

MB SOCCER GRASSROOTS 2026

Implementation Guide aligned with Canada Soccer Grassroots Standards.

This guide summarizes the key standards, delivery expectations, and program structures used to support high-quality Grassroots environments across Manitoba.



DEVELOPMENT FIRST

Player growth comes before results and standings.



GAME-LIKE LEARNING

Players learn best through realistic, engaging play.



OPEN AND INCLUSIVE

Grassroots programs should be welcoming, flexible, and accessible.



SAFE AND POSITIVE

Create an environment where children can try, fail, and enjoy the game.

WHAT THIS GUIDE COVERS



2026
STANDARDS



STATION-BASED
TRAINING



COACHING
METHODOLOGY



SESSION
SETUP



GROUPINGS



STAFFING
ROLES



FESTIVAL
STRUCTURE

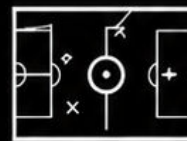


GAME-DAY
RULES



TECHNICAL
PRIORITIES





2026 GRASSROOTS STANDARDS AT A GLANCE

Key alignment points for Manitoba Soccer delivery.

1



PLAYER-CENTERED

Sessions must be age-appropriate, engaging, and built around how children learn.

2



OPEN ACCESS

Grassroots environments should support broad participation and inclusive registration.

3



NO TRYOUTS / NO FIXED SEASON-LONG ROSTERS (U8-U10)

Avoid selection-based entry and avoid permanent team identity in the youngest Grassroots age bands.

4



FLEXIBLE GROUPINGS

Use fluid groupings that can change based on challenge, progression, confidence, and social needs.

5



U10 COMPETITION NOTE

Weekend tiering may begin at U10 where applicable, but training should remain developmental, flexible, and player-focused.

6



PARENTS AS PARTNERS

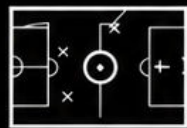
Clear communication helps families understand objectives, progress, and the purpose of the Grassroots environment.



2026 IMPLEMENTATION NOTE

For Grassroots ages, the priority is development, enjoyment, repetition, and decision-making — not early selection or fixed status.





WHY STATION-BASED TRAINING?

A recommended Grassroots delivery model aligned with Canada Soccer Grassroots Standards.

Canada Soccer is not prescriptive about one format, but a station-rotation approach is often the most effective model for Grassroots delivery.



1. EQUAL ACCESS TO DEVELOPMENT

Every player works, learns, and improves at the same time with the same opportunities.



2. SMALL COACH-TO-PLAYER RATIOS

Stations allow more coaches to be actively involved with small groups for better quality.



3. HIGH REPETITION IN VARIED SETTINGS

Players repeat skills and actions often, in different ways, with different challenges.



4. CONTINUOUS ENGAGEMENT AND FLOW

Players stay active with minimal lineups, keeping energy high and attention focused.



5. NO FIXED TEAMS OR COACH ASSIGNMENT IDENTITY

Players are not tied to teams or specific coaches—promotes equity, flexibility, and growth.



6. VARIED SOCIAL GROUPINGS AND ADAPTABILITY

Players mix with different peers, building confidence, teamwork, and social skills.



7. EFFICIENT USE OF COACHES AND SPACE

Multiple learning opportunities happen at once across the space, maximizing every session.

SUGGESTED STATION-BASED MODEL

Example only— one effective option is to connect all stations to a common theme while exposing players to all four moments of the game.



1v1 or 2v2 or 3v3

Small-number duel games develop attacking and defending actions, confidence, ball protection, beating an opponent, and transition reactions.



DIRECTIONAL RONDO

Age-appropriate possession activity with direction and support; small goals are optional—use target players or end zones instead; emphasizes scanning, decision-making, and transitions.



ISOLATED TECHNIQUE

Focused repetition of a key technical action connected to the session objective, helping players build coordination and execution.



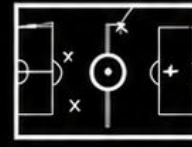
SMALL-SIDED GAME

A game-based activity where players apply the theme in realistic situations across all four moments of the game.



Suggested only: connected station themes can help create clearer learning, better flow, and repeated game-like actions.





COACHING METHODOLOGY

How coaches should teach and interact in Grassroots environments.

1



CHILD-CENTERED COACHING

- Adapt to the child.
- Respect cognitive, emotional, and physical stage.

2



LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

- Use game-based activities.
- Create the problem in the activity.
- Allow players to solve or find the solution(s).
- Let the game be the teacher.
- Avoid constant stopping.

3



QUESTIONING OVER TELLING

- Use prompts like 'What did you notice?'
- Guide rather than command.

4



AGE-SPECIFIC APPLICATION

Ages 4–6: imaginative, playful environments.

Ages 7–9: simple objectives and basic decisions.

Ages 10–13: more structured challenges with open-ended solutions.

5



PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

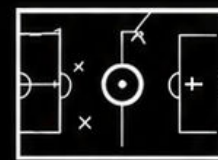
- Use positive reinforcement.
- Treat mistakes as learning moments.
- Create confidence to try and fail.



COACHING STANDARD

Less talking. More playing. Clearer pictures. Better questions.





SESSION MODEL AND SETUP

Training time guidelines and practical session organization.

