off the ball**

* Handball
* End Play

**Communicate with the parents**

Meet with the parents before the first game.

* Outline objectives of mini soccer. (Development of an athlete starts with physical literacy and their ability to run, skip and jump. The first 30 minutes of each game consists of skills and drills to build on physical literacy. These are key components to focus on and help teach utilizing the soccer ball in many activities.) This is followed by small sided soccer games 5v5 in a modified area.
* Get parents on your side. Be positive, but understand that you are the coach.
* Make sure parents understand what you are trying to accomplish and how you will be going about it.
* Method of communication you will use with your team – email? What’s app? Team snap
* A parent or guardian must attend the games – this is not a drop off activity.
* As a coach, you will deal with minor incidents such as not listening, minor aggressive behavior, and any infractions on the field. However, there are times when a child is not self-regulating. You may ask the parent to remove the child from the field until they are calm. Welcome the child back when they are ready.
* Stress how important it is for their child to have their own water bottle (labelled) and go to the bathroom before soccer.
* Ask parents to arrive a few minutes early for the game/activities.
* Parents are encouraged to clap and cheer.
* Get parent volunteers to help you. They can keep kids organized on the sidelines (or blanket if you are using one). They can make sure that everyone gets in the rotation when the players are substituted. They can tie shoelaces, wipe noses, and make sure the children use the correct water bottle.
* Parents make sure children are dressed for the weather. (sunscreen, mosquito repellent)
* Give parents rainout information line – or communicate with them regarding cancellations of games.
* If children are ill, please have them stay home.

**Player equipment**

* + Shirt, shorts, socks
  + Shin guards mandatory (for safety)
  + Flat soled running shoe or cleats
  + No hard casts or splints (soft braces for knee, ankle, wrist are permitted)
  + No jewellery or piercings (for safety)
* Parents, players and team officials must behave in a respectful manner. EMSA has zero tolerance for any form of harassment, bullying discrimination or intimidation.

**Game day**

Coaches arrive at least 15 minutes early to set up the activities and organize your equipment.

Welcome your players and put name tags on them. Masking tape is fine. Be enthusiastic. Smile!!

The first **30 minutes** of activities should be designed around **skills and drills -**  small sided games and activities suggested in this handout and at the on field coach session.

They are fun and will motivate your players more than any other activity. They should involve small groups playing in small areas (no lineups). Provide players with the best chance to practice individual skills. Provide lots of positive reinforcement.

Email with Practice plan and diagrams will be sent to all coaches.

**General movement activities include**

Agility - running, changing directions, speeding up/slowing down, and stopping

Balance - hopping, jumping and landing

Coordination - combining different movements, moving with the ball, falling and getting up safely

The next 30 minutes follow the modified laws of the game for U7

* 5 v 5 with a goalie. (4 players and 1 goalie)
* Player changes should be every 2 to 3 minutes. (Blow a whistle for both teams to change players).
* Players take turns in all the positions.
* Coaches are on the field assisting their team.
* The assistant coach can be on the “players bench” which is typically a blanket where all those waiting to play are kept ready to go onto the field for the next shift.
* Field dimensions are reduced and rules of the game are limited to enable the players to continue to focus their attention on developing movement patterns rather than game tactics.
* There are no referees at this age

Mini soccer is NOT a place to form rep-like teams. It is not a place where discouragement takes place due to a player not participating in the games because they are not good enough. Winning is not a goal. **No stats are kept.**

**RAIN OUT/ INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURE**  
Unless the fields are officially closed through the rain out lines, regardless of current or pending inclement weather, teams are asked to report to their field to play.

CITY OF EDMONTON RAIN OUT LINE: 496-4999 ext. 1

[Edmonton Field Closure Website](http://coewebapps.edmonton.ca/facilitynotifications/default.aspx?args=4,13) https://coewebapps.edmonton.ca/facilitynotifications/default.aspx?args=4,13

**RAIN OUT & AIR QUALITY RESCHEDULING PROCEDURE**

When a game is rained out due to the City of Edmonton closing the fields, or the coaches called the game due to inclement weather/air quality, it will be up to the coaches to reschedule the game using the following procedure:

**U4, U5 and U7 Rain Out Procedure**

* The Home team calls the Visiting team to agree upon a preferred day and time for the makeup game

(Getting a second preferred date at this time if possible may save you time later)

* If the Home team does not contact you, please call them. They may not have your contact information. Chris Jossy can provide contact info for teams.
* The Home team contacts the scheduler at **stats101@shaw.ca** to confirm a field.
* Phone number for Chris Jossy is **780 717 9210**
* The Home team contacts the Visiting team to confirm date, time and location.

**NOTE: ALL TEAMS MUST SHOW UP TO SCHEDULED GAMES UNLESS SPORTS FIELDS ARE CLOSED.**

**Please – dress for the weather and show up for your games.**

**Lightning Safety/ Severe Weather Policy**

When thunder roars, go indoors!

