



## **U8 Competitive Guidelines**

This is a guide to help organize and administer your U8 'competitive' program. These recommendations are to assist clubs/associations in creating a better environment for our U8 players.

Our goal is to provide meaningful programs for our U8 players around Tennessee. This age is a vital stage in the player's development; we hope to further our player's enjoyment, education and foster a passion of having fun in soccer. Creating the right environment is paramount. Both psychosocial and psychomotor developments are key fundamental growths at this age. Also, a player's cognitive development is growing and is an important factor as well.

### **Points to consider:**

#### **Psychomotor Development:**

- Two senses of speed (slow and fast)
- Improving hand, eye and foot coordination
- Growing skeletal system
- Needs full-rest periods

#### **Psychosocial Development:**

- Looks to establish friends
- Wants to be accepted
- Begins to solve problems
- Scares easily (psychologically)
- Fears Failure

#### **Cognitive Development:**

- Short attention span
- Begins to understand time and space awareness
- Focuses on only one or two tasks at a time
- Focuses on "me" and my "friend"
- Keep players engaged and moving

When creating your practices, keeping the players engaged and moving are vital. This can be done using a "games centered" approach. The TSSA Youth Module "YM" gives coaches a better idea for this age group. Create an environment for players to

succeed. Giving the correct knowledge and information for them to develop is paramount to the player's success. You must understand age, group, level and teaching technique must be progressive, and logical.

Activities and games focusing on technical development and having fun are critical components of having a deeper player pool in the older age groups. See below sample player development curriculum for u8s.

Age	U8
<b>Fitness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agility</li> <li>• Eye/foot and eye/hand coordination</li> <li>• Continued refinement of gross motor development</li> <li>• Introduce concepts of warm-up and cool-down</li> </ul>
<b>Technique</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bounce juggling and ball-lifting (with the feet)</li> <li>• Change of direction (using pullbacks and basic cuts)</li> <li>• Receiving ground balls with inside, outside, and sole of the feet</li> <li>• Push pass</li> <li>• Shooting (ground balls, with inside of the foot and with the instep)</li> <li>• Introduce basic throw-in (two-footed)</li> <li>• Introduce full volley (from hands)</li> </ul>
<b>Tactics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1v1 attacking (courage to dribble toward the goal and at defenders)</li> <li>• 1v1 defending (seek to win the ball)</li> <li>• 2v1 (wall pass)</li> <li>• Recognition of open space</li> <li>• Always control the ball on the first touch ("Kicking is not soccer!")</li> </ul>
<b>Psychology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working in pairs</li> <li>• Sharing</li> <li>• Sportsmanship</li> <li>• Creativity</li> </ul>
<b>Training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60-70 practices per year (Academy-style, 60 minutes/practice)</li> <li>• Majority of training activities have 1-2 players per ball</li> <li>• No activities with more than 6 players per ball</li> </ul>
<b>Competition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4v4 to small goals (no goalkeepers)</li> <li>• Approximately 20 games per year, which may be part of an organized jamboree/festival (using approved U8 rules, no reported scores/standings)</li> <li>• No tournaments</li> </ul>

**Numbers:** 4 v 4 without Goalkeepers. No more than 4 players can be on the field at a time for a team.

**Ball:** Size 3

**Field:** 35yd x 25yd (recommended)

**Goals:** 4 x 6 (recommended)

**Roster:** Max of 8 players per team (7 is recommended)

**Travel:** 1 hour max from team club (would recommend 30 min). No overnight stays.

**Season length:** 1 full year (Aug thru July)

**Coaching license:** Youth Module (YM)

**Tournament:** No results and No championship are allowed at U8. Jamborees are great at this age where games are drastically reduced to about 30 min games.

**Age limit:** This is for U8 (age 7). No one is allowed to play up into this age group.

**Practice to Game ratio:** 2:1

**Practice duration:** 60 minutes max is recommended

**Game max per year:** 20 (does not include jamborees)

**Games:** In-house small sided games (SSG) and seasonal jamborees.

**Referee:** Yes 1 per game (Grade 9 referee license)

**Offside:** No offside

**Free Kicks:** Conform to FIFA with the exceptions that all kicks are direct and all opponents are at least four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

**Penalty Kick:** No penalty kicks

**Throw-In:** Conform to FIFA with the exception that an improperly performed throw-in can be retaken once.

**Goal Kicks: per FIFA.** The defending players must stand at least four yards away from the ball until it is in play. The ball is in play once it has left the goal area.

**Corner Kick: per FIFA.** The defending players must stand at least four yards away from the ball until it is in play.