



Muskoka United Football Club
Box 5187
Huntsville, ON P1H 2K6



muskokaunitedfc@gmail.com

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: Development Program

MUFC is for competitive soccer. We want to develop players' skills and athletic ability first and foremost.

What is *development*?

“Development” is short for Long Term Player Development. It is more competitive than house league, but the focus is on developing skills and fostering a love for sport.

When does the outdoor season start and end?

Training (or practices) start when the snow melts and we are able to use the towns' fields. The exact date depends on the weather. Games typically start after the May long weekend. Usually, the development season (playing games against other communities) is finished by the end of August. Occasionally it will run into September. Training can continue, at the coaches' and technical committee's discretion, until the following year's assessments (September or October). Training days/times depend on the field availability and the game schedule (which is set by the leagues).

When does Pre-season start?

Development teams are expected to train indoors once per week from January to April in order to work on fitness, team building, and skill progression. Indoor soccer training is also beneficial to the outdoor game: among a number of other benefits, it encourages players to work on tight ball control, emphasizes finding open lanes while under pressure, and rewards players who keep the ball on the pitch.

Where can I expect my player to play?

MUFC strives to train and play equally in Bracebridge and Huntsville. However, there are circumstances that are beyond anyone's control that require teams to make exceptions. In the spring, Huntsville's Conroy Park allows teams to begin outdoor training much earlier than the Town of Huntsville or the Town of Bracebridge will allow use of our grass fields. In the winter, we often struggle to find gym space (lots of competition for large gym spaces, which soccer requires), and some teams may travel to Gravenhurst High School or St. Dominic's Catholic Secondary School to complete their indoor training. In the fall, training often gets pushed to Gostick Park, in Bracebridge, because there is access to lights



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Some fields drain better than others. After very heavy rain, games or practice sessions may be moved to a different field in lieu of canceling them. If games are rescheduled due to weather or teams want an extra practice, there is often more available field space at Gostick Park. Access to lights allows us to use the field space for longer periods of time.

Bracebridge training sessions will be held at Gostick (outdoors) or at one of the Bracebridge schools (indoors). Huntsville training sessions will be held at McCulley-Robertson or Conroy (outdoors) or at one of the Huntsville schools (indoors). Games are often split evenly between the two communities.

It is important to note that indoor training space is limited. The school board has a policy that an organization can only book space in each school twice a week. This means that there are times we must make use of the gyms in Gravenhurst, Port Sydney, etc..

What are my travel expectations like?

The soccer clubs in the Huronia District Soccer Association typically include: Orillia, Barrie, Bradford, South Simcoe (Alliston), Collingwood, Innisville, and Wasaga. Teams from North Bay and/or Sudbury are often approved to play in our league as well. Please note that there may not be a team from each club in your child's division. The expectation is that each team within a division plays at least one home game and at least one away game.

That sounds like a lot of travel?

We understand the difficulties of living in a rural community. Unfortunately, travel at the development level is a necessity. Not to worry. One solution is carpooling; carpooling is a great way to help alleviate many stresses around traveling. We highly encourage parents to get to know your fellow parents/guardians and arrange a ride share. A lot of team-building and bonding occurs on the road, traveling to training and games. As players age, in any competitive sport program, travel is a requirement. The development program is a great introduction into those travel expectations.

What is the time commitment during the season?

The development teams have one game per week and two training sessions per week. Some teams may also choose to enter festivals (i.e., tournaments) in the summer. The HDSL typically runs two to three mandatory weekend festivals per summer for the development teams. All MUFC Development players have the option to join Bracebridge Soccer Club or Huntsville Soccer Club's House League programs proving schedules work, at a reduced cost. Although the priority for attendance must always remain with MUFC.

How many players per team?

The minimum number of players to run a U9 and U10 team is 9, and the maximum number of players to roster is 12. The minimum number of players to run a U11 and U12 team is 12, and the maximum number of players to roster is 16.



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Will my player's current team be broken up? We really enjoyed playing with one another this season.

At the development level, there is no guarantee that any one team will remain the same in subsequent years. Team demographics are determined by the number of players who register, recommended roster sizes, as well as the specific divisions that the HDSL offers.

