

Subj: SSG resolution
Date: 12/17/2001 5:13:03 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: Gers1873

Hello all,

I am writing in the middle of the holiday period in the hope of leaving enough time before the USYSA Workshop in Atlanta to complete an important challenge. This past October, the Presidents of the fourteen state associations in region II unanimously voted to endorse the R-II DOC's proposal on SSG (see below). The proposal was basically a statement of the national SSG Position we have been working on for over a year. While this vote was not an outright mandate, the effect has been politically significant in dealing with local SSG issues, and, most importantly, has created a situation where one region is now alone in leading the national change process. Three of the 14 states in R-II (IA, MN, ON) have formally mandated SSG and this creates regional and national unease, primarily with inter-state play and the notion of being alone in leading the charge.

In short, there is tremendous momentum in play and we have a wonderful opportunity to help push the political process forward by presenting a unified front to our respective state presidents ahead of the Atlanta Workshop. The SSG issue will likely be one of THE hot topic for discussion, with nationwide adoption in either 2003 or 2004 being the best case scenario.

Here is the issue to be resolved. The DOC's in region III have endorsed a position statement on SSG that mirrors the region II statement on games for U-10's (6v6) and U-12's (8v8). At the U-6 and U-8 levels, however, we have slight variations in our recommendations and those may cost us some credibility problems, if not resolved.

The issues are these:

At the U-5 and U-6 levels, where do we stand with regard to 4v4 (with no goalkeepers) versus 3v3 (with no goalkeepers)?

At the U-7 and U-8 levels, where do we stand with regard to 5v5 (with goalkeepers) versus 4v4 (with no goalkeepers)?

If we can resolve these two issues, we have the job done! Notice that the R-II position provides the option of playing 3v3 at U-6 (while recommending 4v4) and of playing 4v4 without goalkeepers at U-8 (while recommending 5v5). The region III statement is more number-specific in advocating 3v3 (U-6) and 4v4 (U-8). While this probably does not matter either way to local communities, who, in reality, will do whatever works for them, the signals from our end should be consistent or we risk the possibility of being played off against each other.

So, from here, I will collect any and all comments that any of you would like to contribute and will circulate them back to the group; hopefully, by the turn of the year we will have our resolution. From there, the final challenge will be to have each DOC formally sign onto the proposal in time for national distribution to the state presidents.

Thanks for your input, and Happy Holidays.

Tom

PS: Please provide me with any updates to the list below. I have no e-mail addresses for Ed Bradley in Rhode Island, or Colin Barton and George Campbell in Alaska.

Region I
Connecticut Youth Soccer Association

Director of Coaching, c/o Kathy Zolad (ED)
Delaware Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Lew Atkinson
Eastern New York Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Alfonso Mondello
Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Mike Barr
SoccerMaine
Director of Coaching, Andy Biggs
Maryland Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Graham Ramsey
Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Dean Conway
New Hampshire Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Ian Torney (Jeff Pill)
New Jersey Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Rick Meana
New York West Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Glenn Buckley
Pennsylvania West State Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Chris Brown
Soccer Rhode Island
Director of Coaching, Ed Bradley
Vermont Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Dave Saward
Virginia Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Gordon Miller
West Virginia Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Bob Gray

Region II

Illinois Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Ian Mulliner
Indiana Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Dan Kapsalis
Iowa Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Ian Bradley
Kansas Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Eddie Henderson
Kentucky Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Fran Kulas
Michigan Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Don Gemmell
Minnesota Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Ian Barker
Missouri Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Denny Vaninger
Nebraska Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, TBA
North Dakota Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Bill Ashby
Ohio South Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Roby Stahl
Ohio Youth Soccer Association North
Director of Coaching, Tom Turner
South Dakota Youth Soccer Association

Director of Coaching, Ron Theisz
Wisconsin Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Jim Launder

Region III

Alabama Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, TBA (C/O Deter Walker)
Arkansas State Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Julian Owen
Florida Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Mike Strickler
Georgia Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Jacob Daniel
Louisiana Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Sam Snow
Mississippi Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Nigel Bolton
North Carolina Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Bill Furjanic
North Texas State Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Gary Williamson
Oklahoma Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Peter McGahey
South Carolina Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Van Taylor
South Texas Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Bobby Murphy
Tennessee State Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, TBA c/o Manny Sanchez

Region IV

Alaska Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Colin Barton / George Campbell
Arizona Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Mark Lowe
California Youth Soccer Association North
Director of Coaching, Karl Dewazien
California Youth Soccer Association South
Director of Coaching, Steve Hoffman
Colorado Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Nate Shotts
Hawaii Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, George Kuntz
Idaho Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Tom Fleck
Montana Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Ric Plante
United States Youth Soccer Ass'n Nevada
Director of Coaching, Mark Hechter
New Mexico Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Bob Bigney
Oregon State Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Jimmy Conway
Utah Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Greg Maas

Washington Youth Soccer Association
Director Of Coaching, Dave Schumacher
Wyoming Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Kosta Tsandes

Region II Position Statement

Rationale

The playing of appropriate soccer games for children under the age of thirteen has become the linchpin issue for future player and coach initiatives in the United States. Soccer games smaller than 11v11 provide many critical advantages to players, including the ability to repeatedly contact the ball and the ability to repeatedly experience basic tactical problems. In terms of player development, this ability to actively participate is directly related to fun and enjoyment, and to the issues surrounding quality of play and retention. In addition, players under eleven are routinely structured into formal positions at ages when their spatial awareness and technical range do not lend themselves to a practical understanding of large group tactics.

It is also the case that the vast majority of youth coaches do not have a soccer background, yet are faced with, arguably, the most critical period of player development. Coaching games that demand a midfield organization (above 6v6) are too complicated for these coaches and often focus instruction on structural issues rather than individual technical and small-group tactical issues.

The Region II Directors of Coaching endorse the following structure for youth soccer games and seek the help of each respective state association in implementing this plan on a nationwide basis.

- We believe that players under the age of six (U-5 and U-6) should play games of no more than 4v4, with no goalkeepers. This recommendation does not preclude games of 3v3. The recommended field size is 40 yards x 30 yards.
- We believe that players under the age of eight (U-7 and U-8) should play games of 5v5, with goalkeepers. This recommendation does not preclude games of 4v4 with no goalkeepers. The recommended field size for 5v5 is 45 yards by 30 yards.
- We believe that players under the age of ten (U-9 and U-10) should play games of 6v6. The recommended field size is between 45-50 yards in length and between 35-40 yards in width.
- We believe that players under the age of twelve (U-11 and U-12) should play games of 8v8. The recommended field size is between 80-90 yards in length and between 45-50 yards in width.
- We believe that players older than twelve (U-13 and above) should play 11v11. The recommended minimum field size is 110 yards x 65 yards.

Region III Position Statement

Rationale

The intent is to use small-sided games as the vehicle for match play for players under the age of twelve. Further we wish to promote age/ability appropriate training activities for players region wide. Clubs should use small-sided games as the primary vehicle for the development of skill and the understanding of simple tactics. Our rationale is that the creation of skill and a passion for the game occurs between the ages of six to twelve. With the correct environment throughout this age period players will both excel and become top players or they will continue to enjoy playing at their own levels and enjoy observing the game at higher levels. Small-sided games in match play for our younger players create more involvement, more touches of the ball, exposure to simple, realistic decisions and ultimately, more enjoyment. Players must be challenged at their own age/ability levels to improve performance. The numbers of players on the field of play will affect levels of competition. Children come to soccer practice to have fun. They want to run,

touch the ball, have the feel of the ball, master it and score. The environment within which we place players during training sessions and matches should promote all of these desires, not frustrate them.

· We believe that players under the age of six should play games of 3 v 3. This will provide a less cluttered and more developmentally appropriate playing environment. No attempt whatsoever should be made at this age to teach a team formation!

· We believe that players under the age of eight should play games of 4 v 4. This will provide a less cluttered and more developmentally appropriate playing environment. Players in this age group can be exposed to a team formation at the start of the game, but do not be dismayed when it disappears once the ball is rolling. The intent at this age is to merely plant a seed toward understanding spatial awareness.

· We believe that players under the age of ten should play games of 6 v 6. This will provide a less cluttered and more developmentally appropriate playing environment. The coaching of positions to children under the age of ten is considered intellectually challenging and often situates parent-coaches in a knowledge vacuum. Additionally, premature structure of U10 players into positions is often detrimental to the growth of individual skills and tactical awareness. This problem is particularly acute with players of limited technical ability. We also believe that the quality of coaching has an impact on the playing numbers. We recommend that parent-coaches would best serve their U10 players by holding a Youth Module certificate.

· We believe that players under the age of twelve should play games of 8 v 8. This will provide a less cluttered and more developmentally appropriate environment. The U12 age group is the dawning of tactical awareness and we feel it is best to teach the players individual and group tactics at this age rather than team tactics.

Subj: Re: SSG resolution
Date: 12/18/2001 9:51:13 AM Eastern Standard Time
From: statecoach@mysa.org (Denny Vaninger)
To: Gers1873@aol.com

Tom,

U-5, U-6: 4 v 4 no keepers. U-7, U-8: 5v5 with keepers. This is what Missouri thinks, but we are willing to change numbers, to get all of the regions on the same page. Lets get it done. Again, on behalf of all the young players and coaches who will benefit from this. THANK you for your tireless efforts.

Denny

Subj: RE: SSG resolution
Date: 12/17/2001 6:08:23 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: mike@oregonyouthsoccer.org (Mike Smith)
Reply-to: mike@oregonyouthsoccer.org (mike@oregonyouthsoccer.org)
To: Gers1873@aol.com ('Gers1873@aol.com')

Tom;

It was great to see you in Florida, and I thought it was excellent that you held the meeting in the hotel there to get more people on the same page. Oregon is close to having a coaching committee agree on the format for small-sided games. This, I am hoping, will happen before our January AGM.

It would be my recommendation that U6 and U7 play no more than 3v3 (no keepers); U8 play no more than 4v4 (I like 3v3 plus goalkeepers, but most of the committee want no keepers); U9 and U10 play no more than 6v6 (with keepers); and U11 and U12 play 8v8.

With regard to goalkeepers, when given the choice between an empty net and a goal with an adult goalkeeper (sitting or standing) most of the recreation kids I have worked with prefer to challenge themselves shooting at the goal that has a goalkeeper. At U8 some of the kids are playing for the 3rd year and playing with no keeper is no challenge. I have seen some U6 kids score from kick-off to a goal 15 yards away with no keeper so maybe U8 need a little more of a challenge?

In these small-sided game formats, ideally I would like to see a coach and assistant coach for each team as well as possibly a team manager as this will help develop more coaches and responsible adults to help clubs. Whenever possible we would also recommend NOT having a coach try to look at two side by side fields simultaneously! Simply put, the less complicated we can make it for the younger kids (and coaches) the more likely it is that they will have FUN and get more touches with a ball. This will undoubtedly help their development as players and consequently fuel their desire to stay involved in the game longer.

Hope you have a great Xmas and Hogmanay! Hope you get a good-looking first foot!

Speak to you soon.

Add my name to the list; I am the new Region IV ODP Head Coach for Girls.

Cheers,

Mike

Subj: Re: SSG resolution
Date: 12/18/2001 7:28:08 AM Eastern Standard Time
From: Rstahl2
To: Gers1873

Tom

Thanks for the update. I ran into a hornet's nest when I presented the proposal at our BOD meeting last week.

Roby

Subj: RE: SSG resolution
Date: 12/17/2001 5:59:28 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: THart@youthsoccer.org (Tom Hart)
To: Gers1873@aol.com ('Gers1873@aol.com')

Hi Tom!

George Campnell (not Campbell) campnell@mtaonline.net

I will throw this out into the discussion on SSG- For quite a few years the "official" US Youth Soccer Modified Game for Under 6 has been 3v3 (no goalkeeper) and for Under 8 4v4 (no goalkeeper). Both are only "official" recommendations- not mandates. The only mandate regarding small sided games is that teams under 10 and younger shall play no more than 8v8. When asked the field dimensions or rules for U6 8v8 or U7 6v6 or other "non-official" versions we (US Youth Soccer/National Office) only mention the "official" playing numbers. I have revised the "official" rules for U10 8v8 to include variations such as 5v5, 6v6 & 7v7- all are versions that have been allowed since day one for U10's.

I agree with your concern regarding conflicting versions of U6 and U8 play. The USSF Goalkeeping staff seems to have backed off it's earlier "goalkeepers at all ages" stance since Tony DiCicco came out in opposition. I strongly recommend remaining with a U6 3v3 and U8 4v4- both without goalkeepers.

Little of the issues in these Position Statements are not already covered in national policies- the real issue is nationwide compliance. Governance in most organizations allows for some measure at the top with increasing detail at the local level- much like Federal, State and Local laws. Our State Associations all have a hodgepodge of state and local rules, policies and bylaws, that while allowed, only create 55 "different" versions of youth soccer.

I received an email from one State President where he said mandatory coaching education "could not be enforced". "We couldn't enforce 8v8 for U10's and we couldn't enforce that". Amazing! Cal South and several other states can and do yet he doesn't believe his state would support it. Even with a mandate we are left with the State Association to police itself.

Have a great holiday- I'll see you in Philly!

Tom Hart
Director of Recreational Coaching Education
US Youth Soccer

Subj: RE: SSG resolution
Date: 12/17/2001 8:53:34 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: gssa_dircoach@gasoccer.org (Jacob Daniel)
Reply-to: gssa_dircoach@mail.gasoccer.org
To: Gers1873@aol.com

Tom,

Well put. Since existing USYSA publications have been endorsing 3v3 at U6 and 4v4 at U8 for many years now, it seems that our best bet is to stick with these numbers. Otherwise, people will, as you say, play USYSA vs the State DOC and we lose credibility.

