

# Guidelines for Small-Sided Games

## **1. Coaches will be on the field to control play.**

- Let the players play - give positive remarks but refrain from "play by play" instructions
- Players should play all positions (areas) -- coaches should talk about and encourage all players to attack, defend and support;
- Make sure all players get equal playing time;
- Cheer for all children, even those on the other team, make sure parents on your team are not yelling, not cheering only for their child and they are showing good sportsmanship (please see "**keep the kids playing guidelines**")

## **2. Emphasis is on letting the kids play safely with minimal rules.**

- No tripping, pushing, and grabbing -- tell players to keep their arms down;
- No slide tackles -- tell players to "stay on their feet";
- No kicking the ball from the ground -- tell players who fall down to "stand up before kicking the ball";
- Fouls will be called on a player who kicks, trips, jumps at, charges, hits, pushes, holds, spits at, slide tackles or tackles from behind. Also, if a player handles (hands) the ball deliberately, plays dangerously, or obstructs a player and does not play the ball.
- Quickly restart the game after quickly telling players what foul was committed, and how to avoid the foul, as in the examples above. Restart play with an indirect free kick from the location of the foul -- a player can not kick the ball directly into the goal from this kick - it must touch another player first;

## **3. Minimal rules:**

- No throw-ins -- just play the ball in;
- No corner or goal kicks -- just play the ball in;
- No off-sides -- but discourage cherry picking (emphasize defending as a team);
- No kickoffs -- start game and restart after goals are scored with a "draw" start (a draw start is sort of like a drop ball, but the ball is already on the ground and the referee says "draw" to begin play, at which point the players both try to pull the ball back and take positive possession);
- No penalty kicks;
- No score keeping;
- Substitutions on the fly;

## **4. Sportsmanship:**

- Players, coaches, parents and trainers must show respect for one another at all times;
- Adjust positions if games are unfair or switch players onto different fields, do not let one player keep scoring and ensure all children are afforded touches
- Shake hands after each game;

## **5. Coach Involvement in Training Sessions:**

- Coaches may wish to participate fully in all training sessions with the professional trainers. Working side-by-side with them -- helping teach the techniques and using their activities -- is an excellent way to become a better coach.