MUFC, along with BSC and HSC, can appreciate the wonderful feeling players and parents/guardians experience when a team bonds. The players enjoy playing with one another. We often refer to these close-knit groups as "families."

It's important to remember that due to registration numbers, both parent clubs are often unable to field full teams in each division (u9, u10, u11 & u12). We have frequently had to rely on blended age groups. This means part of the team moves up to the next level, while the remaining half stay in the same age group, year over year. Having all development players play under one umbrella supports more players per division, resulting in teams having a greater likelihood of moving up together.

Who are the coaches?

We are still recruiting coaches for some teams. The coaches are all volunteers and are required by Ontario Soccer to participate in four courses (a combination of in person and online). MUFC strives to have representation from multiple communities (e.g., Bracebridge, Gravenhurst, Huntsville, Parry Sound) on each team's list of coaches and managers. For example, the 2023 U15 Girls team had a manager from Beatrice, a coach from Utterson, a coach from Huntsville and two coaches from Bracebridge. This is not always the case, and is dependent upon the volunteer pool.

What program is best suited for my player?

When choosing a program for your player, we highly encourage you to chat with your child to understand their goals, as well as consider what works best for your personal family situation. There are several factors to take into consideration: travel, expenses, fees, differences in coaching expectations from House League vs Development, and attendance expectations/commitment level.

Not all athletes are appropriate for the development stream. Some athletes don't want to commit to training and would prefer to strictly play games. That's ok. House League is there for those athletes, and there is nothing stopping them from joining development programs in subsequent years.

Development	House League
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Min 3 nights a week (April – September)• 2 X practice (house league will be scheduled)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 night per week (May – July)• BSC and HSC may offer additional



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> on a practice night wherever possible) • 1 X game • 2+ Festival Weekends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> optional programming
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 X week indoor training (Jan - April) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No indoor training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer coach who has completed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Police Record and Vulnerable Sector Check ○ Respect in Sport ○ Making Ethical Decisions ○ Concussion Awareness/Management ○ NCCP Soccer coaching courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A parent volunteer or older MUFC player
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly travel expected • May be up to 30 min to training • May be up to 2 hours to a game • Car pooling is recommended 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No weekly travel • Games played locally • At times BSC and HSC may offer mixed programs (BSC v HSC scrimmages) • Travel is optional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your player is committed to developing their skills which may support their interests in competing at a higher level in future years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your player wants to keep their soccer experience light and just play games.
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What is included in the fee?

Players will be receiving 10 months of soccer programming, which includes:

- 16 weeks of indoor training
- Team and player registration into the HDSL
- Player insurance through Ontario Soccer
- Additional training opportunities with National A licensed coaches and / or position specific training.
- Certified coaches in Respect in Sport, Making Ethical Decisions, Concussion Management, and an age-appropriate soccer coaching certification (Learn to Train, Soccer for Life, etc.)
- Coaches receive an additional 6 weeks of training by National A licensed coach
- Full uniform kit including home and away jerseys, shorts and socks
- Includes all team equipment (balls, cones, pinnies, goal posts, nets, training aides, etc.)
- 20 weeks of outdoor training twice a week
- Approx. 12 games (determined by the league)
- Strength and Conditioning program designed by Sports Lab (provided fully by a local sponsor) for all athletes and coaches training to deliver the program
- All ref fees are included in the registration fee
- 2-3 festivals (includes ref fees for all games)
- Additional fall programming/team training based on weather and team interest.

What about sponsorships?

We are looking for team and club sponsorships to help support a lot of the club and team costs. A great deal of time is spent by our volunteers raising sponsorship funds. We budgeted almost \$40,000 in sponsorship if not for this fees would have been higher.

We are still in need of team sponsors, if you know someone who would be willing to sponsor a team, please contact muskokaunitedfc@gmail.com

I can't afford to pay for soccer right now/all at once.

We understand. It is difficult for most families to make large payments at once. We have a variety of payment plans available to suit different family's needs. If you will still struggle to pay the fees there are community organizations such as the Children's Foundation that may be able to help. Please reach out to our club administrator if you need assistance in finding these options.

How do "assessments" work?

