



FAQ's –Removing Standings-

Q- Is LTPD killing Competition?

NO It is not! It is about creating an environment where every child can learn the skills they need to achieve success in the game, and then allowing them to apply these skills in competitive formats that are age appropriate.

Q- Where else in the world is this done?

Germany, Spain, Japan and Denmark have all been doing this. The English FA is also phasing this in.

Q- Why would we remove standings at U12 and below?

Games are still won and lost and the game itself provides the competition platform. This will make it easier for coaches to provide a 'fear free' playing environment, and promote players to try their skills in a game setting without being preoccupied with failing and the 'win at all costs mentality'.



This Issue:

- BC Soccer Stance –Standings- Competition in Early Stages
- FAQ's Removing Standings
- Stage 1-3 Overview
- Club Development Manuals

BC Soccer supports CSA Recommendations

With all of the talk recently about the recording and posting of standings for U12 and below we would like to remind you of the recommendations of the Canadian Soccer Association and LTPD. BC Soccer supports the recommendation put forth by the Canadian Soccer Association. To assist with the understanding of these recommendations, please see the FAQ and read below.

Competition in the early stages of LTPD

One element of Long-Term Player Development (LTPD) that frequently stirs controversy is the recommendation to eliminate league standings at U12 and below. The controversy arises from the popular claim that standings, as well as league championships and trophies at these early ages, are essential to motivating young players to “compete”.

The elimination of standings in children’s leagues is not intended to reduce the intensity of competition among players in a game situation. LTPD recognizes that playing with competitive commitment and intensity is necessary to advance player development in ball technique, decision making, mental concentration, and other skills and capacities.

However, experience shows us that young children will compete even the absences of league standings. All young players understand that soccer is a game for scoring goals and “winning.”

Simple observation of children’s soccer around the world shows that the absence of a trophy or league title does nothing to diminish each player’s desire to compete each time they step onto the soccer pitch for a match.

The important difference is that the elimination of standings at U12 and below diminishes the incentive for coaches at these levels to play to “win the league” because they are chasing a trophy and a league title at the end of the season. It also reduces pressure from parents to win, to perform, and to avoid mistakes.

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Why is this distinction important?

When coaches in children's leagues chase trophies and titles, and when parents criticize and pressure their children, poor player development is the most frequent result. Coaches tend to play only their strongest players, leave their "weak" players on the bench, specialize players in positions prematurely, use game tactics aimed solely at guaranteeing a win (e.g. kicking the ball down the field, not trying to create controlled buildup), and promoting a general attitude of "don't take chances – don't experiment with your skills or decisions – just play safe by kicking the ball far and away."

These problems are more easily addressed in the absence of league standings. Coaches of children's teams are easily able to justify equal playing time for all players, experiment with positions and field alignments, and promote a general willingness among players to try their skills in a game setting without being preoccupied with failing their teammates and the overall effort to "win the league."

When standings are eliminated in children's soccer at U12 and below, games are still won and lost, and competition still takes place among the players. However, it is now far easier for coaches to pursue a broad-based approach to player development rather than a narrow view of "we must win three points today or we cannot challenge for the league title."

In this light, it should be clear that competition remains at the centre of the LTPD approach. Less skilled players are assured more playing time in the competitive environment so they can develop their competition skills, and all players gain experience in a variety of positions. Most importantly and far more subtly, all players are encouraged to practice and experiment with their skills in a competition environment without fear of making a mistake that could cost a league result.

Measured in the context of the physiological, emotional and mental developments that take place during childhood, it is essential that players be permitted and even encouraged to make mistakes. This is the only way they can achieve the practice required to refine their ball control and decision making skills in a competitive setting.

Some coaches will always want to win at all costs, regardless of whether or not there are league standings. This is an unfortunate reality of community children's sport. However, the LTPD approach to competition at U12 and below provides the best overall incentive for coaches and players to focus on broad-based player development instead of a "win at all costs" approach.



FAQ's –Removing Standings-

Q- Don't most parents and kids want standings?

Yes many parents and kids want standings. But that approach, while what parents know and are familiar with, has clearly not led to healthy results. We have seen a major increase in dropout rates in both recreational and competitive soccer. We are simply not developing the majority of those kids who enjoy and actually have a passion and a skill for this sport.

Q- Don't kids need to learn that competition is part of life?

