

RUSC Micro Soccer

It finally looks like spring is on the way!

We hope to bring more fun and excitement to this season. We will continue with some of the programs we put in place in the recent Micro seasons to improve the skill training aspect of the program and will modify others. Key to this effort is ensuring that the sport remains fun and exciting to the kids. After all, developing skilled players is meaningless if they don't want to play.

There are changes, particularly at the U8 level, so *please* read this carefully.

Note: shin guards are mandatory from an equipment perspective (make use of the Sports Authority coupon for 20% that was sent out earlier from our relationship with MYS)

Important Dates

Program Start Date: Sunday 13th April

Program End Date: Sunday 15th June.

There is **NO** soccer on Sunday 20th April (Easter) or Sunday 25th May (Memorial Day)

The Program

The RUSC Micro Programs runs every Sunday afternoon at Coolidge Middle School. For Spring 2014 we will have a U6 session at 12pm, U8 Session I at 1:45pm and U8 Session II at 3:15pm. At the U8 level the participant will play in one pre-defined session. The U8 program also includes "Street Soccer" which we cover later in this document.

Location Notes

Coolidge Middle School itself will be closed. Currently the nearest bathroom facilities are next door at the YMCA. However we are also trying to secure port-a-potties for the spring season. You won't miss them once they are in place!

We recommend sun screen and/or bug spray as there are wooded areas close to the playing area.

Parents Role

Even though you may not actively participate in the program (as a coach, for example) you still have an important role. We want you to encourage your child to engage in the program and have fun. We want them to try new things, try moves and learn from the process.

We also would like to ask you to try and refrain from "sideline coaching". That does not mean you cannot encourage your child. So, just for fun, we are including "Soccer Bingo" printables. This is something you can bring and use to engage with you child and help reinforce the basic elements of soccer. Involve the siblings, grandparents, etc. Make it fun!

Coaches and Teams

These will be sent out in advance of the first Sunday session. We have to wait for all the final logistics (late registrants, coaching volunteers, etc.) before our registrar can pull all the rosters together.

Head Coaches

Please take some time to contact your assistant coaches and players before the first game. Be sure to review the following with them:

1. The place, date and time for Day 1
2. The number of the field at which to meet on the first week – please check the schedule
3. Your team name
4. That a registration table will be set up for those who need assistance. The table will be at the end of the parking lot

Mass Youth Soccer (MYS) / Skills Development Program

We contract with Mass Youth Soccer (MYS) to work with RUSC. MYS will have two coaches in attendance each week to walk coaches through the activities, answer questions and move around the fields during the event to lend advice. It is not uncommon for one of these coaches to jump and participate with the kids. All coaches should arrive 15 minutes early in order to attend these pre-session meetings.

They're a fantastic resource to learn from, so I hope everyone will take full advantage of their presence.

Program Format

Each session runs for 1 hour but the coaches are expected to arrive 15 mins early to participate in the MYS activity review. During the session the first 30 mins are spent on MYS activities. These have been created by MYS and are designed specifically for that age group. The final 30 mins are on scrimmage: 3 vs 3 for U6, 4 vs 4 for U8.

Additional resources for activities and coaching ideas are available on the MA Youth Soccer web site (http://www.mayouthsoccer.org/coach's_corner.aspx) or other coaching resources.

U6 (K and Pre-K)

The format for the U6 session will be the same as in previous sessions. Teams are **mixed** with the first 30mins on skills and the second 30mins with scrimmage (friendly game) of 3 vs 3. We will do our best to keep the teams small but the number of registrants dictates this. Coaches will arrive 15mins before the start (11:45am) for 15 minute session with MYS. They will cover the skill activities for that session in a fun and interactive way. The session will start promptly at 12pm and finish at 1pm.