There is a cap on how many players can roster (see above); if that limit is reached, the MUFC Technical Committee will meet to discuss the options to keep as many players playing as possible. This does not mean that teams will be overloaded with players. MUFC will continue to follow recommended guidelines from Ontario Soccer on ideal roster sizes, while keeping in mind historical attendance rates and commitment levels (e.g., family vacations can have a dramatic effect on team numbers, and forfeiting a game does result in a steep fine to the team).



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Assessments, which are similar in structure to a training session, are completed in the fall to gauge the number of participants and the level of competition in the various age groups. This helps the technical committee plan the season, order appropriate uniforms/gear, recruit sufficient volunteers to run programs, etc. Due to supply chain concerns, several changes have been made to ordering uniforms and equipment. We used to get away with ordering in the winter or early spring. Now our suppliers are requesting orders over a year in advance. This requires that we have accurate participant numbers earlier than in previous years.

Will my player be cut?

All players will have the opportunity to play, but it may look different team to team. As indicated above, there are caps to how many players are able to dress for each game. This current season, the Technical Committee and coaching staff determined what approach was best for their individual team's needs: having practice players (players that come to practices and come to games when a player is needed) versus having a rotating roster of players for each game.

Attendance at Assessments

Your player's attendance at assessments is mandatory in order for them to be considered for the team. Assessment will have their own separate registration.

If your player cannot attend but has interest in playing for the 2026 Season, please email MUFC admin muskokaunitedfc@gmail.com with the following details: Player's first and last name, Player's Year of Birth, and contact information (including email and a phone number).

Who is on the MUFC board?

Board members include equal representation from both BSC and HSC.

Cathy Janke – President, Programming, Disciplinary Chair & Scheduling

Chris Occhiuzzi - Vice President

Dino Tomassoni - Technical Director, Technical Committee Member and Programming

Stephanie Nasturzio - Technical Committee Member, Coach & Teams Liaison

Meagan Rasmussen - Disciplinary member, Team Manager, Club Culture Committee

Chuck Lefebvre - Technical Committee, Coach

Glen Duffield - Head Referee & Disciplinary member

Matt McKay - Technical Committee Member, Programming & Treasurer Liaison, Head Coach

In addition to the board members, MUFC relies heavily on two other individuals to run the administrative side of the club:

Terry Nicholson – MUFC treasurer (volunteer)

Laura Jennings – Club Administrator (MUFC's only staff member)



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How can I help?

It is here where we need more parental involvement. "Doing this together" is a main feature at MUFC. BSC and HSC came together to form MUFC; players and coaches from all over Muskoka have come together to form teams. The one area where we are weak is our lack of "togetherness with parents". Do we want more involvement? Yes! Will it make a better MUFC product and a better experience for your children? Yes! We want your ideas, your passion, your perspective, and your elbow grease. Please don't be afraid of the commitment - by registering your player with us, you are already committed. Why not make that commitment beneficial for all?

Know that the MUFC board members are parents, like you; they are all very busy people, like you; they all have full time jobs, like you; they have families with multiple children's schedules to coordinate, like you. They sacrifice time with their families on evenings and weekends to facilitate programming that benefits the youth of Muskoka. They make those sacrifices because they know Muskoka has a lot to offer and they believe in our Mission: to collaborate to create a local, sustainable pathway for soccer.

We know that united we will thrive.

We welcome everyone.

We strive to be athlete centred - not coach centred or parent centred.

We understand that having fun is the best way to learn.

We will create passionate advocates of our community and sport.

MUFC aims to celebrate what makes our community great. While we hope to grow the game locally, it may be the only path forward to sustain youth soccer in Muskoka.

There is no perfect answer or program for everyone. If something is done a certain way, there is almost certainly a reason why. The MUFC board has spent hours upon hours meeting about all of these issues to create the best program with the resources that they have available.

MUFC is always looking for volunteers! Whether coaching, managing a team, helping with equipment and fields, or sitting on the board, there are always opportunities to volunteer. Please contact our administrator if you would like to know more about current roles.

Volunteers do not have the time, they just have the heart. – Elizabeth Andrew

Questions or Concerns? Please contact
Laura, MUFC Administrator
muskokaunitedfc@gmail.com