



**US YOUTH  
SOCCER**®

*The Game for All Kids!*®



is a non-profit and educational organization whose mission is to foster the mental, physical and emotional growth and development of America's youth through the sport of soccer at all levels and age of competition.



## ***US Youth Soccer...by the numbers***

- The largest youth sports organization in the country
- 3.2 million players from ages 5-19
- Nearly 900,000 coaches, volunteers, referees and administrators
- 200,000 teams
- Over 6,000 clubs and leagues
- 55 State Associations (All 50 states plus 5 larger states are divided –California, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania & Texas)
- Programs are offered for recreational, competitive, elite and special needs players; coaching education; and for promoting soccer in underserved areas.



## ***What is Soccer Start?***

- Soccer Start is designed to introduce the sport of soccer to youngsters living in communities not yet served by existing clubs and leagues.
- Focused on making soccer available to lower-income children in underserved communities, Soccer Start provides soccer training and administrative guidance to players and organizations who might otherwise not be exposed to the sport.
- Soccer Start also helps new programs find the funding and equipment to begin and then to expand their activities. In the past several years, US Youth Soccer has donated hundreds of thousands of dollars in financial and material support to programs across the United States.





## ***Why do we need a Soccer Start Program?***

Soccer is the fastest growing sport in the United States. It has reached into communities from coast to coast and from north to south. Yet, soccer has not always served inner city and rural communities and all economic and ethnic groups. In order to insure that every child has the opportunity to play our beautiful game, US Youth Soccer founded the ***Soccer Start*** program.



## ***Goals of Soccer Start***

- To reach out to children in underserved and socio-economically disadvantaged places in order to offer them an ongoing program of positive sports activities through soccer.
- To increase participants self-esteem through participation in an organized and supportive program of team activities.
- To build positive social and life skills.
- To provide important exercise and increase awareness of one's own health through sports.
- To provide the players with positive, cooperative and enjoyable after school and spare time activities



## ***Creating Your Own Program***

Soccer Start programs are run locally by existing clubs and leagues, by Boys and Girls Clubs and YMCA's, by neighborhood houses and Parks and Recreation Departments. There is no "one size fits all" model for Soccer Start.

Each program starts differently and is created locally to meet the needs and capabilities of the organization and of the players. Programs in the nation's biggest cities may include thousands of children, and yet there are hundreds of small programs that focus on one or two teams, one group of kids in a single neighborhood house, or one corner of a rural farming community.

Programs may last as little as a few weeks in the fall to as much as full seasons in more than one part of the year. Many programs adopt traditional soccer rules with full-sized fields and full-length games while other choose to introduce soccer through "small-sided games" on smaller fields. The choices about how to begin are as varied as the places in which they begin. Soccer Start can help your community decide on how to get started by providing written information and hands-on technical assistance.



## ***The First Steps***

- Create local awareness of your efforts to begin a Soccer Start program.
- Talk to US Youth Soccer and your State Association for written and programmatic support.
- Seek out other Soccer Start programs near you and try to learn what worked for them. Often, Soccer Start programs in the same state have a lot in common.
- Identify a local coordinator, and if possible, a visible role model (well-known soccer person such a professional player, a college coach, even older players like high school or college from your community or nearby communities.
- Find a coaching instructor.
- Identify all the adult administrative functions you will need and develop a volunteer base, as necessary, to fill those functions.



## ***The First Steps Continued***

- **Seek community leadership support first from existing soccer organizations and programs, but also from: Boys and Girls Clubs; Neighborhood Centers; Police Athletic Leagues; YMCA/YWCA; Housing Authorities; Park and Recreation Departments; High School and College Service Organizations; Churches.**
- **Ask for help from local and State soccer organizations: In setting up basic organizational structures from legal formation to functions needed on your start-up Board of Directors; In finding coaches, especially youth coaches; In finding a trainer for your new coaches; In setting up equipment exchanges; In helping with scheduling questions.**
- **Seek community-based financial support from: service organizations such as Kiwanis and Rotary; Churches; Neighborhood small business such as restaurants, record stores, clothing outlets, sports stores; Service providers such as neighborhood doctors; Any other business which is active in the Soccer Start neighborhood-it is in their interest to help.**
- **Identify your equipment and supply needs and look for sources to get them donated or to acquire them at the lowest cost to you. Ask existing organizations where they get there equipment and see if you can set up a way to acquire used equipment from them.**
- **Develop instruction agendas and plans of action for: Administrators, Coaches, Referees.**



# *Implementation*

In order to promote the Soccer Start program at the local levels and gain community involvement and awareness, certain equipment, services and financial support is needed. Some of these needs are:

- Leadership, high-profile spokespersons and role models
- Local organization, implementation and administration through volunteer coordinators
- Caring volunteers willing to commit sufficient time to the program as referees, coaches, managers, drivers and chaperons
- Equipment
- Fields or open playing areas
- Transportation
- Corporate, private and community financial support



# ***Support Network***

- Local leadership, organizers and soccer clubs and leagues
- State association Soccer Start Committee representative or coordinator
- State association Soccer Start/Recreation Representative to the state Board of Directors
- US Youth Soccer / Soccer Start Committee and regional representatives
- Distribution of program materials and educational opportunities
- US Youth Soccer website ([www.usyouthsoccer.org](http://www.usyouthsoccer.org))
- US Youth Soccer national staff



## ***Costs Involved***

- The cost of participation varies depending upon your registration fees, insurance premiums and uniform and equipment costs.
- At all times, cost should be kept to a minimum for all possible participants.
- Grants are available through US Youth Soccer and the US Soccer Federation Foundation.
- There are other philanthropic entities, such as the Shriners, which offer assistance. Research other avenues of funding such as local, state and federal government grants and community groups such as the Lions Clubs, Rotary Clubs, Chambers of Commerce, etc.
- Approach local retailers, companies or corporations for cash or in-kind donations.





## ***Who Do I Contact in My Area?***

**Go to**

**[www.USYouthSoccer.org](http://www.USYouthSoccer.org)**

**for contact information.**





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