



### Getting Started

1. Identify the need in your area.
  - For what type of disabilities do you need to plan?
  - Are you able to fulfill these needs?
  - Check for any restrictions placed on the facility (ies) you plan to use.
2. Are they equipped to handle athletes with physical disabilities?
  - Check with your soccer insurance carrier.
  - Contact established programs for information.
    - US Youth Soccer
    - Special Olympics
    - United Cerebral Palsy
    - Shriners
    - Other KYSA Programs
3. Contact your local school districts and universities.
4. Create a list of people who are able to assist you.
5. Plan your advertisements.
6. Get the support of your State Association and Regional –TOPSoccer Representative, and use them as resources.

### Creating Your Program

1. The unique thing about TOPSoccer is that each program is different and is created around the needs of the participants. Additionally, TOPSoccer athletes are placed on teams according to ability, not age.
2. Length of program is determined by organizer (6-8 weeks)
3. Playing rules.
  - Create rules to fit specific needs.
  - Use the US Youth Soccer Under-6, Under-8 or Under-10 guidelines
4. TOPSoccer programs can have very modest beginnings.
5. For those athletes not able to participate due to medical reasons, design a skills program that is rewarding, challenging and fun.
6. Variety of choices.
  - Small-sided games (3 v 3, 4 v 4, 8 v 8, etc.)
  - Full-sided games (11v11)
  - Unified teams (ratio of challenged athletes to non-challenged athletes)
  - Indoor programs Outdoor program
  - Camps
  - Skills only
7. Above all... keep it simple... KEEP IT FUN!

### Placement and Registration of Athletes

1. Registration procedures should be the same as those used for regular league teams.
  - Registration form should include a section for medical history.
  - Athletes with Down-syndrome should be required to have a current x-ray. If the x-ray is positive for their safety, it should be strongly recommended that they do not take part in team play.
  - In some cases medical waivers may be required.
2. Placement is made by ability not age.
3. Assessment test should be made available upon request.
4. Ensure that the experience is meaningful for the participating athletes, and one in which they feel they have made a contribution.

### **Recruiting Coaches**

Contact local universities, schools and soccer clubs for volunteers. The **State Director of Coaching** is also a good source for coaches. No special training is required, however it is available:

- Through US Youth Soccer and state association sponsored coaching courses.
- Through Special Olympics.

### **Cost Involved**

1. Costs vary depending upon your registration fees and insurance fees, and uniform and equipment costs.
2. Cost should be kept low and affordable to all possible participants.
3. Grants are available through US Youth Soccer.
4. There are philanthropic entities, such as the Shriners which offer assistance. Research others in the local community (Lions Clubs, Rotary Clubs, etc.).
5. Approach local companies or corporations for cash or in-kind donations.

### **Helpful Hints**

1. Use color coded goals or nets (e.g., red goals/yellow nets).
2. Have scrimmage vests available.
3. Have a ball for each athlete.
4. HAVE FUN!