



US Soccer Player Development Initiatives

Small Sided

Information gleaned from the US Soccer website.

On August 1, 2017, the new Player Development Initiatives (PDI) began for all members of US Soccer.

The PDI consists of: (a) Birth Year Registration; and (b) Small Sided Games.

Birth year was implemented by NCYSA the last seasonal year. Below we'll share information on the Small Sided Initiative.

Five Things to Know About Small Sided

Small-sided standards are youth games played with less than 11 players on each team. Playing with less players on the field means that players are constantly involved in play and provided with more opportunities for touches on the ball and overall player development. Not only are there fewer players, but small-sided games also use smaller fields, goals and balls, shorter game times and some different rules to optimize the game for younger players.

Fewer Players, More Development

With fewer players on the field, players have a greater opportunity to play more meaningful minutes. They will be involved in the game, with or without the ball, much more than in a full-sided game, creating more chances for learning and improvement. Reading the game and decision making are

some of the most important qualities for a player that will benefit from playing small sided games. The new standards also cater to the physiological needs of each age group. Having consistent standards across the country allows players to develop on a level playing field and allows U.S. Soccer to better serve and educate parents, players, coaches and referees and clubs.

Ages 6U – 12U

Small-Sided Games Chart



	U6 6 years old and younger	U7 7 years old and younger	U8 8 years old and younger	U9 9 years old and younger	U10 10 years old and younger	U11 11 years old and younger	U12 12 years old and younger
Field Size Ranges (yards)	Length 25-35 Width 15-25	Length 25-35 Width 15-25	Length 25-35 Width 15-25	Length 55-65 Width 35-45	Length 55-65 Width 35-45	Length 70-80 Width 45-55	Length 70-80 Width 45-55
Maximum Goal Size (feet)	Height 4 Width 6	Height 4 Width 6	Height 4 Width 6	Height 6.5 Width 18.5	Height 6.5 Width 18.5	Height 7 Width 21	Height 7 Width 21
Ball Size	3	3	3	4	4	4	4
Players	4v4 No GK	4v4 No GK	4v4 No GK	7v7 GK	7v7 GK	9v9 GK	9v9 GK
Game Time (minutes)	4x10	4x10	4x10	2x25	2x25	2x30	2x30
Offside	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

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Implementation

All youth soccer members will implement the Initiatives, including State Associations, US Youth Soccer, US Club Soccer, AYSO, SAY and others. The goal is uniformity across the country in the youth game and how young players are developed.

For an in-house program (local Recreation league), there is some latitude in the number of players on the field, due to local registration numbers. *(Continued)*

If numbers must adjust by ONE player (e.g. instead of 7v7, available player pool determines you play 6v6 or 8v8), that would be acceptable. However it should be noted that:

1. If your teams travel OUTSIDE your association to play, you would be bound by the US Soccer Small Sided numbers (in this example, 7v7).

2. During your next registration, if numbers adjust so that the 7v7 numbers work, you must use the US Soccer Small Sided Initiative guidelines.

Every effort should be made to adhere to the US Soccer Initiatives and guidelines.

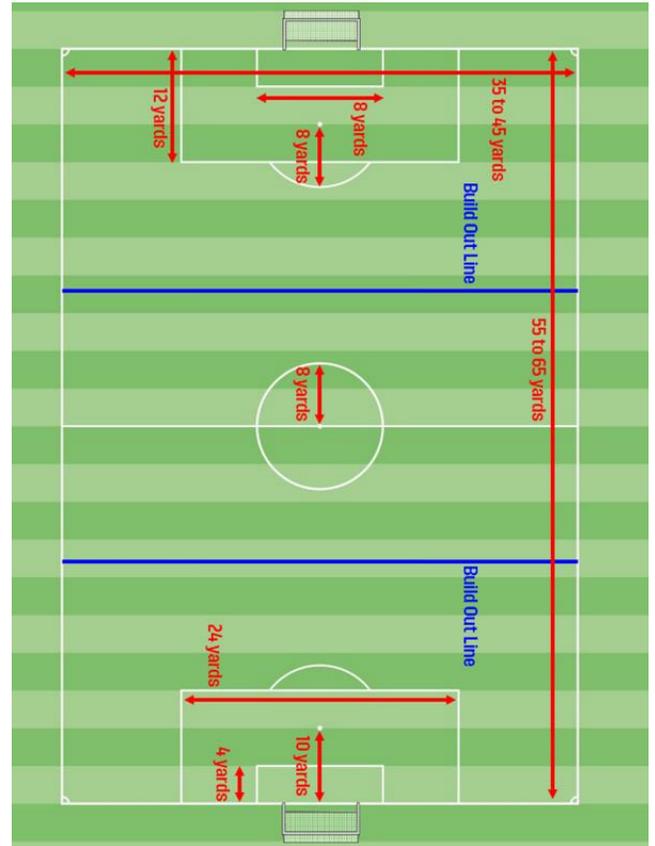
Additional Changes

In addition to the number of players and varying physical dimensions of fields, small-sided games will also have some different rules. Starting at the U-9 level, games will use build-out lines.

A horizontal line drawn from sideline to sideline 14-yards in front of each goal, build-out lines will encourage possession and playing the ball out of the back. When a goalkeeper has the ball in hand or takes a goal kick, the opposing team remains behind the build-out line until the ball is put into play.

This line also indicates where offside can be called, as teams cannot be called for offside between the midfield and build-out line.

As part of small-sided standards, there will be no offside infraction before the U-9 age group. New rules also ban headers as well as punts and drop kicks from the goalkeeper.



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Replacing Current Goal Sizes

NC Youth Soccer does not expect an association to purchase all new goals to meet the Initiative guidelines – that would be a decision for the local association.

However, when the time comes to replace your goals, please replace old goals with the sizes mandated by the Initiative guidelines.