Regards,

Jacob

Subj: Re: SSG resolution
Date: 12/18/2001 10:13:47 AM Eastern Standard Time
From: MYSADOC
To: Gers1873
From; NIGEL BOULTON, DOC MISSISSIPPI

U6 - 3 v 3 no goalkeeper
U7 - 4 v 4 no goalkeeper
U8 - 5 v 5 includes goalkeeper
U9/U10 - 6 v 6
U11/U12 - 8 v 8

We should make the breaks age specific by single year aging especially as we are supposed to be promoting single year aging.

Subj: Fwd: SSG resolution
Date: 12/17/2001 6:46:18 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: PSAlex

Since this has gone out the all the US Youth Soccer member state associations' Directors of Coaching, I thought I would forward it on to the board and to Jim Cosgrove so you will be aware of the process now underway.

I have copied this to Adele for Bob as I do have an email for him and was advised copying it her was the best way to get it to him.

The State Directors of Coaching are seeking national guidelines on Small Sided Games and appear to be using their own initiative to develop one. While I would prefer to see policy flow from the NBOD down, I do appreciate their efforts and support them in the concept of a national policy on small-sided games.

I wonder if this might be an appropriate matter for my committee to address and prepare a recommendation to you on such a policy.

Perry

Subj: Re: SSG resolution
Date: 12/18/2001 11:38:15 AM Eastern Standard Time
From: CoachKulas
To: Gers1873

Tom,

My, and Kentucky's position:

It is important to have blanket standards for age group clusters, i.e. U-6 (meaning U-6 and U-5), and U-8 (meaning U-8 and U-7). This, as opposed to having separate standards for U-5, U-6, U-7, and U-8. With this said, this is the format Kentucky supports:

U-6 - 4 v 4 with no goalkeepers
U-8 - 5 v 5 with goalkeepers

In essence, this message is a reiteration of Kentucky's support for the Region II position statement.

Hope this helps.

Seasons Greetings !
Sincerely,
Fran Kulas

*****End of Round I Comments*****

Subj: Re: SSG resolution
Date: 12/18/2001 3:01:13 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: Uysatd
To: Gers1873

Tom -

I appreciate the efforts to bring consistency across the board. Please find below my recommendations. Please note, I believe our biggest opposition is going to be from the U12 age groups moving to an 8 V 8 format. Will an 8 V 8 format be recognized at the Regional level, considering they currently host Regionals for the U12 age groups that play 11 V 11, or will they consider dropping the U12 age group all together?

U6 3 V 3 No GK's
U8 4 V 4 No GK's
U10 6 V 6 + GK's
U12 8 V 8 + GK's

I look forward to our meeting in Philadelphia. Many thanks -

Have a great day!

Greg Maas
State Technical Director
Utah Youth Soccer Association

Subj: Re: ssg resolution comments: round 1
Date: 12/18/2001 3:07:36 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: bmurphy@stxsoccer.org (Bobby Murphy)
To: Gers1873@aol.com

Tom,

Thank you for your efforts in this area. As South Texas currently does not mandate SSG, I would recommend U6 3v3 no keepers and U-8 4v4 no keepers. I say this based on having a son that has participated in these formats over the course of the last 2 years and having observed larger numbers at these ages during my travels.

I have had the opportunity to observe not only my son's development but also that of his peers during this time. While it may be less of a challenge for some of these players, the excitement and thrill that comes across each player that does score only, I believe, help to ensure the health of the sport.

I compare this to other SSG formats I see around my state where many players are seemingly left out of the game (even if they are playing). I believe at these ages the smaller and less complicated the game, the more fun and long-term success these players will enjoy.

Happy Holidays to all

Bobby

Subj: Re: SSG resolution
Date: 12/18/2001 3:19:47 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: cpetrucelli@athletics.utexas.edu (chris petrucelli)
To: Gers1873@aol.com

Tom,

I don't claim to be an expert on youth soccer but I have a son playing U6 and a daughter playing U7. I have watched closely these games with the above thoughts in mind. I would recommend 3v3 at U5 and U6 and 4v4 at U7 and U8. I believe goalkeepers are useless for either age group.

Merry Christmas!
Chris Petrucelli

Subj: Re: SSG resolution
Date: 12/18/2001 3:25:34 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: Uysatd
To: Gers1873

Tom -

Thank you for the quick feedback. In response to your email -- I believe "in theory" 8 V 8 would be great for player development at the U12 level, but am also concerned this may be too late. I am aware that my earlier email supported this movement, but for all practical purposes, I find it hard to imagine it will gain much support state to state. We may need to extend the time we meet in Philadelphia -- I see a very long-winded debate heading our way!

Have a great day!

Greg Maas
State Technical Director
Utah Youth Soccer Association

Subj: RE: ssg resolution comments: round 1
Date: 12/18/2001 3:33:23 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: ianbarker@mnyouthsoccer.org (Ian Barker)
Reply-to: ianbarker@mnyouthsoccer.org
To: Gers1873@aol.com
CC: johncurtis@mtn.org (John Curtis)

Tom,

Nothing earth shattering, but a restatement.

In MN U5-U8 is the responsibility of in-house/in-club programming. We support 4v4 without keepers. I think 3v3 for U6 is fine because the concern 3v3 is actually harder to "play" is probably not really relevant for that age. I do think U8s benefit having four on the field. Frankly if a U8 program finds they have kids who love being in goal I would not stop them, but I would point out their is a difference between being a goalkeeper and merely standing between the posts.....much like the difference between Peter Shilton and every known Scottish goalkeeper.

At U9 8v8 is too many. At U10, in Minnesota, 8v8 is too many for our coaches and our players as is 11v11 for almost all our U11s and U12s. We are not going to be "soccer police" up to U8, but we will be very aggressive in "recommending" at U9 up.

Summary:

U6/U7: 3v3/4v4 no keepers
U8: 4v4 plus keepers only if we are going to teach specific skills as we do the field players.
(Not an SFA recommendation apparently).
U9/U10: 6v6 including keepers
U11/U12: 8v8 including keepers.

Happy Holidays,
Ian.

*****End of Round II Comments*****

Subj: Re: ssg resolution comments: round 1
Date: 12/18/2001 2:52:38 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: CoachKulas
To: Gers1873

Tom,

I second each of Denny's comments below.

<< This is what Missouri thinks, but we are willing to change numbers, to get all of the regions on the same page. Lets get it done. Again, on behalf of all the young players and coaches who will benefit from this>>

I think the most important aspect is that
<< there is a consistent implementation across the country. >>

Thanks for all your work on this project. Please feel free to let me know if there is anything I can assist you with as we look to move forward.

Seasons Greetings!
Sincerely,
Fran Kulas
Director of Coach and Player Development
Kentucky Youth Soccer Association

Subj: RE: ssg resolution comments: round 1
Date: 12/18/2001 6:17:42 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: coachdir@attbi.com (Dave Schumacher)
To: Gers1873@aol.com

Tom:

U-6/7: 3 v 3 without GK's
U-8: 4 v 4 with GK's
U-9: 5 v 5
U-10: 6 v 6

Dave Schumacher

Subj: Re: SSG resolution
Date: 12/19/2001 9:42:59 AM Eastern Standard Time
From: dsimeone@ussoccer.org (David Simeone)
To: Gers1873@aol.com

Tom,

Simmy here; hope that you are well!!!!

I've been trying to work out this dilemma. Can we give them two preferences for an age group and go towards that compromise? For instance, U 8's either play 4v4 with no GK, or 5v5 with Gk. Getting it down to two gives them an either/or. I know it's not perfect, and I agree that we need consistent information, but surely, in the interest of getting this done we can all accommodate a little and compromise. In the end, for U6's, is there such a difference between playing with or without a GK if we educate coaches about how to deal with rotating kids?

Just a thought, brother...

Sim

Subj: RE: SSG resolution
Date: 12/18/2001 8:05:24 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: mstrickler@fysa.com (Mike Strickler)

To: Gers1873@aol.com ('Gers1873@aol.com')

Tom, Sorry I haven't got back to you sooner. In Florida in order to get the ball rolling we mandated at all of our state sponsored competitions the playing numbers are as follows.

2001-2002	U8	4v4	no GK's	festival format
We did not address U6's as we don't hold events for these ages. I would lean towards 3v3, but would not have a problem with 4v4.				
2002-2003	U9	6v6	w/GK	festival format
2003-2004	U10	6v6	w/GK	
	U11	8v8	w/GK	

U12 we did not change (still 11v11) because if we are identifying these players at ODP and there are regional competitions at the U13 level it was going to be a hard sell. If we ever pushed those ages up they we could go to the lay coaches and administrators and be able to sell 8v8 if we got the other programs to be consistent.

Our approach was not to mandate this down to the club level but to provide a model for the clubs and let them make their own decisions. This has caused the conversations it was intended. Many clubs and leagues have taken the lead and implemented these guidelines. We also have some credibility when we do our module courses that this is what we do at the state level and we feel this would be the best for your players as well.

I have two sons as well playing and one falls under the guidelines and one does not. You can definitely see the difference in my younger child's play. I am convinced this is the way to go.

It is going to be a continual battle but we are making inroads. The key for me is involving administrators who have implemented these programs. The administrators seem to be the deal closers. The biggest fight I get is not the theory of how the players should but more how are the logistical questions answered.

Subj: Re: ssg resolution: round II
Date: 12/18/2001 6:18:51 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: IBrasoccer
To: Gers1873

Tom,

U6 3v3 No keepers
U8 4v4 No Keepers
U10 6v6 With Keepers
U12 8v8 With Keepers

Strongly believe we should keep to the USYSA recommendations at U6 and U8. Some states have already fought that battle and don't want to change again so soon.

Ian Bradley
Iowa State Director of Coaching

Subj: Playing Format Question
Date: 12/18/2001 5:02:39 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: PJMoksoccer
To: Gers1873

Tom,

I hope that all is well. Thanks very much for taking a lead role with this very important issue.

As you know I was just appointed to my position in mid September. I feel like I have been 1-0 down since then. This discussion as to a standard playing format could not be more paramount to the correct development of American children.

Currently, in Oklahoma we are moving toward a standardized playing format. I have just received support from the Oklahoma Youth Board and am moving within the 'political' process toward getting it passed and adopted statewide. Here is what I am working on putting in place in Oklahoma. It differs slightly from the position statements that you speak about but it does generally answer your questions that were in your email. This is currently a fluid proposal and will likely be adjusted and modified.

U5 (4 year olds) - no formal games - a once a week activity

Children this age don't need formal competition. They just need to experience age appropriate 'soccer'.

U6 - U8 (5, 6, & 7 year olds) - 4 v 4 - field size 40 yds by 25 yds. 4 v 4 will provide a comfortable and consistent learning environment for six seasons for the players to learn. Only one set of rules for play for players, coaches, and parents to learn. Constant change from one format to another makes all parties uncomfortable and unsure. One playing format will allow team formation to be a smoother and easier process for member organizations. No goalkeeper will allow all players to learn how to interact with the ball and their game. A consistent format will allow for our coach education programs to tailor to the characteristics of these players and this playing format. We will be able to provide these coaches with more useful information and make their coaching expertise and experience better. Best formation - a diamond. And of course instruct the coaches on when to introduce it and when to expect the players to begin to understand it.

U9 & U10 (8 & 9 year olds) 7 v 7-field size 50 yds by 35 yds. A logical progression to add 2 out field players and 1 goalkeeper at this age. Really 6 v 6 and a keeper. The two additional field players keep the number of out field players as an even number. A new and challenging, yet consistent, learning environment for four seasons for the players to learn. Continue with small numbers and a small field to maximize each players involvement and contact with the ball and still progress forward in expanding their understanding of soccer concepts. Our coach education programs will tailor our materials to fit the characteristics of these players and this playing format. We will be able to provide logical continuing coach education for the coaches who are moving up with their players. 'Recreational Soccer' -Team may not be formed by tryouts or selection. Best playing formation - 1 - 3 - 3 . This will begin to introduce the players to two different lines of players and the goalkeeper.

U11 & U12 (10 & 11 year olds) 9 v 9 - field size 75 yds by 50 yds. A logical progression to add 2 out field players. Really 8 v 8 and a goalkeeper. The two additional field players keep the number of out field players as an even number. A new and challenging yet consistent learning environment for four seasons for the players to learn. Continue with small numbers and a small field to maximize each players involvement and contact with the ball and still progress forward in expanding their understanding of soccer concepts. Our coach education programs will tailor our materials to fit the characteristics of these players and this playing format. We will be able to provide logical continuing coach education for the coaches who are moving up with their players. Important question - 'Recreational' or 'Competitive' Soccer at this age - Here in Oklahoma this will be the biggest sticking point as to getting a standardized playing format passed. Best playing formation - 1 - 3 - 3 - 2 . This will begin to introduce the players to three different lines of players and continue with additional soccer concepts.

U13 & Up (12 year olds and up) 11 v 11 - field size no smaller than 110 yds by 65 yds. The next logical step in player development. Our coach education programs will tailor our materials to fit the characteristics of these players and this playing format. We will be able to provide logical continuing coach education for the coaches who are moving up with their players.

