



IOWA SOCCER ASSOCIATION

Player Development: 8U Program

IOWA SOCCER PLAYER PATHWAY



8U PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Category	Description
Long-Term Player Development Phase	Active Start.
Chronological Age Group	7-8 year olds.
Program Developmental Priorities	1. Enjoyment, 2. Physical Activity, 3. Technical, 4. Social, 5. Psychological, 6. Tactical.
Number of sessions	7-8 week program with one practice session per week and one game per week.
Duration of Practice Session	60 minutes. A recommended structure would be 5 fun and educational activities.
Game Format	4v4 games with two substitutes.
Game Schedule	(1) Informal schedule with flexible roster (see next slide) or (2) Formal season schedule with set rosters
Practice Activities Priorities	Promote physical movement, lots of ball contact (one ball per child), and engage imagination.
Ratio of Coach: Players	1:6 is the recommended ratio in order to make each activity manageable and enhance engagement.
Activities Duration (minutes)	Each activity should last between 7-8 minutes per activity maximum due to limited attention span
Playing Time (minutes)	4x8 minute quarters
Break Time (minutes)	5 minutes break time between quarters.
Team Roster Size	Formal (set rosters) or informal rosters (bulk registration). Maximum of 6 players per team.
Ball Size	Players should use a size 3 ball.
Coach Certificate	Iowa Soccer Youth Coaching Certificate and/or US Soccer 'F' license.

8U PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Category	Informal Teams	Formal Teams
Registration	Bulk registration	Formal roster registration
Roster maximum	6	6
Game Format	4v4	4v4
Substitutes	2 per roster	2 per roster
Rosters	Informal: roster is flexible and changes weekly depending on the number of players who attend.	Formal: roster is set at the beginning of the season and doesn't change from week to week.
Schedules	No formal schedule. The games schedule/ match-ups are organized on game day. See informal game day Organization checklist for outline.	Formal schedule: the club produces a weekly schedule set at the beginning of the season.

8U INFORMAL GAME DAY ORGANIZATION

Game Day Organizational Checklist:

1. Players check in with the program director
2. Program director confirms attendance
3. The number of players dictates the number of teams formed and fields needed. For example 48 players would be organized into 8 teams with four fields.
4. Players are grouped into teams of 6 and play 4v4 with two substitutes (see diagram).
5. Teams are assigned a field with a volunteer who organizes and manages the game.
6. One team wears practices vests to distinguish between teams.
7. Teams play 4x8 minute quarters with 5 minute breaks between quarters.