Equipment Requirements and Restrictions

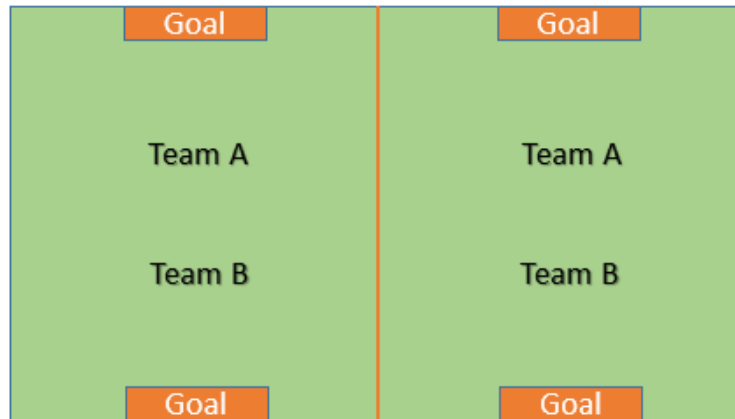
- 1) **SHIN GUARDS** are **mandatory**, which **MUST** be covered by socks. This is the **ONLY** required piece of equipment for participation. **For liability and insurance reasons, players without shin guards will not be allowed to participate. Coaches MUST enforce this. No shin guards, no participation, no exceptions.**
- 2) **SNEAKERS** work fine. If you have or wish to purchase cleats, make sure they are SOCCER cleats (no metal, no toe cleats)
- 3) **CLOTHING** – Dress prepared to play and have fun, based on weather conditions. Generally a jersey and shorts are sufficient early in the season.
- 4) **MICRO SHIRTS** will be in coaches' equipment bags to be distributed at the beginning of the first session
- 5) **BALL** – Bring a size 3 soccer ball. Size 3 is preferable at this age as it's easier for players to control. Be sure to put your player's name on the ball. **NO SIZE 5 BALLS, PLEASE.**
- 6) **JEWELRY** – No jewelry is allowed, especially ear rings/studs. Medic Alert bracelets should be taped so another player cannot get a finger caught in it.
- 7) **WATER** – bring your own water bottle – put name on it.

Field Layout – U6

Each field area split into two. Each team will take one side during activities



During the 3 vs 3 scrimmage



U8 (1st and 2nd Grade)

The format for the U8 session will change starting in the spring. Teams will be **split by gender** as boys and girls will participate in separate groups. U8 teams will play on larger playing areas than the U6 group. There will be two sessions for Under 8, 1:45pm and 3:15pm, in order to support a larger playing area. The participant will play in **one** of these sessions.

I know parents with children in the U6 session would like to have their U8 child in the first session. If we run one session for boys and the other for girls then it would be unfair, every week, for those in the second session. So we will have a simple rotation: first 4 weeks in one session, second 4 weeks in the second session (all the teams would simply rotate). Details on this will be sent out next week with the schedule.

We will do our best to keep the teams small but the number of registrants dictates this. Coaches will arrive 15mins before the start (1:30pm or 3:00pm) for 15 minute session with MYS. They will cover the skill activities for that session in a fun and interactive way. The session will start promptly with first 30mins on skills and the second 30mins with scrimmage (friendly game) of 4 vs 4. We want to introduce a rotation every 5mins so every child will get **equal** playing time. The coach(s) will create the roster rotation. We plan to have someone at the field sound an air horn every 5 minutes which will be the indicator for the next rotation.

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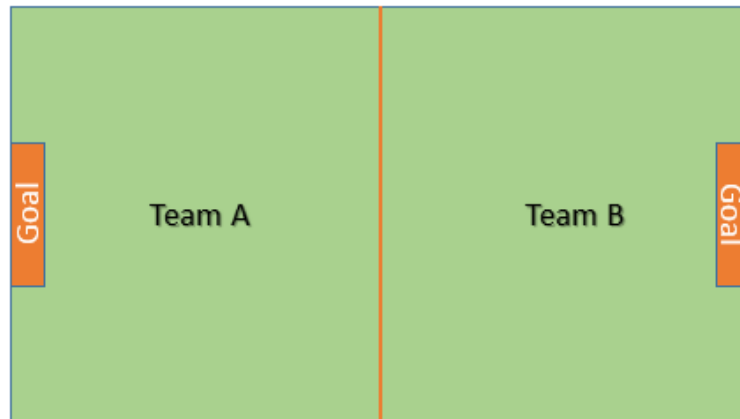
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Field Layout – U8