*Of course competition is part of life. Players will be competing against each other at every practise and each game from 6 years of age. But we are talking about soccer at the **early ages** where we will de-emphasize standings. There will be plenty of competition and plenty of games at the young ages; we just won't focus on the results as our key indicator of success at these early stages.*

Q- What would you say to parents/people that are continually against the removing of standings?

We would encourage them to read all LTPD resources available to them (see next page); to get educated on LTPD and its benefits. LTPD provides a more responsible pathway, it provides a roadmap for appropriate and specific age appropriate development and more importantly it keeps our young children active through sport and wellness.

Please see the overview of Stages 1-3 of LTPD, where the recommendations of the Canadian Soccer Association and of Long Term Player Development. BC Soccer is in full support of these recommendations.

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STAGE 1: Active Start U4-U6 Female and Male "FIRST KICKS"

Soccer contributes to the well-being of children by engaging them in the sport while teaching them basic movements. At this introductory level, the objective is to get moving and to keep active.

Where: Home, daycare, schools, clubs, community, parks and recreation centres.
Why: Provide early opportunities for children to learn basic soccer elements.
Who: Technical leaders, parent coaches, parents, educators, caregivers.
Coaching: Training in Physical Literacy (CSA Program).

- **Physical** – Provide the environment for learning proper fundamental movement skills such as running, jumping, twisting, kicking, throwing and catching.
- **Technical** – The player and the ball: Running with the ball, dribbling, controlling, kicking and shooting.
- **Tactical** – None.
- **Mental** – Fun, fascination, and passion for play.

Game Structure:

No competitive games – adult and child play together informally.

Recommended training times:

30 to 45 minutes.

Season Length:

4 to 16 weeks Winter/Spring/Summer, indoor and/or outdoor.

Recommendations:

- Player success is encouraged. While the adult should challenge the child player, they should allow the child to "score" goals and "beat" the adult opponent.
- Adult discontinues play when the child has lost interest.

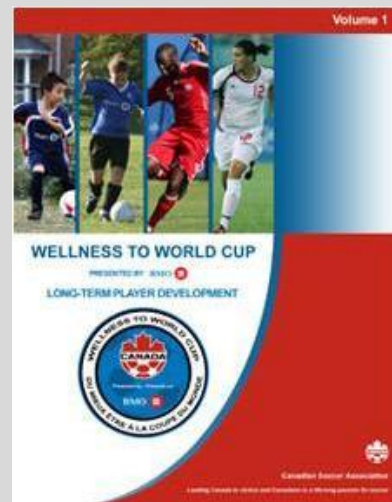


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LTPD Resources

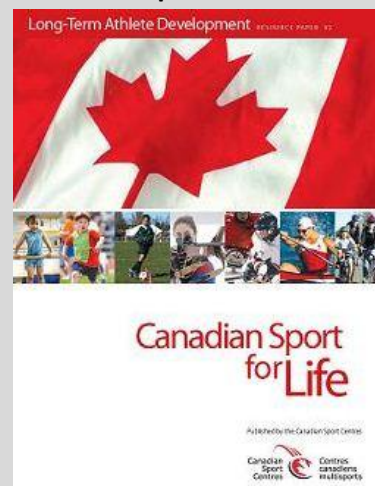
LTPD Volume 1



LTPD Brochure



Canadian Sport for Life LTAD





STAGE 2: FUNDamentals

U6-U8 Female and U6-U9 Male
 "FUN WITH THE BALL"



At this stage, individual player development is paramount. Coaches and teachers should create a stimulating learning environment where the atmosphere is "Freedom and Fun."

Where: Home, schools, clubs.
Why: Provide opportunities for children to learn basic soccer elements.
Who: Physical education teacher, parent coach, team coach, club head coach.
Coaching: Training in Physical Literacy (CSA Program).

- **Physical** – Develop the ABCs of movement: agility, balance, co-ordination and speed, as well as running, jumping, twisting, kicking, throwing and catching.
- **Technical** – Movement exercises/games designed to promote a feel for the ball: gaining ball control in receiving passes, dribbling, passing less than 25m, kicking the ball forward, and shooting on goal.
- **Tactical** – Small children are egocentric – playing the ball is the most important objective. However, they now need to be introduced to co-operation between players. They gain understanding of the game through playing situations.
- **Mental** – Basic awareness of environment to build game intelligence and decision making.