I hope that this material will add to the discussion and debate. I feel strongly that the wrong approach here is to follow the motto 'do what we have always done'. We must take advantage of this opportunity and challenge and put into place a truly progressive nation wide playing format that will lead to player

development. If this means 'mandating' a standardized format nation wide, I am in favor of such direction and leadership. Whatever the results of the discussion and debate, I think that it is critically important to have consensus among the 'soccer experts'. We must show a united front in order to have support for our final product.

Holiday Greetings to you and your family!!!

Your Friend in Soccer
Peter McGahey

BTW - Colin Schmidt email update: cschmidt@americascorers.org.

Subj: Re: ssg resolution: round II
Date: 12/19/2001 11:01:53 AM Eastern Standard Time
From: carrd@ohio.edu (David Carr)
To: Gers1873@aol.com

Dear Tom,

I have read with interest the comments of the youth soccer community and certainly support the SSG resolution as promoted by Region II. The discussion has been wonderful and you are to be commended for your efforts at getting us to this important stage in the development of the game and young players in this country.

My position has been quite clear for a number of years but I have learned a lot and have modified my stance to some degree as we have tested the effects of small-sided games and the appropriate activities that lead to psychomotor, cognitive and psychosocial growth. Please count me as a supporter of the resolution promoted below and I will certainly work to support your efforts, those of Region II, and those of USYSA.

Thanks again for all of your hard work. Have a great holiday and I will see you in Philadelphia.

Dave Carr

*******End of Round III Comments*******

Subj: Re: SSG resolution
Date: 12/19/2001 11:50:24 AM Eastern Standard Time
From: Doc4nmysa
To: Gers1873

Tom,

Bob Bigney from New Mexico here. Some thoughts and an update on what is happening in NM.

I agree we need to try and send a clear, consistent message from the coaching ranks. If we can't agree, or have more than one recommendation, it will cause the general public (administrators) to doubt our credibility. I think the best policy would be to recommend the higher number proposed by our groups and allow smaller numbers to be used if desired. i.e.: Recommend 4 v 4 for U6, but allow 3 v 3 to be played. Recommend 9 v 9 for U12, but allow 8 v 8 or 7 v 7 to be played.

The other issue that I noticed with your recent email is that we need to become consistent with the age group terminology. You recently mentioned U5 and U7, when previously it was always only U6, U8, U10. Many groups recognize U7's or U9's, but many groups do not. Is it correct that the national rules recognize only U6, U8, U10, U12, U14, U16, U17, U18, U19?

This also brings up another issue (for another time) about those age groups. It is something we are looking at in NM about players playing up one age group. With the double age groups at the younger ages and the single age groups at the older ages, it causes some problems when looking at playing up one age group. Shouldn't the age classifications/groupings be reversed? U5, U6, U7, U8, U9, U10, U11, U12, U13, U14, U16, U19. (OK - so it didn't wait for another time to address the issue!)

Anyway...New Mexico is very close to adopting some positions on these issues. We have approved a position statement on SSG for U6, U8, U10 and U12. We are in the process of eliminating U11 and U12 from our State Cup Tournament and hope to implement SSG for U11 & U12 in our leagues very soon. I think some national discussion and adoption of these position statements will be very helpful. I look forward to discussing these at the USYS meetings. Let me know if there is anything I can do to assist you.

Thanks,

Bob Bigney

Subj: RE: ssg resolution: round III
Date: 12/19/2001 12:08:58 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: ianbarker@mnyouthsoccer.org (Ian Barker)
Reply-to: ianbarker@mnyouthsoccer.org
To: Gers1873@aol.com

Tom,

If we expect to have a totally consistent series of models of play with total agreement in all aspects, including GKs, we will be waiting longer than Rangers fans hoping for a Champions' League Championship.

Each state is its' own fiefdom. As there is no inter state play at U6-U8 the need for consistency is less critical, when we get to inter state travel at older ages it becomes more important. I would be very comfortable with a minimum and maximum approach to get started, e.g. U6 no more than 4v4, no keepers or U10 no more than 7v7 including keepers etc.

We are not primed or ready for a single proposal if it does not allow for some latitude.

Ian Barker
State Director of Coaching
Minnesota Youth Soccer

Subj: Re: ssg resolution: round III
Date: 12/19/2001 1:00:16 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: GBuc200398

Tom

Having read all the return comments, I think for us to stand half a chance of implementing these suggestions we need to reach a compromise on an either or basis per age group.

The differences between each state's logistics will make it virtually impossible to make an exact playing number per age group.

I would also suggest that when saying U6 We state this includes U5, when we state U8 we state this includes U7. So

U6 [To include U5] 3v3 or 4v4 No Gk's This seems to be fairly unanimous across the country as these age groups tend to be "In house or Recreation programs"

U8 [To include U7] 4v4 or 5v5 No Gk's Here in lies a discrepancy, made worse by the fact that there are some travel leagues for these age groups. To tell traveling teams No GK'S is a hard sell, because the coaches or organizers do not then see it as a real game. Maybe we should push for no travel play for ages U8, U7, U6, or U5.

U10 [To include U9] Travel Play In leagues that have no scores, records or points posted. 6v6 or 7v7 including GK's.

U12 [To include U11] 8v8 or 9v9 Including GK"s.

"To Police" can be very difficult for the States that do not administer or run the Travel leagues within our jurisdiction. For those states that do run the leagues." Policing "is a little easier.

I am still of the same feeling that some kind of mandate, [not to be confused with dictate!] comes from one or both of our governing bodies [USSF, USYSA] in some way or form as not to "upset" the members. Maybe if we, the Directors of Coaching, can come to some consistent set of guidelines, then both governing bodies will feel more comfortable in supporting and then administering a policy. However as I said earlier, if we are going to put out rigid playing numbers, then I feel we are fighting a losing battle. We must leave room for plus or minus one player and with or without a Gk' depending on the logistical differences and the opinions of each states members.

Lets face it any of the suggestions that we are seeing written in these relay's of emails, are better than is currently taking place in many of our States. Lets walk before we run.

Keep up the good work Tom,

Hope to see you all in the Philly or Atlanta areas of the country.

Glen Buckley
State Director of Coaching
New York State West.

Subj: Re: SSG resolution
Date: 12/19/2001 1:16:18 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: Doc4nmysa
To: Gers1873

To All,

Wow! You guys have been busy on those computers around the country. By the time I finish reading and printing the recent rounds, I have new emails to check! And, I had to change the ink cartridge on my printer after this morning!

Some great stuff! I'm printing it all out and will be loading up for the next Board meeting here in NM. Good support for the changes we are trying to pass. I thought Peter McGahey had some great comments.

One comment I hear and agree with - It will be very hard to implement some of the needed changes for U12 when some of our regional groups still sponsor USYS Regional Tournaments for U12 playing 11 v 11. Need to get that changed.

Keep it up. I got a new ink cartridge in and am ready to read!

Bob Bigney
New Mexico

Subj: Re: ssg resolution: round III
Date: 12/19/2001 1:38:33 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: GBuc200398
To: Gers1873

Tom,

I think that it is vitally important that the USYSA Presidents of all regions should be invited to the DOC meeting in Atlanta. Thoughts

Glen Buckley
Director of Coaching
New York State West

Subj: Re: ssg resolution: round III
Date: 12/19/2001 1:48:00 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: Gers1873
To: GBuc200398

In a message dated 12/19/2001 1:38:33 PM Eastern Standard Time, GBuc200398 writes:

<< I think that it is vitally important that the USYSA Presidents of all regions should be invited to the DOC meeting in Atlanta. Thoughts >>

Hi Glen,

I talked to Chris Christoffersen this morning. He is our regional director. His suggestion was to have our ducks in order by Atlanta, in order to make our position known in advance of the AGM in August. That meeting seems to be the time for votes on rule changes, which this proposal will fall under.

We should probably be ready to make visits to the respective regional meetings in Atlanta to stake our claim and lay the groundwork. Our challenge before then will be to have every coach on board. Not a big challenge. We can do most by computer and the few stragglers by phone.

Tom

Subj: RE: ssg resolution: round III
Date: 12/19/2001 2:02:48 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: AllenG@SEC.GOV (Allen, Gary R.)
To: GBuc200398@aol.com ('GBuc200398@aol.com'), Gers1873@aol.com

Tom and Glen:

The numbers issue with respect to plus or minus a player is important, and, thanks to efforts like yours, we are on our way to working the numbers out. Glen, I think you have struck an issue that will have even greater ramifications over the long run, and that is, when should travel play begin? It is an integral part of the developmental issue, because, currently players in the crucial U9 to U12 age groups are being "selected out" for "elite" or travel teams. Most often the basis for this "selection" is physical maturity. This is a tremendous detriment to ultimately producing better and greater numbers of players because it is at these ages that the early or late onset of puberty creates a huge and, in many cases, false picture of who ultimately will develop into the best players. Because of our "travel" leagues at these ages we are selecting a few out for "better competition" and "better instruction" and opportunity.

This early selection process is retarding our development as a soccer nation from all angles. First, the "player" (I have yet to see a real "player" under 15 or 16 (Freddie Adu is a rare exception) who is selected is forced to rely on his "strengths" to succeed, with little opportunity to develop in areas that he has weaknesses. If his or her strength is physical (which it most often is at this age), then when others catch up, this player usually becomes very ordinary. Second, by creating "travel" teams at these ages we are placing a premium on record (regardless of score keeping), and to succeed players most often become role players, rather than being allowed, or encouraged, to develop into more well-rounded and diverse players.

A third problem is represented by the players we leave out. While some persevere and develop into travel players later, many drop out of the sport. We live in a society where instant gratification and obtaining the edge as early as possible are the norm. I don't know about western New York or Cleveland, but in the Northern Virginia area, we literally have people signing their kids up for certain pre-schools before they are even born, just to make sure they can get into the "right" kindergartens later. The perception is that if we don't do more, earlier, we will be left behind. Therefore, our kids are placed under tremendous pressure to be the best as early as possible. This is fed by leagues that want to make more and more money with multiple divisions, and tournaments. After all, when a league or club has a travel tournament, it means, by definition, that many teams will have to come from out of town. Well, how many parents accompany their 16 or 17 year old kids to tournaments compared to parents of 9 year olds? Therefore, it is the 9-year-old, etc, brackets that produce most of the hotel and restaurant revenue. Similarly, who buys all the candy and t-shirts? It also spawns incredible amounts of recruiting, which is, in many cases, promoted by having "professional" coaches at early ages. While most of these coaches have played the game, many have no clue about the myriad aspects of child development. They know the game, but they don't know the "player." Most often, they try to fit kids into a mode of training that is reminiscent of their most recent playing days in college or high school. Hence, they play upon parents' fears of success for their child by spouting the need for commitment and playing more games and tournaments, etc. and the fact that they have the "secret" to success. Obviously, the issue of coaching education is tremendously important, but only a part of the issue. It takes a long time for a soccer player to develop, and one of the driving factors to long-term development is a passion or love for the game. Right now, we force our kids to compete before they ever learn to play or enjoy playing. If there is any doubt about this, try to find a pick-up game among kids in a park. They are almost non-existent, because soccer is a sport that they play when their parents take them to a certain field, with certain players who make up their team, and under the guise of a certain coach. We have it all backwards.

Glen, you have hit upon the key issue that will hound us for the next ten years. In a sense, if all players of these ages (U8 through U12) had to play locally in "transitional" leagues (whether within one club if it were big enough, or within a 2 or three club league), then the issues of numbers of players a side, etc. would be solved quickly. For instance, if between two contiguous clubs had between them 100 players in a particular age group, they would much more readily accept playing 6 v 6 (hypothetically with team rosters at 10), than if they were only looking to find two teams of 16 to play in a travel league made up of players from many different clubs.

Anyway, I am glad you mentioned the issue. Moving to smaller sides is tremendously important, but is only one part of a bigger issue. I guess we can only eat an elephant one bite at a time.

Gary R. Allen
Virginia Youth Soccer Association, Director of Coaching Education

*******End of Round IV Comments*******

Subj: Re: ssg resolution: round III
Date: 12/19/2001 3:02:59 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: darmstrong@popmail.ucsd.edu (Derek Armstrong)
Reply-to: darmstrong@ucsd.edu (Derek Armstrong)

Dear Colleagues,

I have just returned from the UK and caught this conversation somewhat late - Seeing as there are some serious soccer people in here I thought I would add a little of my thoughts on this issue.

USClubsoccer will review these questions in good time as an association. Our technical committee, which will be made up of club directors of coaching of leading clubs and senior professional coaches. I think these people are quite experienced to come up with some recommendations for our member clubs.

I had a nice conversation with Steve Heighway last Sunday with regards to the academies philosophy. Perhaps this will add fuel to your thoughts. I must preface this by saying these are professional clubs in the business of developing players not winning trophies at younger levels.

There is no formal leagues for the U8s through U16s -The leagues start counting points and standings at age U17s. All games are organized on a friendly basis and each club creates its own "game schedule " based on their own philosophy of numbers of games to play. The only trophies that come into play are the tournaments that they select to attend which are few in number.

They play small-sided games in training of various sizes from 3v3 to 8v8 - mainly, they believe in small-sided games as a principle. Goalkeepers were never mentioned so I assume they have them? I would think that mixing players up by playing in goal is something that we should do anyway. In a serious development situation I would assume keepers start to emerge around 10 or 11. From that age perhaps they should be part of whatever games are put forward as the model for your leagues. Certainly playing 3v3 or 4v4 is better than playing 8v8 at age 6 through 9s for developing players. However at 9s and 10s I feel that the numbers should be increased until we get to 8v8 as per U10s and 11s. I do think that U-12s can start playing 11v 11 in competition.

