

German Canadian Football Club

Long Term Player Development & Grassroots Policy



Commitment to Long Term Player Development

Ontario Soccer defines Long Term Player Development (LTPD) as putting the player first and offering age-appropriate opportunities for kids to enjoy the game of soccer. We recognize that making the game fun and creating a safe environment where players can learn and make mistakes will increase player retention and allow them to continue developing through youth soccer and into adulthood.

GCFC's technical team is committed to creating age-appropriate sessions with the players' physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development in mind. This is further outlined in "Ontario Grassroots Standards". Additionally, our technical team meets with our certified coaches and volunteers to discuss practices and explain the rationale behind our activities so coaches can gain a deeper understanding of why we use certain activities.

As part of our commitment to LTPD, GCFC encourages our older players to get involved with their soccer community through coaching and refereeing. Our players in the Learn to Train stage have the opportunity to get involved in coaching by joining in as assistant coaches in our Active Start/early FUNdamentals programs. This experience allows our players to gain a deeper understanding of the game and learn the basics of coaching in a familiar environment.

Ontario Grassroots Standards (U4-U12)

Active Start (U4-U5)

At the Active Start level, GCFC's priorities are:

- Developing fundamental movement skills through play and general movement activities.
- Helping children feel competent and comfortable in our sessions.
- Having children participate in a variety of activities and games that are fun and challenging for children in this stage of development.

To develop fundamental movement skills at this level we engage in age-appropriate movement games that incorporate the children's imagination. At this age the concept of reality versus imagination is not fully developed, so having an imaginative component in all our activities allows the children to stay engaged. Players are encouraged to make decisions and participate in the capacity they feel comfortable.

Sessions for this age group do not have formal matches, but informal game-like activities are incorporated into our weekly 45-minute sessions that extend for 10-12 weeks. We maintain a coach to player ratio of at least 1:6, but this ratio is often 2:6.

To ensure the equipment GCFC uses is age appropriate and high quality, our technical team ensures the equipment is the correct size (size 3 balls and pop-up goals) and safe prior to the start of every season, throughout the season, and at the end of the season.

German Canadian Football Club

Long Term Player Development & Grassroots Policy



FUNDamentals (U6-U8 Female and U6-U9 Male)

At the FUNDamentals level, GCFC's priorities are:

- Further developing a wide range of fundamental movement skills in both structured and unstructured play environments.
- Providing fun, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate sport and physical activity to enhance confidence and desire to participate.

GCFC's technical team designs both structured and unstructured activities for each session surrounding a general theme, which provides coaches with the tools to create a fun and safe environment for all players to learn. The outline of these practices changes throughout the FUNDamental stage to include players at all developmental levels.

The U6-U7 program is run within the GCFC organization and involves weekly 60-minute sessions that include a 20-minute 3v3 match. These sessions run for 10-12 weeks and are led by our certified coaching team and parent volunteers with a 1:6 coach to player ratio. To ensure the equipment we use is age appropriate and high quality, GCFC's technical team ensures the equipment is the correct size (size 3 balls and pop-up goals) and safe prior to the start of every season, throughout the season, and at the end of the season.

The U8-U9 program involves teams registered in the Elgin Middlesex District Soccer League (EMDSL). These teams play a 16-week season with one 60-minute practice and one 5v5 game per week according to the EMDSL schedule, which follows Ontario Soccer Grassroots Standards. 1-3 certified coaches are assigned to each team of 8-10 players to maintain a coach to player ratio of 1:6.

To ensure the equipment GCFC uses is age appropriate and high quality, our technical team ensures the equipment is the correct size (size 3 balls and 5ftx8ft goals) and safe prior to the start of every season, throughout the season, and at the end of the season.

Learn to Train (U9-U12)

At the Learn to Train level, GCFC's priorities are:

- Developing an understanding of basic rules, tactics, and strategies in games and a continued refinement of sport-specific skills.
- Focusing on skill-development and maximizing the player experience in competition settings to improve retention.
- Prioritizing games and activities that are inclusive, fun, and skill-based in training sessions.

GCFC's technical team designs structured activities surrounding a general theme with the purpose of enhancing understanding of the tactics and fundamental skills involved in that theme. Additionally, our activities encourage players to find creative solutions to problems encountered in game situations. Competition days then involve applying those skills and focusing on one area of the game and working as a team to improve in that area.

GCFC's U10-U11 program involves teams registered in the Elgin Middlesex District Soccer League (EMDSL). Their season extends for 16-weeks with two 60-minute practice sessions and one 7v7 game per week according to the EMDSL schedule, which follows Ontario Soccer

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Long Term Player Development & Grassroots Policy



Grassroots Standards. 1-3 certified coaches are assigned to each team of 10-12 players to maintain a coach to player ratio of approximately 1:10.

To ensure the equipment we use is age appropriate and high quality, GCFC's technical team ensures the equipment is the correct size (size 4 balls and 6ftx16ft goals) and safe prior to the start of every season, throughout the season, and at the end of the season.