

RUSC Micro Soccer

We hope you enjoyed the long, cold, snowy winter. Spring is approaching fast, we are starting to see some grass so let's get back to soccer!

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.

We are continuing with improvements to the program so *please* read this carefully.

(This is similar to the "Coaching Info and Guidelines" document we also send to all the coaches)

Note: shin guards are **mandatory** from an equipment perspective.

Important Dates

Micro Coaches Meeting/Clinic: Tuesday 7th April, 7:30pm (Coolidge Middle School Gym). Please come prepared to play (water, ball). You can also collect your coaches t-shirt at this time.

Program Start Date: Sunday 26th April (delayed by 2 weeks)

Program End Date: Sunday 21st June

No Soccer: Sunday 24th May (Memorial Day Weekend)

Rain date (in case we have to postpone a session): Already used due to snow!

The Program

The RUSC Micro Programs runs every Sunday afternoon at Coolidge Middle School. This season we have added in a second U6 session. Details are later in this document.

For the Spring 2015 we have the following planned session times. We leave 30 mins in-between for players/parents to leave and the next group to arrive.

U6 Session I at 12pm (for 45 mins)

U6 Session II at 1:15pm (for 45 mins)

U8 Session I at 2:30pm (for 60 mins)

U8 Session II at 4:00pm (for 60 mins)

The participant will play in **one** of these sessions.

Each week the RUSC Coordinator will send out the weekly schedule/field layout to parents and coaches. We aim to do this by Thursday each week.

Location Notes

Coolidge Middle School itself will be closed. Currently the nearest bathroom facilities are next door at the YMCA. We are also planning to have the porta-potty back which will be located at the corner of the field near the parking lot

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”. However, that does not mean you cannot encourage your child.

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. Introduce yourself to the parents (use “Sports Manager”*)
2. The place, date and time for Day 1
3. The number of the field at which to meet on the first week – please check the schedule
4. Your team name
5. That a registration table will be set up for those who need assistance. The table will be at the end of the parking lot

* All coaches will be sent information about using “Sports Manager” to see and communicate with your roster.

Mass Youth Soccer (MYS) / Skills Development Program

We contract with Mass Youth Soccer (MYS) to work with RUSC, with you and with the participants. MYS will run the “Coaching Clinic”. MYS will have two coaches in attendance each week to walk you through the activities (that you will have already read in advance), answer questions and move around the fields during the event to lend advice. It is not uncommon for one of these coaches to jump in and participate with the team coaches and the kids. Please use your best judgment to determine the pacing of these activities, but they are essentially set up to run 6-8 minutes each with breaks in between. Perhaps most important to remember is that the kids feed off of our enthusiasm. Don't be afraid to really get into it!

Program Format

Each U6 session runs for 45 mins, each U8 session for 1 hour but you, the coaches, are expected to arrive 15 mins early to participate in the MYS activity review. Additional benefit – you get a prime parking space at Coolidge (those of you who have been before know how huge this is!).

U6

During the session the first 20 mins are spent on MYS activities. These have been created by MYS and are designed specifically for that age group. The final 25 mins are on scrimmage: 3 vs 3.

U8

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: 4 vs 4.

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 has changed this year to increase field space by introducing two sessions. Team sizes are planned to be somewhere between 8 (min) and 13 (max) players but the teams will be of similar size. We will do our best to keep the teams small but the number of registrants dictates this. Teams are **mixed**. The first 20 mins are spent on skills/activities and the following 25 mins with scrimmage (friendly game) of 3 vs 3. Coaches will arrive 15 mins before the start (11:45am or 1:00pm, dependent on the session) for 15 minute session with MYS. They will cover the skill activities for that session in a fun and interactive way. Session I will start promptly at 12pm and finish at 12:45pm. Session II will start promptly at 1:15pm and finish at 2:00pm. The participant will play in **one** of these sessions.

We have yet to devise a precise schedule until we know the exact number of teams. However players should expect to alternate sessions at various point(s) over the season. We will do our best to minimize the movements and publish the session plan early on.

Equipment Requirements and Restrictions

- 1) Ensure **ALL** players are registered in the RUSC Micro Program by checking your roster.
- 2) **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.**
- 3) **SNEAKERS** work fine. If you have or wish to purchase cleats, make sure they are SOCCER cleats (no metal, no toe cleats)
- 4) **CLOTHING** – Dress prepared to play and have fun, based on weather conditions. Generally a jersey and shorts are sufficient early in the season.
- 5) **MICRO SHIRTS** will be in coaches' equipment bags to be distributed at the beginning of the first session
- 6) **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.