We are on the right path and I would love to see a lack of standings at the younger age levels and no trophies, as well -oh my what have I said!

Have a great Xmas all

Regards

Derek Armstrong

Subj: SSG
Date: 12/19/2001 6:52:48 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: coachsnow@lsa-soccer.org (Sam Snow)
Reply-to: coachsnow@lsa-soccer.org
To: gers1873@aol.com (Tom Turner)

File: S.S.G.Research.pub (62464 bytes)

DL Time (TCP/IP): < 1 minute

Currently the requirements in Louisiana are to follow the USYSA mandate. That is no more than 8v8 in the U10 and younger age groups. Most of our clubs have voluntarily gone to either 3v3 or 4v4 at U6 without keepers. Most of our clubs play 4v4 without keepers at U8. There are about three clubs in the state that play with numbers larger than that at these ages (5v5). Easily 70% of our clubs play 8v8 with keepers at the U10 age group. The others play 6v6 with keepers at U10. 10% of our clubs play 8v8 with keepers at U12 and the rest play 11v11. We had a vote this past summer to mandate that U6 be 3v3 without goalkeepers, U8 be 4v4 without goalkeepers, U10 be 6v6 with goalkeepers and U12 be 8v8 with goalkeepers. The proposal lost by seven votes. This issue will be revisited at our winter business meeting in January.

Sam Snow
Director of Coaching
Louisiana Soccer Association

Soccer Research Issues from Louisiana Soccer Association Annual General Meeting, July 2001

Issues against *Small-Sided-Games*:

Proposal from L.S.A. – suggested structure:

- 3 v 3 at U6 no GK
- 4 v 4 at U8 no GK
- 6 v 6 at U10 w/GK
- 8 v 8 at U12 w/GK

Current structure:

At U6, U8 and U10 cannot play more than 8v8 and may begin 11v11 at U12. Most clubs at the U6 and U8 levels are playing 3 v 3 and 4 v4 respectively. Some clubs are beginning to play this soccer year (2001/2002) 6v6 at U10 and 8v8 at U12. The major concerns were playing 6v6 at U10 and 8v8 at U12.

Reasons given against proposal:

- Not enough coaches, referees, fields.
- Afraid to be first in the region. Rather a wait and see attitude.
- If we play 8 a-side at U12 then we will be two years behind the development curve at U13 against other states that have been playing 11v11 since U11.
- It takes three years to teach 11v11.
- Not enough players at the premier level, therefore when they play out of state against other teams who play 11v11, L.S.A. players will be at a disadvantage.
- Won't know how to play positions.
- It's OK for recreation and recreation plus, but not for premier level.
- Would like to start regional championships at an earlier age, i.e.; U14 rather than U16.
- Places additional stress on administrative structure.
- The game was designed for 11v11.

Research questions:

- What are the additional demands/needs with regard to coaches, referees and fields when changing from 11v11 to small-sided soccer?
- At what age is a player capable of understanding the 11 v 11 game?
- What is the role that small-sided soccer plays in the development of a soccer player?
- What is the most appropriate age to introduce 11v11 soccer?
- At what age should positional concepts be introduced?
- Does playing 8v8 at U12 in league play pose additional challenges when the same team must play 11v11 against out of state teams who play 11v11 league play?
- What are the tactical developmental stages of a soccer player?
- Are tactical stages of development invariant?

The above notes and questions were compiled by Dr. Ron Quinn and Sam Snow. These are the issues and questions the state Directors of Coaching in Region III must be prepared to answer in our continuing effort to grow soccer in the South.

Subj: Re: ssg resolution: round II
Date: 12/19/2001 8:25:44 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: MPlanteTSS

Tom,

Thanks for getting the ball rolling.

In Montana most clubs do what they want or can based on field space, equipment and volunteers. This is what I am going to recommend at our winter BOD meeting.

U6 - 3v3 no GK.

U8 - 4v4 no GK. It is ok to score a lot.

U10 - 6v6 with GK.

U12 - 8v8 with GK.

I see the U12 as the toughest sell but maybe if the states would get together and not send U12's to Regionals it would be easier.

U13 - 11v11 State Champion

U14 - 11v11 State and Regional competition

U13 & U14 are just ideas for people to think about. Maybe we can meet in Philly.

Ric Plante

DOC Montana Youth Soccer

Subj: RE: ssg resolution: round IV

Date: 12/20/2001 6:24:52 AM Eastern Standard Time

From: AllenG@SEC.GOV (Allen, Gary R.)

Bob and Tom:

Some good comments, Bob, but I think you are wrong on using higher numbers. Even though the issue may seem to be political acceptance, it really is about what makes the most sense for the players. The need for smaller sides is a substantive one, not procedural. Therefore, since we are called upon to make substantive comments, we need to stick to our guns on this.

Unfortunately, as we learned from the 8 v 8 mandate set by USYSA a number of years ago, the administrators do not understand the reasoning and use whatever number is given as gospel, or a minimum, rather than a maximum.

Gary

Subj: RE: ssg resolution: round IV

Date: 12/20/2001 8:28:49 AM Eastern Standard Time

From: AllenG@SEC.GOV (Allen, Gary R.)

To: Gers1873@aol.com ('Gers1873@aol.com')

Hey Tom,

I won't be in Philly, but I will be in Atlanta. I know that the U12 is the toughest sell, but, in many ways, the time is right and crucial. I know here in Virginia, a number of big clubs are voting this season to move to 7 v 7 and 8 v 8 for U12s. There are no substantive arguments against it. The biggest specter is a procedural argument in the guise of a substantive one: that teams will be disadvantaged in State Cup and out of state tournaments. Suddenly, administrators cease to listen to those of us with some background in the game when the issue rubs up against one of their sacred cows. Of course, the nonpolitically correct answer to that is to question the wisdom of State Cup and out of state tournaments at these ages anyway, but that is a nonstarter as well. We are beginning, but unfortunately, it is a lot easier to follow than to lead.

On the travel issue, I agree with you, if we can start with a national mandate for the U10s that would be great. I would really like to start making a hard and relentless push for U12s, so that it really can be accomplished in the next few years. This is going to be the hard battle because so much is at stake in terms of turf and finances. It is incredible here in Virginia where some leagues have five and six divisions at U11 and can warn (threaten) teams that if they don't join their leagues at the earliest ages, they will have to be put on a waiting list to get in later.

Gary

Subj: Re: ssg resolution: round IV
Date: 12/20/2001 9:22:18 AM Eastern Standard Time
From: GBuc200398

Gary, and all

Some accurate points and very well documented throughout your note. For the heck of it, here's another off shoot that you touch on.....Coach Education.

Surely it is time for the development of coaches to become paramount in our thoughts. These critical developmental ages of 8 through 12 are generally left to the volunteer parent who has very little or no underpinning knowledge of the game. While many are well-intentioned volunteers with a love of children that found themselves in the position, they do not have the required skills to evaluate the group and put together an age appropriate learning environment. The ex-players are a group that we should be encouraging to come back as coaches.....but not without first requiring that they get educated. You are right on the mark Gary, with your evaluation of that situation.

If you were good at math at school, you can't just walk into a school and offer yourself as a teacher. You would be shown the door and asked to come back with your degree from a teacher training college...right? What is different about Soccer?

I believe [and I may stand corrected] that the National Hockey Association now "mandates" [oop's sorry there's that scary mandate word again"] that all coaches MUST have a minimum coaching license before being allowed anywhere near the ice with a player. Oh I know we hear all the time "but we cant get volunteers as it is, we will never get them if they have to be licensed." Well, I'm sorry but it is time to move on from that. I do not believe that to be the case. Most parent coaches do it because they want to be with their children. If it becomes an option as to being able to do that, I believe they will readily give up 4/6 hours for a youth module or a weekend for an E. I have certainly found that to be the case in New York West, when my member clubs have "mandated" the license requirement. Those courses have traditionally been very well attended. I think that the majority of volunteer parents want the knowledge, to be able to do the job better.....and yes, lets not kid ourselves, they believe it may help them win!

The new material from US Soccer, i.e., E and D workbooks to correspond with the C, B and A, is excellent and we should all be using it in our state courses. Period. I am not to sure what or who is controlling the material for youth module's, but the sooner we are all on the same page with that, the better.

Sorry to ramble, but whilst we are on this topic of player development, we should not underestimate or include the coach education portion, because, without it, the playing numbers are probably insignificant.

Glen Buckley
State Director of Coaching
New York State West.

Subj: RE: ssg resolution: round IV
Date: 12/20/2001 10:22:06 AM Eastern Standard Time
From: AllenG@SEC.GOV (Allen, Gary R.)

Glen:

You are correct. Coaching education and player development are inseparable pillars, especially in this country. The old saw about volunteers is similar to permissive parenting. Coaches, be they parents or ex-players, or both, want guidance, just as kids want boundaries. While the motivation may be different, the result will be the same. When we mandate that coaches take the proper courses before they coach, they will flock to the courses, simply because we will have placed a value on them. One of the reasons we

have had trouble getting a significant percentage of our coaches to courses is because we have made it so laissez-faire. How can we expect the uninitiated and uneducated coach to place any importance on coaching courses when we don't think enough of the courses to require them.?

Gary

***** End of Round V Comments*****

Subj: SSG
Date: 12/28/2001 11:18:59 AM Eastern Standard Time
From: coachgary@eatel.net (rick garey)
To: gers1873@aol.com

Tom,

In the interest of player development may I suggest that you do not worry about any goal keeping until U10 or even U12. I think that the numbers that you have proposed at the different age levels are very appropriate and lend themselves to positive player development. However, for years I have seen the biggest kid with the longest reach get stuck in goal game after game and rarely get the experience of playing in the field. Also, how many coaches spend any time or have even a basic knowledge of how to train a player at the keeper position? Very, very few I am sure. I am suggesting that goalkeepers start their training at U12 by qualified coaches within each organization, if that is possible. The players could go once per week for goalkeeper training and then practice with their team on the other practice day of the week. Two or three coaches could teach twenty to thirty kids. Just a suggestion! It might help to clear up the numbers issue.

I hope that we can win this war Tom. Sam and I have had a lot of discussion concerning this topic and it is a VERY hot topic indeed. Trying to get adults to see the logic of SSG and not worry about the final score of a soccer match is going to be a difficult but necessary task. We are implementing SSG in the Baton Rouge Club at the U10 level and it is already working. You might want to give Gary Bute (our Director) a call and get his input as well. I hope that you and your family have a safe and happy holiday!

Sincerely,
Rick Garey
Baton Rouge and Louisiana Staff Coach

Subject: Re: ssg resolution: round V comments
Date: Mon, 24 Dec 2001 14:49:23 -0600

Hi folks,

I'm pleased to read some intelligent and stimulating conversation now surrounding the small-sided games issue. Rest assured we'll prevail and make a positive change for our youngest players just as we did in the mid '80s when we changed from 11 v 11 for U8 teams to 7 v 7 at that time. From my discussions with youth coaches and administrators across the country here are some of the issues in their minds as to why SSG may not work for their club:

- ~ Not enough coaches, referees, fields.
- ~ Afraid to be the first to make the change, many prefer a wait and see attitude.
- ~ If we play 8 a-side at U12 and U11 then we'll be two years behind the development curve at U13 against other states that have been playing 11 v 11 since U11.
- ~ It takes three years to teach 11 v 11 (I know, I know...but a coach did say this to me...he holds a "Y" and "A" no less).
- ~ Not enough players at the premier level, therefore when they play out of state against other teams who play 11 v 11 our players will be at a disadvantage.
- ~ Won't know how to play positions.
- ~ It's OK for recreational players, but not for the premier level.
- ~ Places additional stress on administrative structure.

~ The game was designed for 11 v 11.

No doubt these are common feelings across the country. We have the opportunity and power to answer these questions for them and to move this initiative forward. Let's get this ironed out before we get to Atlanta for the U. S. Youth Soccer Workshop, so we can present everyone there with our final version of our stance on SSG. I don't check this account very often so please use coachsnow@lsa-soccer.org for my e-mail address.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO YA'LL!

Sam Snow

Subj: RE:
Date: 1/2/02 10:20:56 AM Eastern Standard Time
From: AllenG@SEC.GOV (Allen, Gary R.)

Sam and All:

Yes, the arguments are common. I think when we are presenting the position one of the first things we need to do are separate the procedural from the substantive arguments. Procedural are merely matters of finding a way to implement changes. Substantive arguments, however, require a basis and support, and, the substantive arguments below, have neither. Let's look at each:

Procedural arguments: Not enough coaches, referees, fields, premier level. Places additional stress on administrative structure

Game was designed for 11v11 (The gravamen of this argument is that all football fields accommodate 11 v 11 without changes). In point of fact, the original game was one between villages in England with hundreds on a side). One could also argue that the original system was 1-1-9, but the fallacy of this type of reasoning is readily apparent. The "game" is merely moving a ball, without hands into an opponent's goal. The numbers needed for skill and tactical awareness development (which is what we are talking about with youth soccer) is not tied to 11v11. To argue otherwise is like arguing that we should still use fire and candles as our primary sources of heat and light, because, after all, this is the way we originally used these resources.

~ Not enough players at the premier level, therefore when they play out of state against other teams who play 11 v 11 our players will be at a disadvantage.

