Program Overview
What is TOPSoccer

TOPSoccer (The Outreach Program for Soccer) is a community based program that is designed to meet the needs of children and young adults that have physical and/or intellectual disabilities.

The program is geared towards player development rather than to competition.
Where are TOPSoccer Programs?

- Many US Youth Soccer Association affiliated leagues and clubs have TOPSoccer programs that are run in conjunction with their Recreation and Select soccer programs.
- Any such affiliated league or club can do the same.
Why Should we have a program?

- US Youth Soccer purports to be the “Game for all Kids” this program allows us to include this largely overlooked segment of our population in our already established leagues/clubs.

- These children are already in your program … they are sitting on sideline benches and chairs watching their siblings play!
Is there a need for such programs ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of Child</th>
<th>With one disability</th>
<th>With multiple disabilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>597,000</td>
<td>75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-14</td>
<td>2,062,000</td>
<td>412,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-17</td>
<td>933,000</td>
<td>309,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>2,537,000</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Who administers/coaches the programs ...

- Any person that has an interest in starting such a program should be encouraged to do so!
- While it is helpful to have some experience with children that have disabilities it is not a prerequisite.
- The teams/groups are coached and administered in much the same way as any recreational team.
Who can participate …

- Any child/young adult with a disability.
- Disabilities might include:
  - Autism
  - Down Syndrome
  - Muscular Dystrophy
  - Cerebral Palsy
  - Sight or Hearing Impaired
  - Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
What will the parents expect …

- That it will be a fun and meaningful experience for their child.
- That the games and activities will be adapted in ways that ensure the child will learn at his/her own pace.
- Practices and games will be organized.
- The program will improve the overall fitness, self-esteem and social skill of the child.
What are the benefits to the TOPSoccer athlete ...

- The TOPSoccer athlete will develop a sense of belonging to a community and will learn the value of being part of a team.
- The athlete will experience an increase in self-esteem, fitness and social skills.
- Success is based upon ability!
Where will we find players …

- Contact your local school district.
- If Adaptive PE is offered in your school system contact the teachers.
- Contact local established groups for the disabled.
- Word of mouth, family and co-workers.
- Advertise in newspapers.
- Through the already registered siblings that are playing in your program!
Registration of TOPSoccer Players

- Procedures vary from state to state but costs are kept to a minimum so that they are affordable to all.
- Registration fees include insurance and in most cases uniform and equipment costs.
How are teams formed …

- Athletes are placed according to ability not by age.
- At first you may not have enough players to form full-fledged teams but this should not be considered an impediment … there are ways to facilitate the needs of small groups too!
  - Use volunteers from the community and/or soccer teams from your league to form unified teams. These teams should include similar ratios of disabled and non-disabled participants.
  - Play small-sided games. For some children as many as 1 VS 1 is perfectly appropriate.
What about practices and games …

- Most TOPSoccer programs do not meet more than once per week. Many of the participants are in therapy or engaged in other activities.

- Schedule one 1 to 1.5 hour (depending on age) practice/games time per week, Sunday afternoons generally work best. Most TOPSoccer season run between 6 – 8 weeks.
End the season ...

- End your season with a party including trophies for all!
Resources …

- Visit the US Youth Soccer website at www.usyouthsoccer.org