Activities and 4 vs 4 scrimmage



Scrimmage/Game Rules

- 1) 3 vs 3 (U6), 4 vs 4 (U8)
- 2) U6: Each pair of teams will play two scrimmages at the same time on the split field.
- 3) THERE ARE NO GOALIES.
- 4) Only size 3 balls should be used.
- 5) Play should be stopped abruptly in the case of injuries. Please encourage the kids to care about their friends and teammates.
- 6) If you need to stop play for any reason, make sure everyone can hear you!
- 7) Rotate the kids into the game using full groups of players at a time if possible (as opposed to one-at-a-time), and do your best to give all kids the same amount of playing time.
- 8) Players should rotate off the field after 3-5 minutes. If you see your team is dominating, please try to mix things up & don't have all strong players on one shift.
- 9) Do not worry about positioning, but do try to keep the kids spread out for safety.
- 10) When the ball goes out the end line, the defensive team does a goal kick or dribbles the ball up. **NO CORNER KICKS.**
- 11) Any time the ball goes out of play, the opposing team moves back – to midfield on a goal kick, and at least about 10 adult steps if the ball goes out over the sideline.
- 12) Sidelines are somewhat fuzzy – try to keep the ball in play. If you have to stop, the team that did not kick the ball out gets the kick or dribble in. **NO THROW INS!** We need as many touches with feet as possible!!!!

- 13) After a goal, restart play from midfield. Players should restart play by dribbling, not by kicking the ball up the field.
- 14) Have a set place for players to sit when not playing during game & make sure they have their water with them (not going to mom & dad for water). Keep the team together. Have a plan with your assistant coaches to keep the kids engaged on the sidelines & have the next group ready to go when the coach says so. Sitting between the split fields will allow kids to play on either field (for U6 only).

Street Soccer (U8's ONLY)

Beginning on Tuesdays (after the first Sunday session), as part of the U8 program we run an *optional* "street soccer" opportunity for U8 players from 4:30pm to 5:30pm at the **Wood End School** (outside). This program is aimed at U8 players who want more opportunities to play. We will provide equipment (goals, balls, pinnies, cones), help with organizing teams, and adult supervision, but there will be **absolutely no coaching** at these sessions. These sessions are intended as supervised pickup soccer for first and second graders – a place where they can have fun, maybe try out a new move that they saw in a soccer game on TV, and simply get more chances to play. In order to encourage this to be a low pressure environment, we encourage parents to drop their kids off for street soccer or sit away from the playing fields. There's no commitment to attend street soccer from one week to the next. Coaches should especially encourage attendance by their stronger players who would greatly benefit from more playing time.

A reminder and details will be sent out nearer the time.

Reading "Encore"

Several high school players are interested in giving back to various RUSC programs by way of volunteering their time. We are working with a group whom we hope to have in attendance each week at the Micro Program. They will be available to assist during activities, scrimmages, to interact with the kids and generally get involved where they can. We hope they become role models as well as generating excitement for the participants.

Details are still being worked out.

HEALTH & SAFETY Concerns

- At the first sign of lightning or thunder, immediately leave the field and get to cars. Play cannot resume until 30 minutes after the last occurrence of lightning or thunder.
- Dogs (except for service animals) are **not** allowed at the field at any time.
- Because of concerns about communicable diseases, Larry Hamdi from the Reading Board of Health recommends the following common sense precautions:
- Do not share water. Players should have their own water bottle. Avoid bringing gallons and using paper or plastic cups.
- Do not share towels.

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- If a child shows any signs of being ill, please keep them home.
- If your child appears to be getting ill while at the field, please remove him/her from the area.
- Fist bumps are preferred to handshakes after the game (as per Middlesex Youth Soccer League guidelines).

Inclement Weather

Soccer is played in all weather, including rain. However if the field is too wet, dangerous or severe weather has been forecast (including thunder storms) then the RUSC Micro Coordinators may cancel the session. We will send out notifications on this by 9:30am on Sunday. Please check your email.

We hope everyone enjoys their time at the Spring 2014 session.

Thanks,

Stuart, Chris and John

(RUSC Micro Coordinators)

Questions/feedback: microsoccer@rusc.org