

Why Small-Sided Games for American Soccer?

Shaun Bailey

Director of Coaching

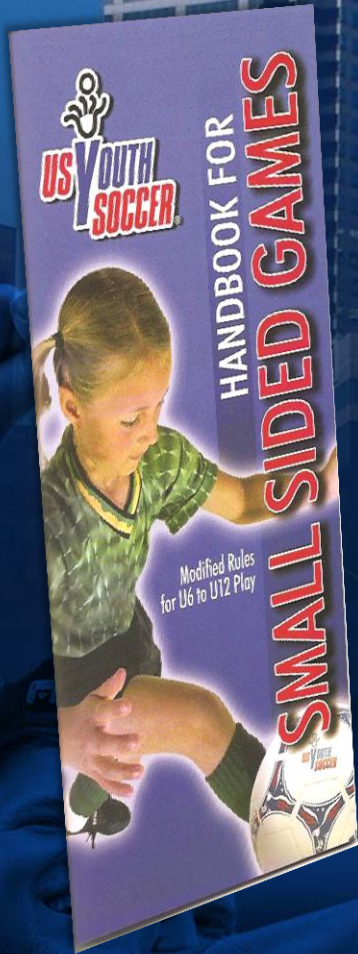
Connecticut Junior Soccer Association



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What are small-sided games?

These are games with fewer players competing on a smaller sized field. These are fun games that involve the players more because fewer players are sharing one ball.



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Who can benefit from Small-Sided Soccer?

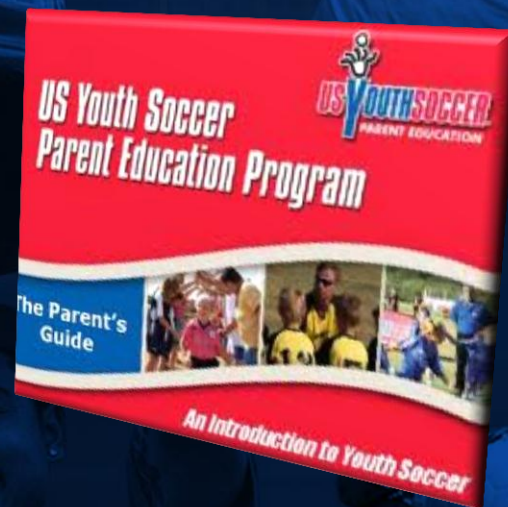
Players



Coaches



Parents



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The USTA launched a junior development program called Quick Start Tennis.

The Mini Tennis Court proved that there were two main issues that needed to be solved in order to make progressive teaching possible.

1. The size of the court makes it impossible for a young player to cover it effectively.
2. A regulation tennis ball flies through the air too fast.



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From Wales Online: July 8th 2012- Wales to learn lessons from Spain in World Cup 2014 bid

by Chris Wathan



“We made the move to smaller-sided games in terms of the younger levels in 2009,” explains Jamie Clewer of the FAW’s development arm, the Welsh Football Trust.

It is currently mandatory to be:

four versus four and five versus five at six and seven-year-old going up to eight versus eight at 11 years old.

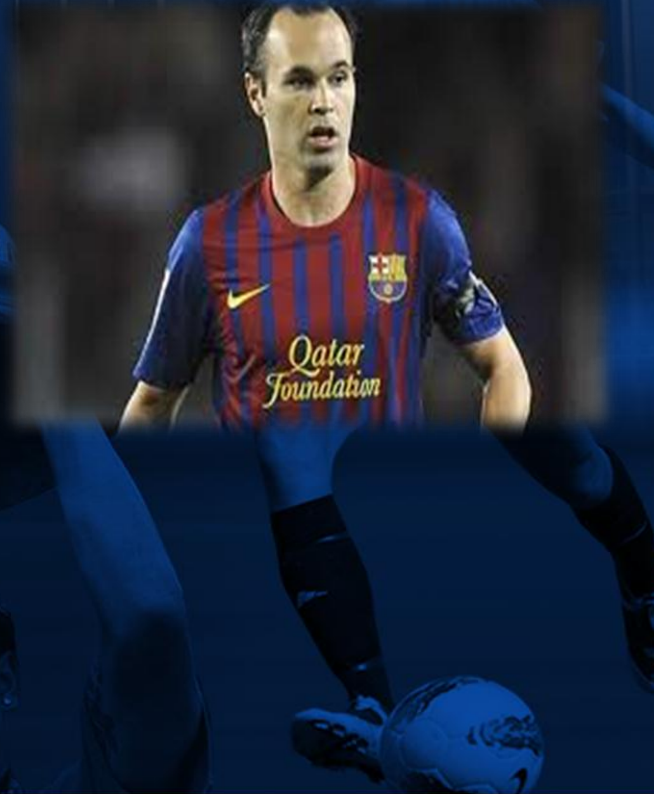


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Does the existing structure of soccer in America allow players to follow a consistent Player Pathway?



