

SHAPING THE GAME – MATCH & FESTIVAL GUIDELINES

Continuum Rules

- A match is made up of two halves, with half-time lasting not less than 2 minutes.
- Matches are limited to the following durations:
 - Under 7 and Under 8:
 - Fixture (2 Clubs are present): 10 minutes each way, 1 game = 20 minutes
 - Fixture (3 are present): 7 minutes each way, 2 games = 28 minutes
 - Festival: 5 minutes each way, maximum of 5 games = 50 minutes (total playing time per team)
 - (b) Under 9:
 - Fixture (2 Clubs or Schools are present): 15 minutes each way, 1 game = 30 minutes
 - Fixture (3 Clubs or Schools are present): 10 minutes each way, 2 games = 40 minutes
 - Festival: 6 minutes each way, maximum of 5 games = 60 minutes (total playing time)
- Fixtures, coaching and training sessions (including time devoted to match play) must last no longer than the following:
 - (a) Under 7 and Under 8: 60 minutes;
 - (b) Under 9 : 90 minutes

Festival /Club Fixture Guidelines

Under 7

Clubs/CBs organising festivals may sometimes charge for team entries. At Under 7 it is recommended – to increase and encourage participation – that a club may enter as many teams as possible, but there should only be **one entry fee per club** regardless of number of teams. .

As the number of players in each team numbers four, there is potential for each “club” fixture to take a festival approach. The aim of the pilot and of 4-a-side is to encourage greater handling, support, evasion and tagging skills and to maximise involvement.

Clubs should be encouraged to involve all available players by increasing the number of pitches (outlined above) and teams involved. For example a club with 20 players could bring 4 or 5 teams. At Under 7 it makes little difference if teams from the same club play each other.

The referee should also be a coach **for both sides** and negate the necessity to have a coach from either team on the pitch. Children should be encouraged to explore and discover for themselves with a little guidance from the referee-coach. Often other adults on the pitch (although well meaning), and advice from the touchline, can be a distraction and prevent children from making their own decisions – an important part of their learning and development. **In line with this all feedback and comment should be positive and constructive.**

As the referee is also acting as a coach it is not entirely necessary to have a coach from each club in attendance for each game. Parents can be utilised to report back on the team and individual performance

SHAPING THE GAME – MATCH & FESTIVAL GUIDELINES

where necessary. By rotating pitches/matches it may be possible for each coach to see all the players from their club.

Under 9

Where clubs have 14+ players it is possible to play two plus fixtures, or if one club has two teams and another club has one, a three club format could be used. It is important, however, that each player is provided with the opportunity to develop and 'A' and 'B' teams should be actively discouraged. **The building of confidence and self-esteem in children is of paramount importance and “categorizing” children at such a young age is not conducive to achieving that objective.**