Spring 2015 – Welcome Message for All

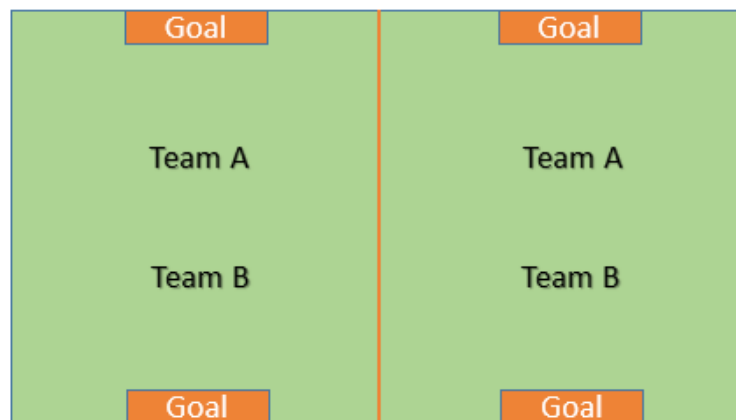
- 7) **JEWELRY** – No jewelry is allowed, especially ear rings/studs. Medic Alert bracelets should be taped so another player cannot get a finger caught in it.
- 8) **WATER** – bring your own water bottle – put name on it.

Field Layout – U6

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



During the 3 vs 3 scrimmage



Scrimmage/Game Rules (U6)

- 1) 3 vs 3 (U6)
- 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.

Spring 2015 – Welcome Message for All

- 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).

U8 (1st and 2nd Grade)

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. Team sizes are planned to be somewhere between 8 (min) and 10 (max) players but the teams will be of similar size. We will do our best to keep the teams small but the number of registrants dictates this. There will be two sessions for U8, 2:30pm and 4:00pm, in order to support a larger playing area. The participant will play in **one** of these sessions.

For the Spring 2015 season:

Weeks 1-4

U8 Boys at 2:30pm

U8 Girls at 4:00pm

Weeks 5-8

U8 Girls at 2:30pm

U8 Boys at 4:00pm

Coaches will arrive 15 mins before the start (2:15pm or 3:45pm) 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 30 mins on skills and the second 30 mins with scrimmage (friendly game) of 4 vs 4. Coaches should try to

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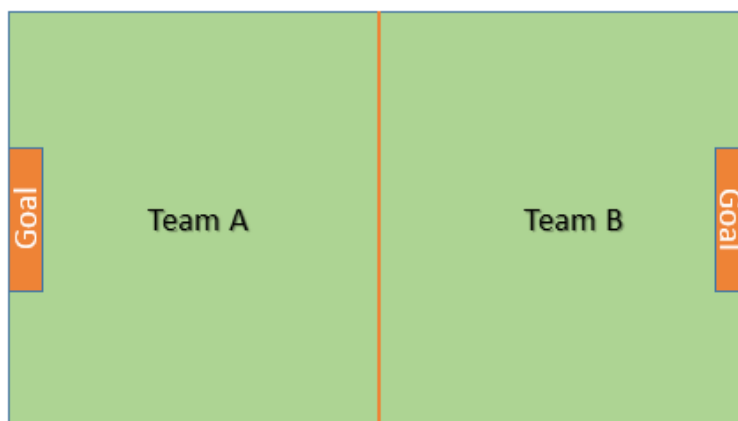
introduce a rotation about every 5 mins so every child will get **equal** playing time. The coach(s) will create the roster rotation.

Equipment Requirements and Restrictions

- 1) Ensure **ALL** players are registered in the RUSC Micro Program by checking your roster.
- 2) **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.**
- 3) **SNEAKERS** work fine. If you have or wish to purchase cleats, make sure they are SOCCER cleats (no metal, no toe cleats)
- 4) **CLOTHING** - Dress prepared to play and have fun, based on weather conditions. Generally a jersey and shorts are sufficient early in the season.
- 5) **MICRO SHIRTS** will be in coaches' equipment bags to be distributed at the beginning of the first session
- 6) **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.**
- 7) **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.
- 8) **WATER** - Bring your own water bottle and put name on it.

Field Layout – U8

Activities and 4 vs 4 scrimmage



Scrimmage/Game Rules (U8)

- 1) 4 vs 4 (U8)

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- 2) THERE ARE NO GOALIES.
- 3) Only size 3 balls should be used.
- 4) Play should be stopped abruptly in the case of injuries. Please encourage the kids to care about their friends and teammates.
- 5) If you need to stop play for any reason, make sure everyone can hear you!
- 6) 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.
- 7) 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.
- 8) Do not worry about positioning, but do try to keep the kids spread out for safety.
- 9) When the ball goes out the end line, the defensive team does a goal kick or dribbles the ball up.
Corner kicks will be introduced after a couple of weeks.
- 10) 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.
- 11) Sidelines are somewhat fuzzy at first but we will start to enforce the boundaries as the season progresses. 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. **Throw-ins will be introduced after a couple of weeks.**
- 12) After a goal, restart play from midfield. Players should restart play by dribbling, not by kicking the ball up the field.
- 13) 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.

Reading “Encore”

Over the past couple of years several high school players have been “giving back” to various RUSC programs by way of volunteering their time. In fact, last season we had 55 players volunteer their time with setups and coaching assistance. They will be available to assist you (the coaches) during your activity and scrimmages, interact with the kids and generally get involved where they can. We hope they become role models as well as generating excitement for the players. We **highly** encourage the coaches to actively use these volunteers, they want to help. Look out for these volunteers, they will be wearing highly visible “safety green” shirts.

Street Soccer – U8 Only

Details will be sent out in the early part of the season.

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.
- 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.

Thank you all for your involvement and volunteering to coach.

RUSC Micro Coordinator

Questions: microsoccer@rusc.org