This is a procedural, disguised as a substantive, argument. There is absolutely no evidence that players who have played 8 v 8 cannot adjust fairly quickly to the addition of 3 players a side, and to the increased space. Sure, at first, there will be some confusion, but, if the key to this game were merely systems, alignments and role-playing, instead of skillful and creative play, and the ability to adapt to the situation physically, technically and tactically, then we would have won a World Cup long ago. The game is not about the former, but it is about the latter, and development of these attributes takes years. For us to focus on a momentary, apparent, disadvantage at 12 years old, is myopic. If we were more concerned about the development and retention of players, and less so about the number of "trophies" our 12 year olds have in their rooms, we would increase the standard of play immeasurably.

The substantive support for smaller numbers is obvious. One of the main points of playing with smaller sides is to increase the amount of playing time, numbers of touches, decision-making and, basically, the involvement of each player. It stands to reason that when we do this, more players will not only learn to play better, but have "fun" and continue to play the game. Additionally, more players will have the opportunity to play at higher levels. Isn't this what we really want?

Afraid to be the first to make the change, many prefer a wait and see attitude (This really isn't procedural, but it is not substantive either)

Substantive arguments:

If we play 8 a-side at U12 and U11 then we'll be two years behind the development curve at U13 against other states that have been playing 11v11 since U11. First of all, there is no evidence to support this. Second, it depends on what one means by development. If development in soccer is an increase in skill and tactical decision-making, then the fallacy of this argument is obvious. If "development" is being able to use players with certain "current" physical advantages to exploit more space, or to teach players certain limited roles within the game, then perhaps, there is a very short-term benefit to playing 11 a side at these ages. But even if there were legitimacy to this argument, which there is not, ultimately, who cares other than parents of 12 year olds and coaches seeking to make a name for themselves by exploiting precocious athletes) who is "apparently ahead of the curve" at 12 years old? Certainly, none of our U.S. players are even with the curve when they are 18 or 19. If there were any credence to this argument, why would the entire Italian federation play 5 v 5 until U14, why would the professional youth programs in England play 7 v 7 until U14, why would the entire Dutch, French, Portuguese and Spanish federations do so? Arguably, we might be able to find a team of our 12 year olds who would be "ahead of the curve," but it is not even close at later ages. Even though we have had some recent success with our U17 National Teams, this is only so for 16 players who have spent more than a year in residency. Below the top four or five of these players, the level of play drops precipitously, and below the 16 on the team, there are only a handful that are even noticeable.

Could it be that those making this argument are looking at the wrong "curve"? What happens at U13, in terms of team results, has very little bearing on the development of players later, so who cares about results at this age? This really becomes a procedural argument, because then administrators, etc. measure success by State Cups, Regional championships, etc. The problem is that none of this should even be on the radar screen at U13. The reality is exactly the opposite of the predictions of those who make this argument. Not only will the kids who play 8 a side at U11 and U12 not be behind the curve later, their added skill and tactical development will make many of them two to three curves ahead of those playing 11v11 when it really begins to matter, at U17 and above.

~ It takes three years to teach 11v11 (I know, I know...but a coach did say this to me...he holds a "Y" and "A" no less).

Perhaps this coach meant that it took him two or three years to understand 11v11. We have spent the past 30+ years in our coaching schools (look back at Dettmar Cramer's first coaching manual from 1971) trying to help coaches understand that it is not the system or numbers of players that make the game. It is the skill of the players, and their understanding and ability to create, see and exploit the weaknesses of the opponents around them in groups. If it were not so, then we would already have won a World Cup. All one has to do is look at what has been repeatedly touted over the years as the major areas our more accomplished players need to work on: transition and speed of play. Certainly, the numbers a side provide a framework within which to work, but the issues are there no matter what the numbers a side. In fact, with fewer numbers, such things as transition and speed of play are even more important because no player can afford to pass the responsibility for these issues to the other players.

~ Won't know how to play positions.

This again assumes that one should learn to compete before one learns to play. It really does put the cart before the horse. As we in the coaching schools have tried to show over the past thirty years, it is the player who has the skill and tactical ability to adapt quickly that succeeds in the highest levels of this game. Again, two of the main reasons the US cannot break into the top echelons of world soccer are our skill level and speed of play. Our players are schooled like no others in "positional play", but there is no substitute for skill and speed of play. Positions are secondary, and grow out of the abilities of the players we have, not vice versa. If this were not so, there would have been no evolution of systems over the years, all we would have needed to do is make sure players learned to play the specific positions. Certainly, players like Pele

and Maradona would not have been major factors in the game. After all, neither of them played organized soccer before they were 15. They must have been horribly behind the curve.

~ It's OK for recreational players, but not for the premier level.

What can possibly be the basis for this argument? Certainly it is not that our "premier" level players are good enough already, and do not need better development. Yet, this is exactly what this argument assumes. Again, I guess Italy, France, Portugal, Holland and England have it all wrong. The exact opposite approach should be taken. If we change for no one else, we should change for the premier players. After all, aren't these the players we think will ultimately be the best players (this is wrong thinking too, but the subject of another discussion), therefore, shouldn't we provide the best opportunity for them to develop? Of course we should, unless our real goal is only to garnish championship trophies at 12 years old.

Gary R. Allen
VYSA Director of Coaching Education

Subj: Round and Round
Date: 1/8/2002 12:07:29 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: quinnr@XAVIER.XU.EDU (Ronald W. Quinn)
To: gers1873@aol.com

Tom,

The dialogue and input in these discussions have been rich and insightful. Since I have had time to read the comments and digest them over the holidays I would add my two cents.

On the specifics of small-sided games I agree with the "no more than" concept using these numbers. At U6 & U8 no more than 4v4 and NO GK's, at U10 no more than 6v6 with GK, at U12 no more than 8v8 with GK, begin 11v11 play at U14.

I thought that Derek Armstrong's comment were "spot on" but we must also realize that England & Europe are completely different soccer cultures than here. We will not be able to eliminate U6 teams even though many would agree it is too young. So the issue is not to duplicate another country, because we are not. The key to our success is finding out what attributes and qualities of player development around the world would be successful here. I can say however, that in understanding the youth soccer player (12 and younger), we are ahead of most countries.

The real issue, I believe, is how do we actually begin to address these questions? We can discuss as much as we want and even arrive at some consensus, but how do we know we are correct? If small-sided games are mandated, how will we assess the effectiveness of this new national structure? Even though conducting actual research has not been a part of the soccer landscape (and as many of you know that my interest to create a USYS Institute has mainly fallen on deaf ears) it is now time to tackle these issues in a scientific way. We have a coaching education system in place, which most would agree, including myself, is pretty good. But how do we know? There has never been any follow-up, on any candidate, completing any course, on the effectiveness of the course on their coaching and thereby improving player development! An assessment of the effectiveness of the coaching schools has never been done in the 30+ years of coaching education in this country.

Following Louisiana's AGM last summer and the defeat of Sam's proposal, Sam & I sat down and identified the issues raised and turned them into research questions.

SOCCER RESEARCH ISSUES FROM LSA AGM Summer 2001

Proposal at LSA

Suggested structure: 3v3 at U6 no GK
 4v4 at U8 no GK
 6v6 at U10 w/GK

8v8 at U12 w/GK

Current structure: At U6,8,10 cannot play more than 8v8
11v11 at U12
Most clubs at the U6,8,10 are playing 4v4, 6v6, 8v8 respectively.

The major concerns were playing 6v6 at U10 and 8v8 at U12.

Reasons given against proposal:

- Ø Not enough coaches, referees, fields.
- Ø Afraid to be first in the region. Rather a wait and see attitude.
- Ø If we play 8 a-side at U12 then we will be two years behind the development curve at U13 against other states that have been playing 11v11 since U11.
- Ø It takes three years to teach 11v11
- Ø Not enough players at the premier level, therefore when they play out of state against other team who play 11v11, LSA players will be at a disadvantage.
- Ø Won't know how to play positions.
- Ø Its OK for Recreation and Recreation Plus but not for Premier Level.
- Ø Would like to start regional championships at an earlier age, i.e. U14 rather than U16.
- Ø Places additional stress on Administrative structure.
- Ø The game was designed for 11v11.

From these concerns we developed 8 research questions.

Research Questions

1. What are the additional demands/needs with regard to coaches, referees and fields when changing from 11v11 to small-sided soccer?
2. At what age is a player capable of understanding the 11v11 game?
3. What is the role that small-sided soccer plays in the development of a soccer player?
4. What is the most appropriate age to introduce 11v11 soccer?
5. At what age should positional concepts be introduced?
6. Does playing 8v8 at U12 in league play, pose additional challenges when same team must play 11v11 against out of State teams who play 11v11 league play?
7. What are the tactical developmental stages of soccer players?
8. Are tactical stages of development invariant? Meaning are there specific stages that all soccer players must pass through? Some obviously quicker than others, but are the stages the same?

The question asked by Adam Cohen below is another example of the types of questions I am seeing that coaches and parents are beginning to ask. I would think that it would certainly be in USYS best interest to be at the forefront of addressing and attempting to resolve these issues.

<< I am trying to gather some information regarding the positive influence that qualified (paid) coaches can have on young players and the game of soccer itself. Do you have, or know of, any research that has been done in terms of improvements that are made to clubs when more qualified coaches are brought in (this, of course, would be done in conjunction with the education of the current coaches)? >>

Please add this to the email pipeline as I will once again also bring this to the USYS Coaching Committee at the workshops in February. Comments and thoughts are most welcomed.

Sincerely,
Dr. Ronald W. Quinn
Associate Professor
Director of Sport Studies
Head Women's Soccer Coach
Xavier University

ps: one final thought. If SSG are adopted, how should the field and goal size be modified?

Subj: SSG resolution
Date: 1/11/2002 4:37:59 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: Gers1873

File: national comments.doc (169984 bytes)
DL Time (TCP/IP): < 1 minute

Hello all, and many thanks for your participation in this important discussion. It never ceases to amaze me how much we can get done by e-mail, and the quality of the contributions has been excellent. Ahead of next week's meeting in Philly, I have attached all "31" pages of comments for "plane (or john) reading."

What I take from the responses is that we can all happily live with the 3v3 (U-5/6) and 4v4 (U-7/8) recommendations currently in place through US Youth Soccer (with no GK's), and that 6v6 (U-9 and U-10) and 8v8 (U-11 and U-12) will not cause anyone undue heartache. In other words, we may have our proposed hierarchy in place. However, there are some related issues to be considered.

1) At the "recreation" and "recreation-plus" levels, having goalkeepers at U-7/8 may be unavoidable, and, as Ian Barker mentioned, we are not going to become the SSG police. We have USYSA recommendations in place and can cater our literature and coaching education towards these numbers. An outright mandate for play at U-8 and below may be unrealistic and perhaps unwise, given the flexibility necessary with grass-roots programs.

2) "Recommendations" for U-5/6 and U-7/8 may be one thing, but we are ultimately striving for USYSA "mandates" at U-9/10 and U-11/12. This is when travel normally begins, when tournament play starts to become an issue, and when the weight of a national resolution is necessary to overcome the inertia experienced in many parts of the country. Can we conceivably seek a "mandate" for the older players while endorsing "recommendations" for the younger children?

3) We may be fighting an uphill battle with the U-12's. It is here that Ron Quinn's proposal of a national research group will probably have to play a part in impacting the eventual outcome. Any concrete support from other countries would help at this time, but we may need time, money and evidence that NOT playing 11v11 at U-12 is in ALL our players' best interests.

Safe travels. I'm looking forward to seeing many of you next week.

Tom

PS: Listed below is the national directory of DOC's. I have started to add additional coaches working directly for the various state associations and would appreciate hearing about any others who should be included. When the proposal is presented to the respective regional and national administrators, more widespread inclusion and support will certainly not be to our detriment.

Region I

Connecticut Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, c/o Kathy Zolad (ED)
Delaware Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Lew Atkinson
Eastern New York Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Alfonso Mondello
Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Mike Barr
SoccerMaine
Director of Coaching, Andy Biggs
Maryland Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Graham Ramsey

Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Dean Conway
New Hampshire Youth Soccer Association
ODP Coach, Ian Torney
Competitive Coach, Jorge Pardo
Coaching Advisor, Jeff Pill
New Jersey Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Rick Meana
New York West Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Glen Buckley
Pennsylvania West State Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Chris Brown
Soccer Rhode Island
Director of Coaching, Ed Bradley
Vermont Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Dave Saward
Virginia Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Gordon Miller
Coaching Director, Gary Allen
West Virginia Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Bob Gray

Region II

Illinois Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Ian Mulliner
Indiana Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Dan Kapsalis
Boys ODP, George Perry
Girls ODP, John Carter
Iowa Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Ian Bradley
Ass't Director of Coaching, Serge Lipovetsky
Kansas Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Eddie Henderson
Kentucky Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Fran Kulas
Michigan Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Don Gemmell
Recreation Director, Ted Lynch
Minnesota Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Ian Barker
Ass't Director, John Curtis
Missouri Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Denny Vaninger
Nebraska Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, TBA
North Dakota Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Bill Ashby
Ohio South Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Roby Stahl
Ohio Youth Soccer Association North
Director of Coaching, Tom Turner
Boys ODP, Tony Niccoli
Girls ODP, Sandor Jakab
South Dakota Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Ron Theisz

Wisconsin Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Jim Launder

Region III

Alabama Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, TBA (C/O Deter Walker)
Arkansas State Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Julian Owen
Florida Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Mike Strickler
Georgia Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Jacob Daniel
Ass't Director, Thomas Findlay
Louisiana Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Sam Snow
Mississippi Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Nigel Bolton
North Carolina Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Bill Furjanic
North Texas State Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Gary Williamson
Oklahoma Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Peter McGahey
South Carolina Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Van Taylor
South Texas Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Bobby Murphy
Tennessee State Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Manny Sanchez

Region IV

Alaska Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Colin Barton
Arizona Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Mark Lowe
California Youth Soccer Association North
Director of Coaching, Karl Dewazien
Coaching Education, Hervi Rualo
California Youth Soccer Association South
Director of Coaching, Steve Hoffman
Technical Director, Steve Sampson
Colorado Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Nate Shotts
Hawaii Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, George Kuntz
Idaho Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Tom Fleck
Montana Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Ric Plante
United States Youth Soccer Association Nevada
Director of Coaching, Marc Hechter
New Mexico Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Bob Bigney
Oregon State Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Jimmy Conway

Recreation Director, Mike Smith
Utah Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Greg Maas
Washington Youth Soccer Association
Director Of Coaching, Dave Schumacher
Wyoming Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Kosta Tsandes

Subj: Re: SSG resolution

Date: 1/11/2002 11:54:19 PM Eastern Standard Time

From: PSAlex

<< 2) "Recommendations" for U-5/6 and U-7/8 may be one thing, but we are ultimately striving for USYSA "mandates" at U-9/10 and U-11/12. This is when travel normally begins, when tournament play starts to become an issue, and when the weight of a national resolution is necessary to overcome the inertia experienced in many parts of the country. Can we conceivably seek a "mandate" for the older players while endorsing "recommendations" for the younger children? >>

Tom,

Mandating might be avoided through the US Youth Soccer ability to regulate interstate play in tournaments. We could require the desired "guidelines" be used to have a tournament approved for teams from other states to enter.