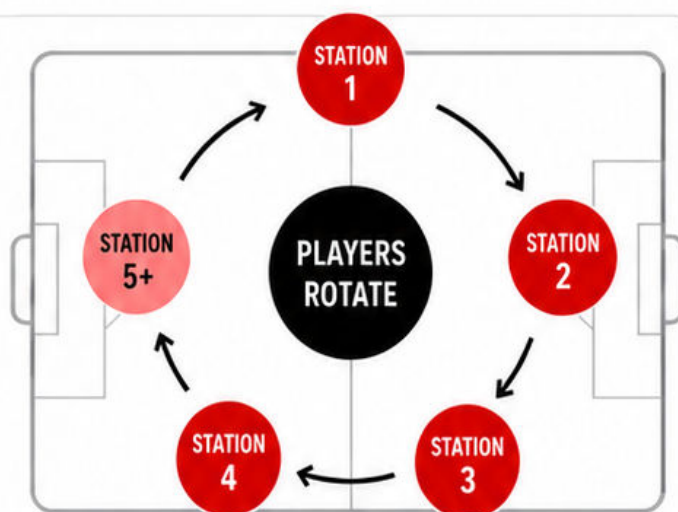
TRAINING TIME GUIDELINES

 Age	 Duration	 Format
U8/U9	45–60 min	Station Based
U10/U11	60–75 min	Station Based
U12	60–75 min	Station Based



EXAMPLE SESSION SETUP

- For 50 players, keep stations at 10–12 players.
- Use approximately 10 minutes per station.
- Allow 2 minutes for rotation and 1 minute to reset.
- Mirror the 4–station setup if more groups are needed.
- Define a clear rotation path.
- Ensure adequate spacing and plenty of balls.



COACHING FOCUS

1

One session theme

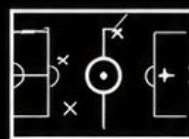
2

Maximum 3 clear coaching points

3

Arrive prepared and set up safely





GROUPINGS AND STAFF ROLES

Flexible player environments supported by clear leadership roles.

1 TRAINING GROUPINGS



PROMOTE

- ✓ Fluid groups based on progression and effort
- ✓ Groupings that create the right challenge
- ✓ Balanced social and developmental experiences
- ✓ Ongoing tracking of player needs



AVOID

- ✗ Fixed groups for several months
- ✗ Training groups identical to match groups
- ✗ Grouping only by status or label

2 GRASSROOTS STAFF ROLES



TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

Leads player development direction and supervises technical staff.



SKILLS MANAGER

Oversees all sessions on site and manages program flow.



SKILLS COACH

Leads activities under the direction of the Skills Manager.



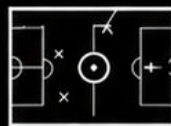
GAME LEADER

Supports festival games, flow, restarts, and player experience.



Strong Grassroots delivery depends on clear roles, consistent language, and flexible player groupings.





MATCH DAY STRUCTURE AND GAME FORMAT

Event-based play aligned to Grassroots development principles.



FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING

WYSA Match Days are hosted bi-weekly or monthly on weekends. Club-led Match Days can be scheduled at the club's discretion on weekends or weeknights.



SINGLE VENUE HOSTING

Host clubs deliver events at a single venue. This may be a home field, shared field, or neutral site depending on facility needs.



ONE OR TWO MATCHES

A Match Day may include one or two matches in a day, depending on the format and Canada Soccer Grassroots Standards.



BALANCED MATCHDAY SQUADS

Matchday squads should be balanced and event-based, not fixed long-term teams.

GAME FORMAT BY AGE

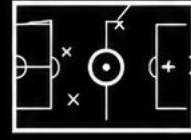
Age	Game Structure	Format
U8/U9	2 x 20 = 40 min match	5v5
U10/U11	2 x 25 = 50 min match	7v7
U12	2 x 35 = 70 min match	9v9



IMPORTANT MATCH DAY REMINDERS

- Match Days bring a number of teams together at a single venue rather than traditional single-team home and away play.
- Balance squads as evenly as possible.
- Use Match Days to support development, not status.
- Give players meaningful minutes.
- Matchday organization should not recreate fixed long-term teams at the youngest ages.





FESTIVAL GAME-DAY RULES

Simple rules that keep the game flowing and player-focused.

1



GOAL KICKS

Taken within 5 yards of goal and unopposed. Retreat lines are in effect.

2



RESTARTS

Use pass-ins or dribble-ins instead of throw-ins. Restart quickly after goals and stoppages.

3



CORNERS AND FREE KICKS

Corner kicks may be passed or dribbled in. Handballs and fouls restart with a direct free kick.

4



SUBSTITUTIONS AND MINUTES

Allow on-the-fly substitutions or changes at stoppages. Aim for even playing time. Rotate goalkeepers.

5



GAME LEADERS AND COACHES

Host clubs schedule game leaders. Coaches may move and support players without harming game flow.



GAME-DAY PRIORITY

Keep games moving, maximize touches, and create a supportive environment for learning.



TECHNICAL PRIORITIES AND SAFETY NOTES

Development emphasis for young Grassroots players.

Technique	Coaching Emphasis	Grassroots Priority
 Dribbling / Running With Ball	Use both feet, change speed and direction.	 Very High
 Passing	Firm pass, clear target, move again.	 High / Medium
 Receiving	Open body, prepare the next action.	 High / Medium
 Shooting	Balanced body, strike through the ball.	 Medium
 Defending / Tackling	Close space, slow down, be patient.	 Medium
 Long Passing	Introduce only when quality and safety allow.	 Medium / Low
 Goalkeeping	Simple catching, footwork, and bravery.	 Low Priority



HEADING

Heading is not recommended or taught in this age group. Do not include heading instruction or heading activities in U8-U9 Grassroots sessions. Follow Canada Soccer Grassroots Standards and prioritize safer foundational skills instead.



Priority at this stage: lots of touches, simple decisions, confidence, and enjoyment.