

# REASONS FOR SMALL SIDED PLAY

## Philosophical

1. Because we want our young soccer players to have more *individual teaching time* with the coach! Fewer players on the field will guarantee this! (Need to feel worthy...need to feel important)
2. Because we want to distance our young soccer players from the external undo pressures of the adult game. (eliminate extrinsic value)
3. Because we want our young soccer players to enjoy the game for its own sake. (foster intrinsic value)

## Educational

1. Because we want our young soccer players to touch the soccer ball more often and become *more skillful* with it! (Individual technical development)
2. Because we want our young soccer players to make *more quality decisions* during the game! (Tactical development)
3. Because we want our young soccer players to be more physically *efficient* in the field space in which they are playing! (Reduced field size)
4. Because we want our young soccer players to have *more involved playing time* in the game! (More opportunity to solve problems that only the game presents)
5. Because we want our young soccer players to have *more opportunities to play on both sides of the ball!* (More exposure to attacking and defending situations)
6. Because we want our young soccer players to have *more opportunities to score goals and make saves!* (Pure excitement)

The “Small-Sided” environment is a *developmentally appropriate environment* for our young soccer players. It’s a **FUN** environment that *focuses on the player*.

These are the reasons why US Youth Soccer endorses “Small-Sided Games” for U6, U8, U10 and U12 players across the board...across America.

**Six and seven year olds** (U8 players) are still little people but are maturing and have better balance and agility. They begin to experience success technically and will share the ball a bit with a teammate or teammates. Numbers on the field must be small so that they can have the ball a lot. This allows them to practice their newly learned skills in an uncluttered environment. They begin to enjoy *soccer!*

**game playing numbers:** *4 versus 4 (no goalkeepers)*

**maximum field size:** *30 yards x 25 yards*

**goal size:** *4 ft high x 12ft wide (use goals provided or cones)*

**ball size:** *Number 3*

**length of game:** *Four – 12 minute quarters, five minute halftime*

**playing time:** *every player is to play 50% of game*

**uniforms:** *home team to wear pinnies in case of conflict*

**start and restart:** *opponent 4 yards from ball*

**fouls and free kicks:** *explain to player foul committed and all fouls direct kicks*

**throw-in:** *no throw in to be used, kick-in with opponents 4 yards from ball*

**goal kick:** *from 2-3 yards from goal, opponents 4 yards away*

**corner kick:** *from 1 yard from corner, opponents 4 yards away*

**coaches:** *should remain on sideline with team bench*

**team benches and spectators:** *spectators to be on opposite side from benches*

**scoring and standings:** *NONE TO BE KEPT*

The rules above are to be adhered to. If one team is short players, coaches may choose to share players. Please do not increase the # of players on the field.

It is a pity that youth soccer is often compared with soccer played by adults. Often there are instructions given by coaches that the children don't understand. Spectators should NOT get involved with the coaching. Small-sided games begin to give the game back to the players and allow a more player-centered soccer environment. When players are motivated to practice their sport, they'll learn more from it and therefore become a better soccer player. So our aim is to get as much pleasure from soccer as possible.

*Safety*

*Enjoyment*

*Learning*

*Sportsmanship*

*Teamwork*

Coaching Resources:

[www.usyouthsoccer.org](http://www.usyouthsoccer.org)

[www.nmysa.net](http://www.nmysa.net)

[www.northernsc.org](http://www.northernsc.org)