Such a first step might be easier to accomplish, as it does not interfere with in house play. Kentucky introduced SSG this way many years ago and has not yet had to mandate small sized for any age group. Clubs will move to play in house in the same format as they play in state tournaments and interstate tournaments. When Ohio South wrote a rule denying their teams U10 and below to travel to tournaments that kept standing or awarded trophies, ALL Kentucky associations brought their tournaments into compliance with ONE year.

I am strongly thinking this might be a viable way to start moving to a common SSG practice across the country.

Just my opinion Tom.

Hope to see you in Philly.

Perry

Perry Alexander

Subj: RE: SSG resolution

Date: 1/11/2002 7:02:29 PM Eastern Standard Time

From: coachdir@attbi.com (Dave Schumacher)

To: Gers1873@aol.com

Tom:

Got your message. The question I have is where did U-5's come from? I must not have been watching closely.

The only difficulty I have is what we approved in Washington and now having to defend or back track on our approved numbers. If USYSA mandates then we will all live with it, however, our original position statement put a cap on an age group but suggested an ideal number. That seemed to be a good approach.

I will support whatever the majority agrees upon. I won't be at the NSCAA and won't arrive in Atlanta till 4:00 on our meeting day, hopefully I won't miss out on too much.

Look forward to speaking soon.

Schu

Subj: Re: SSG resolution
Date: 1/12/2002 10:13:03 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: dsimeone@ussoccer.org (David Simeone)
To: PSAlex@aol.com, Gers1873@aol.com (Tom Turner)

In my experience it has been much more difficult to come to an agreement for a MANDATE....I believe what we want is INFLUENCE not CONTROL. I'd like to see us propose parameters broad enough to get to where we need to be, BUT with some flexibility from state to state as they see fit without too much deviation, some flexibility.

The tournament issue is completely different....I would suggest that we consider approaching this issue of tournament play from a wellness perspective.....is it responsible, healthy, and NEGLIGENT to allow kids to play under those demands???? What would we do as a coaching community when the first kid drops dead under the conditions of multiple games in heat???? How would we react to use such an incident for changing what the administrators have allowed to happen??? I think approaching this from health and liability negligence is worth a try.....

dave

Subj: (no subject)
Date: 1/12/2002 9:17:17 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: Johnlellinger
To: coachsnow54@hotmail.com, Gers1873

File: Position Statement.doc (65024 bytes)
DL Time (TCP/IP): < 1 minute

Sam and Tom:

Since you two seem to be spearheading much of what I have been reading regarding position statements-- Dan and Jay asked to me to put something together. Region I and Region IV will buy in to what I have put together which is primarily what you two and Tim C. started. It encompasses a couple of parameters where you guys seem to differ, but I think we can get this though at the USYSA workshop.

Let me know your thoughts---John

USSF Position Statement

RECOMMENDED GAME FORMS FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

- To promote the implementation of small-sided games as the vehicle for match play for players under the age of twelve throughout the United States.
- To promote and encourage an appropriate developmental environment for players that is based on both age and ability characteristics.

Recommendations:

U-6

- Game Form-----4 v 4 (3 v 3 is an option)

- Game Duration-4 X 8
- Substitution-----Free
- GK Status-----None Required
- Field Size-----4 v 4 (40 yards x 25 yards)—3 v 3 (30 yards x 20 yards)
- Ball Size-----3

U-8

- Game Form-----5 v 5 (4 v 4 is an option)
- Game Duration-2 X 20
- Substitution-----Free
- GK Status-----Use last defender as GK in 5 v 5 (no GK in 4 v 4)
- Field Size-----5 v 5 (45 yards x 30 yards)---4 v 4 (40 yards x 25 yards)
- Ball Size-----3

U-10

- Game Form-----7 v 7
- Game Duration-2 X 25
- Substitution-----Free
- GK Status-----Players rotate as GK in game
- Field Size-----60 yards x 40 yards
- Ball Size-----4

U12

- Game Form-----9 v 9
- Game Duration-2 X 30
- Substitution-----Free
- GK Status-----GK share time in order of priority
- Field Size-----100 yards x 50 yards
- Ball Size-----4

U-14

- Game Form-----11 v 11
- Game Duration-2 X 35
- Substitution-----No re-entry in half
- GK Status-----GK chosen based on ability
- Field Size-----110 yards x 60 yards (minimum)
- Ball Size-----5

U-16/U-18

- Game Form-----11 v 11
- Game Duration-2 X 40/2 X 45
- Substitution-----No re-entry
- GK Status-----GK chosen based on ability
- Field Size-----115 yards x 70 yards/120 yards x 70 yards (minimum)
- Ball Size-----5

Note: The remaining modified laws for age appropriate competition should apply.

DEVELOPMENT OF GOALKEEPERS

- The implementation of goalkeepers within youth soccer is an issue that creates considerable discussion among coaches. Requiring a player to be only a goalkeeper at too early of an age may have a negative effect and eliminate them from future participation in soccer

- Children grow at different rates and times. It is impossible to predict who will be the best goalkeeper at age twenty when they are ten. Early selection as a goalkeeper may not be in the player's best long-term interest.
- Development of a goalkeeper must be carefully monitored and conducted. The progressive teaching of technical skills is important given the concerns for safety within the position.

Recommendations:

- U-6---No GK required for 3 v 3 games. No GK required for 4 v 4 games.
- U-8---No GK required for 4 v 4 games. Use last defender for 5 v 5 games.
- U-10---GK is included within team-rotate players as GK.
- U-12---GK's identified within team-GK's share time but in order of priority determined by the coach.
- U-14---GK chosen on ability and contribution to the team.

MAXIMUM COMPETITION PER DAY

- Multiple games being played on one day or one weekend and its effect on the quality of the experience and development of the individual player.
- Playing schedules that include so many tournaments and games that there is never an "off season" for players.

Recommendations:

- For tournament managers and schedulers:
 1. Players allowed to play a maximum of one full-length game plus overtime period per day per weekend (maximum two games per weekend).
 2. Where multiple games are a necessity—
 - a) Schedule full-length games with a day of rest between games
 - b) Play shortened halves for games played on back-to-back days
 - c) For players U-14—a maximum of 100 minutes of competition per day
 - d) For players U-15 and older a maximum of 120 minutes per day

Notes: Modified FIFA rules apply—no re-entry after substitution
Kick-off times for games should allow players a reasonable opportunity to prepare properly for competition. This encompasses rest and recovery, nutrition and adequate time to warm-up.

- Coaches prioritizing events:
 1. Objectives are identified and a seasonal plan is developed that balances practice, competition, rest and recovery.
 2. The best interests of the player must be considered when scheduling Competition. The quality and the choice of the events must be carefully considered when developing a seasonal plan.

ABILITY TO PLAY UP

- The majority of clubs, leagues and district, state or regional Olympic Development Programs in the United States allow talented, younger players to compete on teams with and against older players. This occurs as a natural part of the development process and is consistent throughout the world. Currently, there are isolated instances where rules or policies have been imposed that restrict the exceptional player from "playing up". These rules regarding this issue vary. Some absolutely will not allow it. Others establish team or age group quotas while the most lenient review the issue on a case-by-case basis.
- Associations that create rules restricting an individual player's option to play at the appropriate competitive level are in effect impeding that player's opportunity for growth. For development to

occur, all players must be exposed to levels of competition commensurate with their skills and must be challenged constantly in training and games in order to aspire to higher levels of play and thus maintain their interest and passion for the game.

Recommendation:

- When it is appropriate for soccer development, the opportunity for the exceptional player to play with older players must be available. If there is a concern regarding the individual situation, the decision must be carefully evaluated by coaches and administrators familiar with the particular player. When faced with making the decision whether the player ought to play up, adult leadership must be prepared with sound rationale to support their decision. Under no circumstance should coaches exploit the situation by holding players back in their quest for winning team championships, nor should parents push their child in an attempt to accelerate their ascension to the top of the soccer pyramid. In addition, playing up under the appropriate circumstances should not preclude a player from playing in his or her own age group when it is evaluated to be in the best interest of the player's development.

CLUB REGISTRATION vs. TEAM REGISTRATION

- Registering players to a club rather than team provides for fluid movement between teams and levels based upon the needs and abilities of the player.
- By registering players to a club rather than a team increases the opportunities for players to gain experience and playing time as determined by the Club's Director of Coaching.
- Club registration embraces the concept of "playing up" and positively influences the player by providing easy access to a increased level of competition.

Recommendation:

- Players should be allowed to register directly to a club. Club player passes rather than team player passes would be issued. Players would be restricted from playing down in competitions that are below their own age.
- Tournaments or cup competitions may freeze rosters prior to beginning to prevent changes in the roster during the actual competition period.
- Players would be limited to playing only one game per day regardless of the age grouping.
- Club Director's of Coaching would oversee technical decisions relative to player development to ensure they are being made in the best long-term interest of the player's growth and development. Team coaches would not be able to hold players back when it is in their best interest to play up.

FESTIVALS vs. TOURNAMENTS

- Teams are participating in a vast number of tournaments each season. The participation in these tournaments by youth teams often creates a "in-at-all cost" attitude and has a negative influence on player development.
- This high level of participation in tournaments effects the development of the player in the following way:
 - a) Time is reduced for development, i.e. practice
 - b) Excessive play at competitive tournaments is detrimental to individual growth and development
 - c) Winning becomes the main issue for the coach rather than the long term development of the player

Recommendation:

- For players below the age of ten a festival format should replace a tournament structure. Festivals feature a set number of games with no elimination or ultimate winner.

REQUIRED LICENSING

- To create minimum educational and licensing requirements for coaches in the United States.
- To establish required levels of coaching licenses that are commensurate with the level of play and needs of the coach.

Recommendation:

- To implement the license requirements established and recommended by the Coaching Department of the United States Soccer Federation.
- Implementation to be achieved nation-wide by December 31, 2004.

Recommended Minimum Licensing Requirements:

- 'A' License: Professional Coaches, National Team/Staff Coaches, Club Directors of Coaching/Technical Directors, Head Regional ODP Coaches, National Instructional Staff, Regional ODP Team Coaches, State Directors of Coaching, State ODP Head Coaches, Club Age Group Directors of Coaching
- 'B' License: State Instructional Staff, State ODP Assistant Coaches, Club Team Head Coaches of Select/Elite level teams U-16 or older
- 'C' License: State or regional ODP Coaches-in-Training, Head Coaches of Select/Elite level teams of U-14 or older
- 'D' License: Head or Assistant Team Coaches of Select/Elite teams U-12 or older—course is the first licensing course offered under US-Soccer Federation auspices
- 'E' License: Assistant Coaches of Select /Elite Teams U-12 or older---course provides basic instruction for coaches coaching teams playing eleven-a-side
- 'Y' License: State Directors of Coaching, State Instructional Staff of Youth Modules, Club Directors of Coaching, Coaches of Grassroots/Select level teams
- Youth Module-Level 3: For Coaches working with players U-12—Grassroots
- Youth Module-Level 2: For Coaches working with players U-10—Grassroots
- Youth Module-Level 1: For Coaches working with players U-8---Grassroots

Note: Grassroots refers to the broad base entry level of soccer. This is the foundation of the talent pool.

AGE OF COMPETITIVE PLAY

- To promote a playing environment for preteen players that allows them to pursue playing opportunities that meet both their interest and ability level.
- To strongly discourage playing environments for where players under the age of twelve are forced to meet the same “competitive” demands as their older counterparts.

Recommendation:

- Players under the age of twelve should remain in developmental soccer programs where no league or match results are maintained.

STATE, REGIONAL, AND NATIONAL COMPETITION FOR U12'S

- To create a playing environment which is not detrimental to both players and adults; much of the negative behavior reported about parents occurs during preteen play.
- To eliminate any direct or indirect pressure exerted on coaches and pre-teen players to win at-all-costs.

