



New HFG Soccer Clinic

- For Under 5 and Under 6 CO-ED Age Groups

We are...

- Changing the Game Format!
- Increasing touches on the ball!
- Increasing our players' chances to score more goals!
- Matching up players against like competition!
- Increasing the Fun!





Problems with last year's 7 versus 7 Game Format

- 1 ball for 14 players is not a good ratio. Our youngest players need to have as many touches on the ball as possible.
- 1 or 2 dominate players have the ball for a majority of the game. What about the other 12 players and their confidence?
- Major bunching occurs around the ball, with the most physical player usually winning the ball.
- Why play an older simulated match when less developed, younger players may touch the ball 3 times or less in a game? See Slide on Relative Age Effect (RAE).
- Children of this age can only deal with a few things at a time.
- Children become distracted when not busy. See them picking grass, watching things outside of the game.



This Year's New 3 versus 3 Scrimmage Format

- 3 versus 3 Scrimmage Format (Coaches can modify this based on talent and available players, ie. 4v4, 4v3, 3v2...).
- Fields (approximately 60% Smaller than last year).
- Smaller player configurations allows for early development and understanding of basic soccer positioning concepts – 3 versus 3 teaches support triangles, while 4 versus 4 teaches diamonds.
- Teams split into 2 squads of approximately 6 players (Advanced/Beginner) first by Relative Age Effect (RAE) then by soccer ability.
- Two simultaneous 40 min. scrimmages each week, approximately 1 hour at the field.
- Free Substitutions - substitutions can happen at any time during the game.
- No Goalkeepers - the emphasis is on ball control and increasing scoring opportunities. Keepers in most games at this level are not “in the game” and often idle and become disinterested.



Summary Chart

| Aspect of the Game | Last Year's 7 vs 7 Format | This Year's 3 vs 3 Format |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| Ball to Player Ratio | 1 ball to 14 players | 1 ball to 6 players |
| Players to Coaches (on the field) | 1 coach to 7 players | 1 coach to 3 players |
| Touches on the Ball (during game) | Limited primarily to only a few dominate and more physical players | Increases all players' chances to interact with the ball |
| Goal Scoring | Limited primarily to only a few dominate and more physical players | Increases all players' chances to score goals |
| Quality of Competition | Greatest to least of talent and ability all play together | Groups players of like-ability and age together |
| Bunching the Ball | Happens Constantly | Minimized with less players on the field |
| Time at the Field | About 1.5 hours | Less than 1 hour |



Relative Age Effect (RAE)




- US Soccer divides players by 12 month age groups or bands
- This creates a large season of birth distribution bias in competitive soccer
- Fewer expert soccer players born between May and August than between September and December under current youth soccer recreation format.
- Being 12 months younger than a teammate as an adult offers little or no disadvantage. However, for a 7 year old, being almost a year younger than their peers presents a great challenge. That year represents a large proportion of their life.
- The one-year age band was designed to reduce bias toward younger players. However, using a whole year age band underestimates differences that exist among children within that year.
- Studies show that providing smaller game formats in shorter age bands at the clinic level increases player ability, keeps players interested in the game longer and allows everyone to have fun.

Source: Robert R. Horn, Ph.D. & Michelle Okurura, NSCAA Soccer Journal March-April 2011



Small-Sided Soccer Endorsements

The HFG Clinic Academy's use of small-sided scrimmage approach is supported by the following organizations:

- Lasers Soccer Club 
- DC United 
- Erin Konheim Soccer Academy 
- U.S. Youth Soccer
- National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA)
- U.S. Soccer Federation