Game Structure: Ranges from 3v3 to 5v5.

Game Format	Squad Size	Game duration	Ball Size	FIELD SIZES		GOAL SIZES no larger than
				Min/Max width	Min/Max length	
3 v 3 *	Max 6	2 x 15 min.	3/4	18 to 22m	25 to 30m	5ft1.52m X 8ft2.44m
4 v 4 *	Max 8	2 x 15 min.	3/4	20 to 25m	30 to 38m	5ft1.52m X 8ft2.44m
5 v 5 *	Max 10	2 x 15 min.	3/4	25 to 30m	30 to 38m	5ft1.52m X 8ft2.44m

*With or without goalkeeper - when no goalkeeper, reduce the goal size.

Recommended training times: 30 to 45 minutes.

Season Length: 12 to 20 weeks, indoor and/or outdoor.

Recommendations:

- No league standings – jamboree format – emphasis is on FUN.
- Players and game formats are organized to support the basic playing experiences.
- All players play equal time and try all team positions, including goal keeping.
- Equal time should be allotted to practice and games.



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STAGE 3: Learning to Train

U8-U11 Female / U9-U12 Male
 "THE GOLDEN AGE OF LEARNING"

The effect of the role-model is very important at this stage. Children begin to identify with famous players and successful teams, and they want to learn imaginative skills. Skill demonstration is very important, and the players learn best by "doing." Players move from self-centered to self-critical, and they have a high stimulation level during basic skills training.

This is also an important time to teach basic principles of play and to establish a training ethic and discipline. Repetitions are important to develop technical excellence, but creating a fun and challenging environment is still essential for stimulating learning.

Where: Clubs, district/regional development centers, schools.
Why: Player development and talent identification.
Who: Coaches, technical leaders, physical education teachers.
Coaching: Training in Physical Literacy (CSA Program).

- **Physical** – This is an optimal window for trainability of speed, flexibility and skills.
- **Technical** – Building a greater repertoire of soccer related movements; technical skills are developed in training and within the context of basic soccer games.
- **Tactical** – Developing environment awareness and encouraging decision making; simple combinations, marking and running into space.
- **Mental** – Golden age of learning; intrinsic motivation is developed by the Fun and Enjoyment that foster desire to play; imagination, creativity, increased demands, discipline.



Game Structure: Ranges from 6v6 to 8v8.

Game Format	Squad Size	Game duration	Ball Size	FIELD SIZES		GOAL SIZES no larger than
				Min/Max width	Min/Max length	
6 v 6	Ideal 8/M ax 10	2 x 25 min.	3/4	30 to 35m	40 to 55m	6ft1.83m X 14ft4.27m
7 v 7	Ideal 9/M ax 12	2 x 25 min.	4	30 to 38m	40 to 55m	6ft1.83m X 16ft4.88m
8 v 8	Ideal 11/M ax 14	2 x 30 min.	4	42 to 55m	60 to 75m	6ft1.83m X 18ft5.49m

Recommended training times: 45 to 70 minutes.

Season Length: 16 to 20 weeks, indoor and/or outdoor.

Recommendations:

- Small leagues provide game fixtures, but no league standings are recorded.
- Players and game formats are organized to support the basic playing experiences.
- All players play equal time and try all team positions, including goal keeping.
- The game structure progresses between ages from simple to more complex.
- The training to competition ratio should be 2 to 3 training sessions for every game.



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Club Development Manuals

Club Development Manuals have been created to provide member clubs within British Columbia a road map to responsible and beneficial age appropriate development programming for stage 3 of LTPD. These Club Development Manuals can be found on our BC Soccer Website. (Stage 1 and 2 Manual will be available shortly)

The GK Club Development Manuals were also created to aid our member clubs create and deliver responsible, beneficial age appropriate development programming for positional specific Goalkeeping position with in Stages 1-3 and 4-7.

- [Small Sided \(Stage 3\) Club Development Manual](#)
- [Goalkeeping Club Development Manual Stages 1-3](#)
- [Goalkeeping Club Development Manual Stages 4-7](#)

Next Issue:

Physical Literacy

- Fundamental Skills
- Four Activity Environments
- Fundamental Skills and Related Sport Opportunities
- Fundamental Skills to Child Development



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