Recommendations:

- In the absence of regional competition for U-9's and U10's, festivals or jamborees replace state cups.
- The status quo should be maintained with regard to U-11 and U-12 regional and national competitions.

ACTIVE COACHING

- To foster growth and development of our top level coaches, particularly those in administrative positions, such as club and state directors and national staff coaches by remaining active practitioners.
- To create opportunities from active coaching experience for our top-level coaches holding administrative positions to obtain essential and current knowledge pertinent to their craft.

Recommendations:

- Since many coaching directors in the United States are in their 20's and 30's and still developing their personal philosophy and pedagogy, it is imperative that active coaching environments be created for our top-level coaches maintaining these administrative positions.
- By creating active coaching environments for our top-level coaches in administrative positions, coaching directors can be seen as individuals who practice what they preach.

RISK MANAGEMENT

- In order to provide a safe and healthy playing environment for players and parents, all youth clubs need to ensure that their coaches are properly screened and certified before beginning their coaching duties.

Recommendations:

- All coaches involved in youth soccer should be subject to background checks and that coaching licenses be required as part of the risk management process.
- Each coach should be issued a registration card, certifying that they have completed the risk management process and have attained the required coaching certification.

PARENT EDUCATION

- There is no question that one of the problems haunting youth sports today is the inappropriate behavior of the parents of the participating athletes. There is a need in youth soccer, not only to address this issue, but also, to increase the knowledge base regarding our sport to these same individuals.

Recommendations:

- All youth soccer parents should be required to sign and comply with a Code of Conduct.
- It should be the responsibility of all youth soccer clubs and leagues to be proactive and develop parent education programs.

From: Gers1873@aol.com [mailto:Gers1873@aol.com]

Sent: Monday, January 28, 2002 12:12 PM

Subject: SSG resolution

Hello all,

What a wonderful weekend in Philadelphia! The SSG crusade is steadily working towards a positive conclusion in both the technical and political arenas.

Here's where we are.

The DOC's from Regions I, II and III have officially endorsed a program of play with 3v3 (U-5 and U-6), 4v4 (U-7 and U-8), 6v6 (U-9 and U-10) and 8v8 (U-11 and U-12) as the preferred progression. Goalkeepers are "officially" introduced at U-9.

Perry Alexander (Nat'l Coaching Committee Chair) has appointed Steve Hoffman (DOC, Cal-So) to represent Region IV on an ad hoc committee formed to bring the SSG issue to resolution. In short, we are region IV away from a "formal" national consensus on the playing numbers and would like to resolve that technicality as soon as this week.

Assuming the West is in agreement, our next step is to present our unified national position on small-sided games to the Presidents of regions I, III and IV in Atlanta. It would be the task of each state director of coaching to prep their respective presidents BEFORE that meeting. All we require is a formal endorsement of the "CONCEPT of Small-Sided Play" from each of the other three regions. Remember Region II has already taken this step. We do not need "mandates" from the regional level. If we can achieve this important objective in Atlanta, we can be very optimistic that the next step will happen very quickly.

Below, I have listed the state directors and significant others from each state. If there are any additions or changes to this list, please let me know as soon as possible as this list will accompany the national statement and proposal.

Thank you all for getting us to this point; I think the suitable analogy is being up 3-0 with 15 minutes left!

Tom

Region I

Connecticut Youth Soccer Association

Director of Coaching, c/o Kathy Zolad (ED)

Delaware Youth Soccer Association

Director of Coaching, Lew Atkinson

Eastern New York Youth Soccer Association

Director of Coaching, Alfonso Mondello

Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer Association

Director of Coaching, Mike Barr

SoccerMaine

Director of Coaching, Andy Biggs

Maryland Youth Soccer Association

Director of Coaching, Graham Ramsey

Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association

Director of Coaching, Dean Conway

New Hampshire Youth Soccer Association
ODP Coach, Ian Torney
Competitive Coach, Jorge Pardo
Coaching Advisor, Jeff Pill
New Jersey Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Rick Meana
New York West Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Glen Buckley
Pennsylvania West State Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Chris Brown
Soccer Rhode Island
Director of Coaching, Ed Bradley
Vermont Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Dave Seward
Virginia Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Gordon Miller
Coaching Director, Gary Allen
West Virginia Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Bob Gray

Region II

Illinois Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Ian Mulliner
Indiana Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Dan Kapsalis
Boys ODP, George Perry
Girls ODP, John Carter
Iowa Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Ian Bradley
Ass't Director of Coaching, Serge Lipovetsky
Kansas Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Eddie Henderson
Kentucky Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Fran Kulas
Michigan Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Don Gemmell
Recreation Director, Ted Lynch
Minnesota Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Ian Barker
Ass't Director, John Curtis
Missouri Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Denny Vaninger
Nebraska Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, TBA
North Dakota Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Bill Ashby
Ohio South Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Roby Stahl
Ohio Youth Soccer Association North
Director of Coaching, Tom Turner
Boys ODP, Tony Niccoli
Girls ODP, Sandor Jakab
South Dakota Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Ron Theisz
Wisconsin Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Jim Launder

Region III

Alabama Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, TBA (C/O Deter Walker)
Arkansas State Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Julian Owen
Florida Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Mike Strickler
Georgia Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Jacob Daniel
Ass't Director, Thomas Findlay
Louisiana Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Sam Snow
Mississippi Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Nigel Bolton
North Carolina Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Bill Furjanic
North Texas State Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Gary Williamson
Oklahoma Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Peter McGahey
South Carolina Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Van Taylor
South Texas Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Bobby Murphy
Tennessee State Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Manny Sanchez

Region IV

Alaska Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Colin Barton
Arizona Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Mark Lowe
California Youth Soccer Association North
Director of Coaching, Karl Dewazien
Coaching Education, Hervi Rualo
California Youth Soccer Association South
Director of Coaching, Steve Hoffman
Technical Director, Steve Sampson
Colorado Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Nate Shotts
Hawaii Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, George Kuntz
Idaho Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Tom Fleck
Montana Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Ric Plante
United States Youth Soccer Ass'n Nevada
Director of Coaching, Marc Hechter
New Mexico Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Bob Bigney
Oregon State Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Jimmy Conway
Recreation Director, Mike Smith
Utah Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Greg Maas

Washington Youth Soccer Association
Director Of Coaching, Dave Schumacher
Wyoming Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Kosta Tsandes

Subj: RE: SSG resolution
Date: 1/28/2002 4:42:02 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: mike@oregonyouthsoccer.org (Mike Smith)
Reply-to: mike@oregonyouthsoccer.org
To: Gers1873@aol.com
CC: coaching@csysa.org, Stevekick10@cs.com

Tom;

Sorry I missed you in San Diego before you left. Mick & Laurie filled in superbly in your absence, although there wasn't much of a meeting seeing as Smitty was on the phone most of the time getting calls about selling his house!

Anyway, as far as SSG go in region IV, I thought the west were the first to all agree and come to a consensus at last years breakout meeting in Las Vegas at the USYS Workshop. We have since had a couple of personnel changes, but I think we all pretty much agree. Count Oregon alongside anyway.

I thought Nate Shotts (Colorado) was our spokesperson Hoffy??? Get him on it and have him email everyone to agree and get back to him so he can alert Mr. Turner that region IV is a go!

Looking forward to seeing you all in Atlanta.

All the best,
Smithy

Subj: Final Region 1 document for presentation to State Pres
Date: 1/28/2002 8:06:29 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: GBuc200398

File: US Youth Soccer Region 1 Position Statements.doc (39936 bytes)
DL Time (TCP/IP): < 1 minute

Hi All,

Attached is the final document that conforms with the region 2, and 3 document from which Tom is preparing the combined document for presentation to the State Presidents in Atlanta.

There was some feeling amongst us, [myself included] that perhaps by allowing one player either way at the U10 U12 age groups that Politically it would of been an easier sell. However from the feedback I received, everyone was happy to go with Tom's Proposal of rigid numbers of 6v6 at U10 AND 8v8 at U12 Including GK's so that we are all on the same page, and we present a unified document supported by all four regions.

So read it over and lets wait for Tom's Document that he hopes to have completed by the end of the week for our perusal.

See you in Atlanta, or you never know I may be back in touch before if needed.

Glen

**US Youth Soccer Association
Region 1**

State Directors of Coaching

POSITION STATEMENTS

Region wide player development initiatives

Revised 01 / 27/ 02

The Region 1 States and their respective Directors of Coaching endorse this document.

Connecticut	Executive Director	Kathy Zolad
Delaware	Director of Coaching	Lewis Atkinson
New York East	Director of Coaching	Alfonso Mondello
New York West	Director of Coaching	Glen Buckley
Maine	Director of Coaching	Andy Biggs
Maryland	Director of Coaching	Graham Ramsey
Massachusetts	Director of Coaching	Dean Conway
New Hampshire	Director of Coaching	Ian Torney
New Jersey	Director of Coaching	Rick Meana
Pennsylvania East	Director of Coaching	Mike Barr
Pennsylvania West	Director of Coaching	Chris Brown
Rhode Island	Director of Coaching	Ed Bradley
Vermont	Director of Coaching	David Seward
Virginia	Director of Coaching	Gordon Miller
West Virginia	Director of Coaching	Bob Gray

Sue Ryan	Region 1 ODP	Girls Head Coach
Jeff Pill	Region 1 USSF	National Staff Coach
Jim Kelly	Region 1 coaching committee	representative

It is the intention of this group to present the contents of this document to the Region 1 State Presidents for their endorsement and approval. It is the hope of the group that each member state will work toward implementing these player and game development suggestions. Regions 2 and 3 have produced similar documents. Region 2's document was accepted by their Presidents and received a unanimous vote of approval. While we understand that logistical differences are apparent in each state, we would hope that each state would work toward implementing working models that follow these suggestions.

1.PLAYING AGE

Recreational and In house Programs.

We would suggest that Recreational and in house programs only accept registrants who are 5 [five] years of Age or will turn 5 during the season applied for. Thus playing in an Under 5 group. We also recommend that Children under the age of 8 [So includes U8] do not travel to play competitive games

2. PLAYING NUMBERS

Players U6

We believe that children under the age of six [so U5 and U6] should play games of 3V3 with no goalkeepers, on a field with appropriate dimensions.

Field size aprox 30 x 20

Players U8

We believe that children under the age of eight [so U7 and U8] should play games of 4V4with no goalkeepers, on a field with appropriate dimensions.

Field size aprox 40 x 30

Players U10 [including travel play]

We believe that children under the age of ten, [so U9 and U10] should play games of 6v6 including the GK, on a field with appropriate dimensions. **We recommend that ALL travel leagues in these age groups be contested for no points. No records, wins or losses are posted.** Field size 45,/ 50long x 35,/ 40 wide

Players U12

We believe that players under the age of 12, [so U11 and U12] should play games of 8V8 including goalkeepers. Field size 80/90long x 35/40 wide.

U6, U8

We would suggest that players NOT be placed in positions, nor should any attempt at formations be encouraged in these age groups.

Players U13 and above.

We would like to see all states work toward U13 being the onset of the 11V11 game.

3.COACH LICENSING

We believe that all states should encourage their leagues/Clubs to enforce coach-licensing requirements for all coaches that come into contact with children. The following recommendations for minimum licensing requirements should be implemented by December 31st 2004.

Competitive level coaches should hold a minimum USSF D License or equivalent NSCAA Regional Diploma.

Recreational or In house coaches should hold a minimum USSF E License if they are working with teenage age players or above and an age appropriate Youth Module if they are working with children

Coaches working at the “Premiere” or “Classic” level should hold a USSF C or NSCAA National Diploma. Ideally they should hold a USSF B or NSCAA Advanced National Diploma

The overall intent is to create minimum license requirements that are commensurate with levels of play.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

We believe all coaches should be subject to background checks, and that coach licensing be part of that process. We also believe that each coach should be presented with a card showing that they have completed the process and hold the required license.

5. FESTIVALS /JAMBOREES.

We believe that Soccer “festivals or Jamborees” should replace tournaments for all players U10 and younger. We also endorse and support the movement to prohibit U10’s from traveling to events that promote winning and losing and the awarding of trophies, other than participation awards.

6. STATE CUP

In keeping with regional and national competition, we believe that the U13 age group should be the youngest to compete for their respective state cup.

7. TOURNAMENT PLAY

We believe that excessive play at competitive tournaments is detrimental to individual growth and development, and can serve to reduce long- term motivation. Furthermore far to many club team schedules include so many tournaments and matches that no “off “ season is included.

We believe that players under 12 years of age should not play more than 100 minutes a day. Players older than 13 should not play more than 120 minutes per day.

We would like to recommend to tournament organizers and schedulers the following:

- Players are allowed ample rest between games.
- That all games are of the same length, including semi's and finals.
- Kick off times allow players a reasonable opportunity to prepare for competition.
- Rest and recovery, nutrition, warm up time and extreme environmental conditions should be considered.
- Consider the traveling distance of the team when scheduling their kick off time.
- We recommend that teams schedule no more than 4 tournaments per season.

8. PRACTICE TO GAME RATIOS

We recommend that planned seasonal scheduling should be developed to enhance player development and performance. A schedule that balances practice, games and rest and recovery is essential to maximize performance. To avoid fatigue and overuse injury, the entering of every tournament available is not recommended and can have a negative effect on basic skill and fitness development

We recommend the following game to practice ratios:

- U6 – U8 1 Practice to 1 game.
- U10 – U12 2or3 Practices to 1 game
- U14 - U19 3 or4 Practices to 1 game

In order for an athlete to improve technical, tactical and psychological performance there must be periods of low intensity activity or complete rest interspersed with periods of high intensity activity.