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Barcelona versus Sporting Lisbon U-11 Biale Orly Cup Final 2011

What do we teach?

Principles of attack ??

Principles of defense ??

Connecting the lines !!

What were your observations??



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Technical:

- ✓ Dribbling – Running with the ball
- ✓ Passing/Receiving
- ✓ Shooting
- ✓ Defending (Individual technique)
- ✓ Attacking (Individual Technique)
- ✓ Goalkeeping (Individual technique)
saving, footwork, distribution,
communication



From Wales Online: July 8th 2012- Wales to learn lessons from Spain in World Cup 2014 bid by Chris Wathan

Craig Bellamy is a vocal supporter of the small-sided philosophy.

“When I was growing up I played 11v11 on full-sized pitches at nine years of age,” he said. “And just because I was quick I could get away with murder.”

“My touch wasn’t the greatest but I could still get on the end of a ball. That taught me a lot of bad habits.”



Tactical:

- ✓ Defines shape
- ✓ Spatial awareness
- ✓ Defending in small groups
- ✓ Attacking in small groups
- ✓ Transition
- ✓ Provides more opportunities to both understand, and execute decisions based on the game



John Barnes- Liverpool FC 1987-1997

Ref: Small Sided Games, by Paul Cooper



“Liverpool practiced small-sided games every day and it was high-intensity stuff.”

“There was no tactical work, none whatsoever. All the strategic stuff was done within the small sided games. Liverpool believed that everything we faced in five-a-sides would be encountered again on match day.”



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Physical:

- ✓ Age appropriate sized fields allow for players to rotate positions during open play
- ✓ Make more movements of quality, based on movement of ball, team-mates and opponents
- ✓ High energy games



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May 19, 2012- From The Chicago Tribune
Globetrotting by Philip Hersh:



“Over the years, we (the U.S.) have relied on athleticism and fitness,”

Lloyd said during this week’s Olympic media summit in Dallas.

“But times are changing, and we can’t rely on that any more.”

“In small-sided games, you can’t take plays off. The girls we saw training were all totally engaged. You can’t start to do that at age 25. It has to begin at under-8, under-9.”



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May 19, 2012- From The
Chicago Tribune:
Globetrotting by Philip
Hersh

Teammate Heather O'Reilly, headed for a third Olympics, had a similar take.

“When you play on big fields (as a young player), there is not much demand for clean technique. I developed technique later. When I went to college, I still had a very weak left foot.”



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Psychological:

- ✓ The use of small sided games follows the “game based training” model
- ✓ The “game based training” model allows for players to stay engaged throughout
- ✓ A key philosophy in small sided games is that the players can compete and have fun
- ✓ Studies have shown that fun is one of the main reasons why children participate in sports



Fundamentals!!



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England Field Hockey:



England Field Hockey implemented Mini Hockey for players prior to the age of 13:

- ✓ 7 aside games that form the introductory segment of a players development.
- ✓ Pitch Dimensions- 55 Meters x 43 Meters
- ✓ Allows children the opportunity to experience enjoyment and success.
- ✓ Allows the children to understand simplified rules.



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Tom Sermanni, Head Coach USWNT :



“I think technical development is the key. Technical development of youth players has to take priority over physical development.”

“By that, what I mean is how well they can dribble, how well they can pass, how good the touch is, how good their understanding of the game is.”



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4 vs. 4 versus 8 vs. 8

It's all about Touches and Opportunities....



- ✓ **Passes: +135% or 585 more passes** in 4v4 games
- ✓ **Shots Taken: +260% or 481 more shots** in 4v4 games
- ✓ **Goals Scored: +500% or 301 more goals** in 4v4 games
- ✓ **1v1's: +225% or 525 more 1v1's** in 4v4 games

These data were collected in a 2002-2003 study conducted for Manchester United Football Club by Dr. Rick Fernoglio, a lecturer in Exercise Science at Manchester Metropolitan University. Fifteen (15) 4v4 and 8v8 games were videotaped and analyzed for the study. This study was reported on page 6 of the March 2004 edition of Success in Soccer magazine.



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“Kids football is all about the individual loving the game: dribbling and shooting, playing games and scoring goals, experimenting and copying. It is very simple and lots of fun. Adult football is all about the team and results. It is physical, tactical, complicated and very serious.”

Tom Statham – Manchester United Academy



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From the Website of:
Lynnfield Youth Lacrosse, MA

3rd through 9th Grade:

We will be playing on small sided fields much like what is used to play indoor or box lacrosse. Teams will consist of 8-12 players per team, with 6 or 7 playing on the field at one time.

This will insure that everyone gets a great deal of playing time.



