

EMSA West INDOOR MINI SOCCER 2023-2024

U4 & US Community Soccer Program

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EMSA West OUTDOOR MINI SOCCER 2023-2024

U4 & U5 Community Soccer Program

Overview of program

Volunteer coaches

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)

Parent organizations- Edmonton Minor Soccer Association (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.

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.

2) **Skill development**

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

Team Rosters/ Game Schedules/ Team communication format

Teams play once a week from the middle of October to end of January possibly the first week of February.

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

When and how do coaches access schedules and rosters– EMSAwest runs the Indoor U4/U5 Program. You will have received a email from the office on how to access your legal roster on emsasoccerportal.com. EMSAwest has set up all your teams on TeamSnap, this is your main communication platform to use.

Who provides team equipment?

T shirts are provided by EMSAwest. The zone office will provide a equipment bag for each team. (discs cone, ball pump, balls, Band-Aids) Please return the equipment to the office at the end of the season.

What to expect from U4/U5 players

Coaching pre-school 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!

- Self Centered Play
 - No matter how much you "practice" it, they will not pass the soccer ball.
 - Twenty seconds after the start of a game, every player will be within 5 yards of the ball - "The swarm"
 - Players will slap at the ball with their hands, or pick it up. Remind them use their feet.
- Tears
 - Most will cry immediately when they get hurt. Have them get a drink of water (which will be the cure for most tears at this age)
 - Tiredness and frustration manifests in tears at this age. Parents should be on hand to assist and comfort their child.
- Low Independence
 - Invite parents of children reluctant to participate in activities to join in the activities and hold their child's hand.
- Total commitment to whatever it is they are doing at the moment
 - They will go flat out and then crash
- Physical Limitations
 - Skeletal system is growing rapidly which can result in apparent lack of coordination.
 - Cardiovascular and temperature regulation system is not completely developed. They can overheat quickly. Make sure that they get adequate water breaks.
- Entertainment
 - They will say or do something that is very funny. Make sure you laugh.

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

Extra activities can be found at

CANADA SOCCER PATHWAY: COACH'S TOOL KIT-STAGE 1: ACTIVE START

(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. If a player is shy or reluctant to participate, ask the parent to hold their hand and do the activities with them.
7. Use encouragement and praise (rather than negative words)
8. Reward positive behavior with positive attention
9. Have a plan with backup activities in case things move along quickly (or an activity does not work out).
10. Avoid lineups to keep their interest.
11. Alternate game, activity, game

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 3 v 3 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)
- If children are ill, please have them stay home.

Player equipment

- o Shirt, shorts, socks
 - o Shin guard's mandatory (for safety)
 - o Clean Flat soled running shoe or Indoor cleats
 - o No hard casts or splints (soft braces for knee, ankle, wrist are permitted)
 - o No jewelry 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.

Structuring a Practice or game

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Successful coaching begins with planning. The better planned you are, the better experience everyone involved will have.

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 go)
- Get parents to help out and be responsible for the children on the sidelines.
- 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 quiet 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.

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).

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 **25 minutes** of activities should be designed around **skills and drills** - small sided games and activities suggested in this handout and at the on field 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

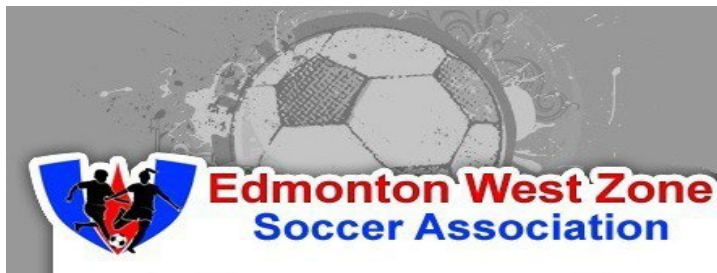
Coordination - combining different movements, moving with the ball, falling and getting up safely

The next 20 minutes follow the modified laws of the game for U4 and US handout.