9. LEAGUE PLAY AND MATCHES PER YEAR.

We believe that the optimal playing and learning environment includes no more than two matches per week. [seven days]. Players should not compete in more than one match per day and no more than two full matches per weekend. Modified FIFA rules should apply, no re-entry per half for U14 and younger players, and no re-entry after substitution for the U15 and older age groups.

10. SNICKERS COMPETITION.

We believe that, in order to be consistent with the final stages of the competition, the National tournament should adopt a no re-entry rule for the state and regional level play. Also that an extra day of rest is included at the regional and national competition, between Semi and Final Games.

Subj: Re: SSG resolution
Date: 1/28/2002 4:45:36 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: ba22@cornell.edu (Berhane Andeberhan)
To: Gers1873@aol.com

Tom!

Congratulations on the success to this point with the SSG. I have been following with interest although I have reserved myself from direct participation in the discussions! I just wanted to express my sense of appreciation without any specific axe to grind! Keep up the good work for all of us!

Brhane

Subj: Re: SSG resolution
Date: 1/29/2002 11:25:52 AM Eastern Standard Time
From: PJMoksoccer
To: Gers1873

Tom,

Thanks for all your hard work with this. Let me know if there is anything else that you need from me prior to Atlanta.

Peter McGahey
Oklahoma Soccer Association

Subj: RE: SSG resolution
Date: 1/29/2002 11:30:07 AM Eastern Standard Time
From: coachdir@attbi.com (Dave Schumacher)
To: Gers1873@aol.com

Tom:

Thanks for the update. I'm concerned about one issue related to the proposal. That is the including U-5 in the program. Our original position I believe had U-6/7 playing 3 v 3 and its seems U-7 got bump up now with U-8 at 4 v 4.

I feel as we need to make a recommendation at U-5/6 to participate in a clinic format like Tony Waiter's One with One program.

If this program passes as proposed we will have people in Washington State thinking it is ok to have leagues at U-5 and U-6.

Is there anyway of changing what the entry level age and numbers or adding a position stating we believe that league playing should not begin for players until the age of six.

What do think?

Schu

Subj: Re: SMALL-SIDED GAMES
Date: 1/30/2002 9:49:07 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: bgorman@nscaa.com (Barry Gorman)
To: Gers1873@aol.com

Hello Tom,

Thanks for your kind words. The membership will have to put up with me for the year I suppose.

Regarding the small side game concept, I don't know if the Mike got around to clarifying the association's position on it. However, you can most certainly add my name to the supporting cast. As you know the NSCAA's National Course finishes with 6 vs. 6 and our Advance National Course finishes with 8 vs. 8. I hope this helps. Let me know if there is anything else I can do to assist you.

Best wishes.

BG

Date: 1/31/2002 2:17:22 PM Eastern Standard Time

From: mike@oregonyouthsoccer.org (Mike Smith)

Reply-to: mike@oregonyouthsoccer.org

Hey Coaches,

<< The DOC's from Regions I, II and III have officially endorsed a program of play with 3v3 (U-5 and U-6), 4v4 (U-7 and U-8), 6v6 (U-9 and U-10) and 8v8 (U-11 and U-12) as the preferred progression. Goalkeepers are "officially" introduced at U-9. This is not mandated, but recommended as being the best progression for player development. >>

You probably got the paragraph below from Tom this week and below is a follow-up email he sent me regarding how he knows some of you feel about small-sided games. Please check the list below and let me know if Tom has the correct opinion from your state. Remember this doesn't have to be exactly how you do it but you agree to the principle behind it. I thought we, as a group, had agreed on this in Las Vegas last year at the workshop.

Assuming the West is in agreement, Tom Turner's next step is to present our unified national position on small-sided games to the Presidents of regions I, III and IV in Atlanta. It would be the task of each state director of coaching to prep their respective presidents BEFORE that meeting. All we require is a formal endorsement of the "CONCEPT of Small-Sided Play" from each of the other three regions. Remember Region II has already taken this step. We do not need "mandates" from the regional level. If Tom can achieve this important objective in Atlanta, he is optimistic that the next step will happen very quickly.

Check below and get back to me stating whether you agree with the other 3 regions or not. If your answer is yes and it states yes below, then there is no need to reply. Please confirm if there is 'assume yes' or 'no idea' next to your state. Tom is trying to get this done by tomorrow (Friday) so he can start drafting his proposal.

Thanks.

Best wishes,

Mike

Mike Smith

Oregon Youth Soccer Association

(503) 626-4625

mike@oregonyouthsoccer.org

From Tom...

California Youth Soccer Association South

Director of Coaching, Steve Hoffman

Technical Director, Steve Sampson

YES

Colorado Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Nate Shotts
YES

Idaho Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Tom Fleck
YES

Montana Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Ric Plante
YES

New Mexico Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Bob Bigney
YES

Oregon State Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Jimmy Conway
Recreation Director, Mike Smith
YES

Washington Youth Soccer Association
Director Of Coaching, Dave Schumacher
YES

Utah Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Greg Maas
ASSUME YES

California Youth Soccer Association North
Director of Coaching, Karl Dewazien
Coaching Education, Hervi Rualo
ASSUME YES

Arizona Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Mark Lowe
ASSUME YES.

Wyoming Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Kosta Tsandes
NO IDEA

Alaska Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, Colin Barton
NO IDEA

United States Youth Soccer Ass'n Nevada
Director of Coaching, Marc Hechter
NO IDEA

Hawaii Youth Soccer Association
Director of Coaching, George Kuntz
NO IDEA

Subj: Re: (no subject)
Date: 2/2/2002 9:21:38 AM Eastern Standard Time
From: Johnlellinger
To: Gers1873

Tom:

No problem. I do not think it will kill anything you guys have pushed for. Jim Cosgrove is here in Costa Rica as well as three of the regional director's and we have spent some time discussing this. Flexibility makes it a guarantee sell job for them.

Jim feels that this makes for a much easier situation, also I am working on Dan Flynn to allow coaches who take the youth modules over a period of years to receive their national youth license once they have completed all the modules. I tried to convince Bobby Howe of this way back when. Your thoughts on that idea--you can still give the course as a complete course, but once again you have some flexibility within the states/region.

Take care—John

Date: 2/3/2002 10:28:35 AM Eastern Standard Time
From: Johnlellinger
To: Gers1873

Tom

I would not worry about the proposal if it is 4-5-7-9 with options for 3-4-6-8 or 3-4-6-8 it is all good. Again, if you have Jim Cosgrove saying that there needs to be some flexibility with the numbers and he is the voice of the states politically and you have Chris Brown who is here and he is DOC of West-Penn and he agrees with the higher numbers I do not foresee any problems.

The USSF document is out and as I said earlier we have to cover parameters--if the states vote for the lower playing numbers--that is great, because they are covered in the document.

Take care—John

Date: 2/1/2002 11:48:45 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: Johnlellinger
To: Gers1873

Tom:

I believe the us-soccer statement is coming out before the workshop. April has sent her reply to Tom King's memo.

As far as the numbers go for U10 and U12, it will read U10--7v7 (option 6v6)/U12--9v9 (option 8v8). I have talked with many and we are going to allow some flexibility in our statement. April agreed with these numbers. She said they were consistent with her previous document.

See you in Atlanta---John

Subj: RE: National Proposal
Date: 2/7/2002 2:22:33 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: coachdir@attbi.com (Dave Schumacher)
To: Gers1873@aol.com

Tom:

The reason for combining is the entry-level age of the player. I believe most state begin at U-6 or U-7, therefore this first experience would be at 3v3 which we all agree is better for both player and coach. If we begin the U-7 at 4v4 (first year) then they miss out on that year. This might even be more important for the coach than the player. At 4v4, there is the temptation of the coach to introduce positions. Hopefully, a year of 3v3 might help the new coach avoid this.

Let me know your thoughts.

Schu

Subj: Re: National Proposal
Date: 2/7/2002 12:43:30 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: PJMoksoccer
To: Gers1873

Tom,

I hope that all is well. I am looking forward to meeting you in Atlanta. Thanks for all your hard work with this proposal. Let me give you an update from Oklahoma.

I presented my version (U5 no games, U6-U8 4v4, U9-U10 7v7, U11-U12 9v9, & U13 and up 11v11) of the extended small-sided game format at our annual workshop. The ensuing discussion was shocking to me. Not one voice of concern was raised over the 9v9 for U11-U12 age group, the entire conversation centered on...U5. We had a two-hour discussion about why 4 year olds need two practices per week and then a game on Saturday, this included comments of support from a professional coach here in Oklahoma. You can only imagine my reaction to these statements. So we in Oklahoma have formed a committee to go over the proposal and propose a final version for a vote at the May meeting. We are trying to move ahead. Many great plans can get killed in committee. But I am optimistic. This leads me to my concern about the National Proposal. Before I give you my concern. Let me say that my president and I are on board with the concept of extending small- sided games. Oklahoma will not stand in the way of positive progress. But I think, that regarding our youngest players, U5 - 4 year olds, the proposal is dangerously vague. These players don't need formal games. They need fun activity days to introduce them to the game. You know the argument. Basically, I think that we need to take a firmer stance regarding players this age. Because, if we don't the administrators will fill-in the vacuum and we'll have these players playing games too early. Please let me know your thoughts.

Thanks again for your time. I have been on my soap box for too long. Sorry.

Speak to you soon,
Peter

Subj: RE: National Proposal
Date: 2/7/2002 2:23:36 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: mstrickler@fysa.com (Mike Strickler)

Tom,

I agree with the goal. I am uncomfortable in the way we are implementing it however based upon my past experience. When I first brought this to the board I was crucified with all the typical reasons we can't implement small-sided games. I was asked to go back and rework the proposal. Fortunately I got a second bite of the apple and was able to go back the next day with a proposal that phased the program in over three years. I agree we want the final goal but would hate to see it fail like the 4v4 did several years ago. I know phasing it in doesn't necessarily help us now and I went through that when I reworked my proposal as it left my oldest son who is 8 out of it and I see where the change should have been made. Our

goal is to get this passed and I think phasing it in takes a lot out of the argument. I know phasing it in was discussed in Philly and I thought this would be our best tact. This was my experience in getting it passed and I wanted to share it.

Subj:
Date: 2/7/2002 2:58:51 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: gekuntz@uci.edu (George Kuntz)
Reply-to: gekuntz@uci.edu
To: Gers1873@aol.com

Tom:

Thank you on my behalf for continuing to represent the state directors as our voice. It is about time we had more leadership as a group. In your proposal you didn't mention goalkeepers after the age of nine. It is assumed that there will be goalkeepers when the players are playing 6v6 and up.

The definition of development is dynamic as is the constant reworking of how children retain information and learn. I look forward to continued nuances that will help in the growth , learning, and retention of soccer information for kids.

Sincerely,

George Kuntz
Men's Soccer Head Coach
University of California, Irvine

-----Original Message-----

From: Gers1873@aol.com [mailto:Gers1873@aol.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 07, 2002 2:56 PM
To: Mike Strickler
Subject: Re: National Proposal

Hi Mike,

I (and probably everyone else) is with you on this! When it goes to the national Board, any proposal would include a phase-in period.

See you in Georgia,

Tom

Subj: RE: National Proposal
Date: 2/7/2002 2:44:57 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: AllenG@SEC.GOV (Allen, Gary R.)

Mike:

Remember that the arguments you are delineating are merely procedural arguments. There is no substantive basis for them. The concept of phasing in is a red herring designed to keep the status quo for as long as possible.

The numbers of fields and players are not going to change. What needs to be done administratively can be done in 6 months. Remember, all that is being put forth in Atlanta is backing the concept. Implementation can accommodate many different scenarios. Certainly, we are at least formally putting administrators on notice that change is in the air.

Gary

Subj: Re: National Proposal
Date: 2/7/2002 2:52:13 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: MYSADOC

In a message dated 2/7/2002 1:23:36 PM Central Standard Time, mstrickler@fysa.com writes:

<< Our goal is to get this passed and I think phasing it in takes a lot out of the argument. >>

You know, I introduced small-sided into Arkansas in the early 90's and made it my first job when I joined MYSA in 1998. Forgive me for feeling tired and despondent that we are still, 10 years later, trying to get an agreement and still want time to phase things in. No disrespect to you Mike I understand the issues, I've been through them enough times. The problem is they also keep re-igniting as small fires in parts of the states because we have no National or Regional mandate to run on. When are we going to bite the bullet? Making the change over is entirely doable if it is pre-planned and prepared for.

I guess I will look forward to another mind numbing discussion on the introduction of SSG in Atlanta this year.

Yours frustrated in Mississippi,
Nigel Boulton
MYSA

PS Honestly - I'll stay positive and support the move but let's MOVE!!

Subj: RE: National Proposal
Date: 2/7/2002 3:54:51 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: coachsnow@lsa-soccer.org (Sam Snow)

Well I'm on board with Nigel, let's not delay. As Gary has stated many of the remaining arguments are merely procedural. So let's arrive in Atlanta with some solutions to those procedural problems; i.e., the lay out of fields, need for more goals, perceived need for more coaches, and change in roster size, etc. There are a lot of great minds on this distribution list; surely we can come up with solutions. Let's share some of those ideas before we arrive in Atlanta, so that we can make efficacious use of our time together.

Sam Snow
Director of Coaching
Louisiana Soccer Association