The safety of players, coaches, management and spectators is the primary concern in any weather event that occurs during all matches sanctioned by Canada Soccer. By understanding and following the below information, the safety of everyone shall be greatly increased. Ultimately, the referee has the final say over delaying or restarting a match due to weather. Waiting to stop play or not waiting to start play may result in a serious injury or loss of life. Referees are expected to act responsibly when dealing with such events during matches they are controlling

**Additional Information**

Please note the following recommendations from Environment Canada:

* **To plan for a safe day, check the weather forecast first.** If thunderstorms are forecast, avoid being outdoors at that time or make an alternate plan. Identify safe places and determine how long it will take you to reach them.
* **Watch the skies for developing thunderstorms and listen for thunder.** As soon as you hear thunder, quickly get to a safe location. If you can hear thunder, you are in danger of being hit by lightning. More people are struck before and after a thunderstorm than during one.
* **Get to a safe place.** A safe location is a fully enclosed building with wiring and plumbing. Sheds, picnic shelters, tents or covered porches do NOT protect you from lightning. If no sturdy building is close by, get into a metal-roofed vehicle and close all the windows.
* **Do not handle electrical equipment, telephones or plumbing.** These are all electrical conductors. Using a computer or wired video game system, taking a bath or touching a metal window frame all put you at risk of being struck by lightning. Use battery-operated appliances only.
* **If caught outdoors far from shelter, stay away from tall objects.** This includes trees, poles, wires and fences. Take shelter in a low-lying area but be on the alert for possible flooding.

Be aware of how close lightning is occurring. Thunder always accompanies lightning, even though its audible range can be diminished due to background noise in the immediate environment and its distance from the observer.

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**LAW I – THE FIELD:**

**EWZSA U7 OUTDOOR RULES & REGULATIONS**

1. DIMENSIONS:  
   The field of play should be rectangular. 120 ft x 90 ft. The field should be close to these dimensions; however field space may dictate smaller or larger fields. Try to be a close as possible.
2. MARKINGS:  
   1. Distinctive lines are necessary, sidelines and end-lines.  
   2. A halfway line can be marked out across the field or otherwise indicated.  
   3. Other marks are possible but not necessary for the enjoyment and development of the youngsters.

a. A center circle with a five yard radius b. Four corner arcs with a two-foot radius c. A goal area.

1. GOALS:  
   a. Goal Size should be 10-12 feet wide.  
   b. Goal mouth should be 6 yards from the center of the goal, and 6 yard out from the goal line forming a 6

yard x 12 yard box.  
c. The net can be made of cones, flags or portable nets. As long as they are the same for both sides.

**LAW II – THE BALL:**

Size 3 ball should be used for practices and games.

**LAW III – NUMBER OF PLAYERS:**

1. Number of players on the field at any time will be 10. Each team with 4 players and 1 goalie.
2. Substitutions: made on the fly [or] every 2-3 minutes.
3. Playing time: each player SHALL receive equal playing time.
4. Teams and games may be co-ed.

**LAW IV – PLAYERS EQUIPMENT**

1. Footwear: Tennis shoes or soft-cleated soccer shoes. (use common sense)
2. MANDATORY. Shin-guards and socks covering the shin-guards.
3. Jersey/ T-Shirt: Supplied by community or EWZSA.
4. NO sunglasses, ball caps/ hats.
5. NO item of jewelry of any sort will be allowed on the field of play. Medic Alert Bracelets if required must be covered or padded in order to be safe for all players.

EWZSA promotes playing for FUN not competition. Stats and scored are NOT recorded at this age level.

UPDATED. APRIL 2018

**LAW V – REFEREE:**

Since there are no referees at U7 and the players need to be in close contact with the instructional coach, each team should have one (1) representative on the field. Each representative (preferably the coach) will take half of the field.

**LAW VI – LINESMEN: NO LINESMEN AT THIS LEVEL. LAW VII –DURATION OF GAME:**

1. The first 30 minutes will consist of Skills & Drills. Parents are encouraged to participate with their child.
2. Followed be a 30 minutes game. 2 x 15 minute halves.

**LAW VIII – THE START OF PLAY:**

1. The start of play shall consist of the visiting team starting with the ball at center.
2. The ball may be played forward or backward at the start of play.
3. The second half shall start with the home team starting with the ball at center.
4. The defending team shall be 15 feet away from the center at any start from center.
5. The ball cannot be touched by the same player twice before another player has touched it. If this occurs the

ball must be restarted.

**LAW IX – BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY:**

1. Kick-in’s only if ball goes out of bounds. The ball is awarded to the opposite that put it outside the field of play. Place the ball on the ground have the player kick it into the field of play.
2. No throw in’s allowed.
3. If the ball exits across the goal line, it is a goal kick.

**LAW X – METHOD OF SCORING:**

1. Goals will be awarded when the ball is kicked into the net, or between the goal posts (pylons, flags).
2. No scoring may occur inside the goal area.
3. Goals may not be scored off of restarts.
4. Goals must be scored no higher than 5 feet. (If there are no nets)

**LAW XII - OFF-SIDE: THERE WILL BE NO OFF-SIDES. LAW XIII - FOULS AND MISCONDUCT:**

No pushing, hitting, kicking or holding an opponent and No hand balls.

1. All fouls will result in an indirect free kick with the opponents 10 feet away.
2. The referee or parent shall explain all infractions.

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UPDATED. APRIL 2018