- 3 v 3 with no 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. (Goalie gloves are not used)
- 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.**





EWZSA MODIFIED LAWS FOR U4 & U5 - Indoor

THE FIELD:

- A. Dimensions:
The field of play should be rectangular. 50ft x 64ft. The field should be close to these dimensions; however facility space may dictate smaller or larger fields. Try to be as close as possible.
- B. Markings:
Sidelines and end-lines with pylons or discs.
- C. Goals:
Please use either a pop up net or pylons, goal mouth for both are to be the same width.(approx. 4ft)

THE BALL:

Size 3 ball should be used for practices and games.



THE TIME:

- A. The first 25 minutes will consist of Skills & Drills.
 - B. Followed by a 20 minute game. 2 x 10 minute halves.
 - C. 5 Minutes change over between the next game. If you want a break during the game you will need to shorten the break after practice to 2 minutes.
- NOTE: Field time is 55 minutes, **no over time is allowed.**



NUMBER OF PLAYERS:

- A. Number of players on the field at any time will be 6. Each team with 3.
- B. Substitutions: Suggest 2-3 minutes rotating shifts or during any stoppage of play.
- C. Playing time: each player SHALL receive equal playing time.
- D. Teams and games may be co-ed.

PLAYERS EQUIPMENT

- A. Footwear: Non-marking, flat soled shoes.
- B. MANDATORY. Shin-guards and socks covering the shin-guards.
- C. Jersey/ T-Shirt: Supplied by community or EWZSA.
- D. 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.



REFEREE:

Since there are no referees at U4/U5 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) can take half of the field.

THE START OF PLAY:

- A. The start of play shall consist of the visiting team starting with the ball at center.
- B. The ball may be played forward or backward at the start of play.

BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY:

- A. 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.
- B. No throw in's allowed.

METHOD OF SCORING:

- A. Goals will be awarded when the ball is kicked between the cones into pup-up net.
- B. No scoring may occur inside the goal area.
- C. Goals must be scored no higher than 3 feet. (If there are no nets)

AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR:

- A. Including- pushing, kicking, punching, hitting will result in an In-Direct free kick to the non-offending team, as well as the player sitting for a minimum of 1 full shift (coach's responsibility).

THE COACHES:

- A. There will be one coach from each team on the field. Each coach will take one side. Coaches are to encourage and "referee" their team. (There are no referees at this age). Do not block the goal area.
- B. One coach or parent from each team will be on the bench to direct the players on to the field.
- C. Must have a bench parent (mom/dad) for each gender present on mixed teams.

FAIR PLAY:

- A. Due to some teams not being of equal strength at this age group, when the ball is being kicked in the other team must give them 3 meters (approx.) and cannot chase until the ball has been passed or kicked. This will prevent stronger teams from just crowding the net and keep scoring goals without letting the other opposing players develop a break out or a passing game.



FAQ

WHAT IS MINI SOCCER?

Mini Soccer is a game designed to improve our young players appreciation for the game of soccer. We want them to have fun! The small sided game environment gives these young players “more touches on the ball.” It decreases the barrier of skill and physical developmental differences giving each player the opportunity to improve their soccer skills and physical literacy.

There is 1 game per week, and usually no regular practices. The hour long session consists of 25 minutes Skills & Drills followed by 2 x 10 minute halves. The soccer center books in one hour blocks. This means that all ages (mini to adult) have the field for a maximum of 55 minutes. This allows time for teams to both enter and leave the field. If the Skills & Drills portion goes longer than expected coaches will be required to reduce to the game time. If you require a longer transition time between Skills & Drills and the game please adjust your time accordingly.

There are no referees for the mini program. Each team will have 1 coach present on the field during games. Coaches actively participate with encouragement of positive play and help teach players the rules. There will be lots of reminders of which direction players are supposed to go, and also “No Hands!” It is important to have an assistant coach present with the players on the bench to keep players engaged and ready for substitutions. We also recommend a bench parent be present to keep order on the bench and for any “boo boos.”

DO WE KEEP SCORE/STATS?

No. Mini soccer is a developmental league for fun! No stats are kept at this age group.