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Touches per Game Study (U10 boys)

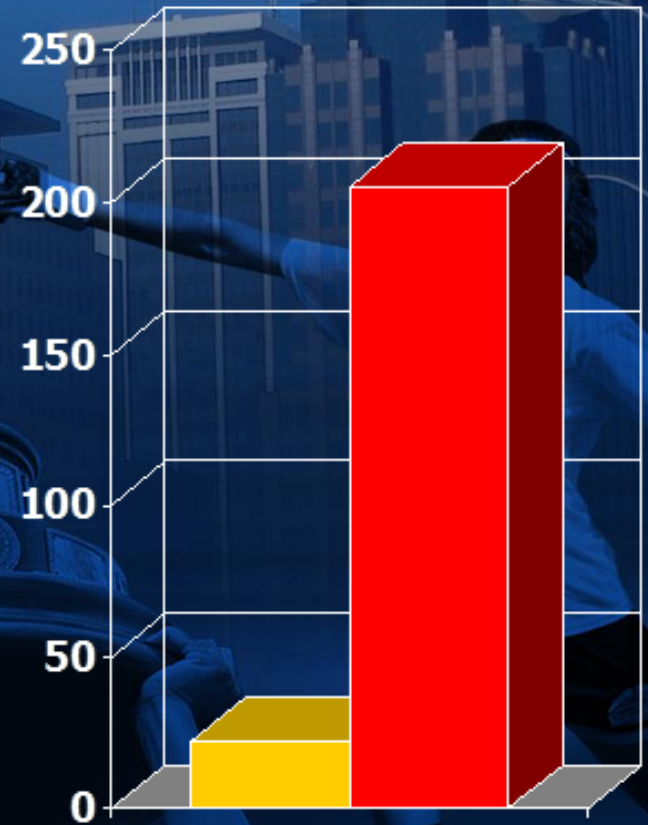
For U10 team

11 vs. 11

22 touches in 60 minutes
Average (.37 touches per minute)

4 vs. 4

205 touches in 48 minutes
Average (4.3 touches per minute)



■ 11v11 (60 minutes)

■ 4v4 (48 minutes)



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From FIFA.COM:

Some statistics that underline the benefits that small-sided games offer in comparison to 11-a-side football:

- On average, in four-a-side football goals are scored every two minutes, and in seven-sided games every four minutes.
- Goalkeepers make two to four times as many saves in seven-a-side football than they do in 11-a-side.
- The ball is out of play for 8 % of the playing time in four-a-side football, 14 % cent of the playing time in seven-sided games and 34 % in 11-a-side football.



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Bangsbo and Pietersen reported that for a major international tournament with FIFA substitution rules:



The individual time of possession for 90-minute games ranged between 20 seconds and three minutes, with an average of one and a half to two minutes possession time per player.

Offensive Soccer Tactics,” Bangsbo and Pietersen (2004) Human Kinetics.





Age 11-12

Age 13+

9v9

11v11

Age 9-10

7v7

Age 7-8

5v5

May 28th 2012: English FA announcement

To be phased in by 2014/15



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Nick Levett, English Football Association:



- “The fastest-growing kid grows 2.5cm (1 inch) in the three or four months between leaving mini-soccer at under 10’s and starting 11v11”
- “In that time, we increase the size of the goal by 265% and the size of the pitch by 435%.”



Under 11 Players in England quoted the following:

- “Why do I have to defend the same size goal as Petr Cech?” – Josh*
- “How am I expected to save shots in a goal that's so big? When the adults come to take the nets down they use a step ladder!”- Adam*



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What if??

Adult 11v11

- The height of the goal will be 12 feet high and 32 feet wide
- Regulation pitch dimensions will be at a minimum of 165 yards x 124 yards
- The penalty box will be 24 yards instead of 18 yards
- Penalty kicks will be taken from 16 yards away





2006- Coaches Helping Coaches- Small Area Games:

Hockey Canada implemented clinics to educate coaches as to why small area games are important for the Long Term Athlete Development. Some of the reasons include:

- ✓ To keep ALL players engaged & moving.
- ✓ To Emphasize the Fundamentals.
- ✓ Incorporate a progression of skill development for EVERY player.



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US Youth Soccer Recommended Field Dimensions & Playing Numbers

Age Group

Length x Width

Number of Players

U6

25 x 20

3 vs. 3 – no goalkeepers

U8

35 x 25

4 vs. 4 – no goalkeepers

U10

55 x 40

6 vs. 6

U12

80 x 50

8 vs. 8

U14

100 x 65

11 vs. 11

U16

110 x 70

11 vs. 11

U19

120 x 75

11 vs. 11



Quotes by Art Williams:
Art Williams was a former High School Football Coach & the owner of AL Williams Insurance (Primerica)



"I'm not telling you it's going to be easy - I'm telling you it's going to be worth it."

"What's popular isn't always right, and what's right isn't always popular."

Final Thoughts !!



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Questions Thank You!!



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