

STREET SOCCER

Street soccer, pick-up game, sandlot soccer or a kick-about whatever title you give to the format the idea is to give the game of soccer back to the players. Past generations learned to play the game on their own with other kids in the neighborhood or at school in these kid organized games. Today youth sports are overly adult controlled and influenced. It's difficult today for youngsters to have a pick-up game since the streets have too many cars, the sandlot now has a mini-mall on it and parents are reluctant, with good cause, to let their child go blocks away from home on Saturday to play in a game on his or her own.

Street soccer is a way for soccer clubs to give the game back to the players in the community. Once a week, or whatever frequency fits the circumstances the best, a club can have organized spontaneity. The club will provide the fields and supervision. Adults will be on site for safety and general supervision, but otherwise it is all up to the players to organize the games.

The adults should NOT coach, cheer, criticize, referee or in any other way involve themselves in the game. The best bet for parents is to drop off their child, go run some errands, and then come back to pick up your child an hour or two later.

The coaches are on site NOT to coach, but to supervise, be on hand for any serious injuries and any severe discipline problems. Additionally the coaches are there to provide the game equipment and to let the players know when each game segment starts and stops.

Street soccer provides the possibility of mixing playing levels, genders and age groups. It can be used to assist with player development, player identification and player selection. Mostly it is a chance for players to play the game for the FUN of the game. Street soccer brings together children, parents, coaches and volunteers to a soccer celebration, regardless of ethnic or cultural backgrounds. Soccer is the common language and the soccer ground is an arena for social inclusion.

Referees are not needed, since these rules are meant to teach self-responsibility and fair play, with the implied agenda of improving the player's competences in non-violent communication and conflict resolution.

Here is a possible set up for street soccer:

- ☆ 4-8 minute match depending upon total number of players
- ☆ 4 matches in an hour ... give sufficient time between matches for water and to get to the next field for the next match
- ☆ 4 vs. 4 without goalkeepers or 5 vs. 5 with goalkeepers
- ☆ Use cones for the corners of the field and corner flags for the goals, have training bibs at each field
- ☆ Each player is given a number
- ☆ Reset the teams after each match
- ☆ The players make the subs

- ☆ The players solve disputes
- ☆ The coach keeps time
- ☆ The coach records the points for all of the players

POINTS

Win	= 3
Draw	= 1
Loss	= 0
Goal	= 1
Shutout	= 1
Assist	= 1
Shutout	= 1
MVP	= 1

Players must report *their* points at the end of the match.

“Play has become spectacle, with few protagonists and many spectators, soccer for watching. And that spectacle has become one of the most profitable businesses in the world, organized not for play but rather to impede it. The technocracy of professional sport has managed to impose soccer of lightning speed and brute strength, a soccer that negates joy, kills fantasy and outlaws daring. Luckily, on the field you can still see, even if only once in a long while, some insolent rascal who sets aside the script and commits the blunder of dribbling past the entire opposing side, the referee and the crowds in the stands, all for the carnal delight of embracing the forbidden adventure of freedom.”

Eduardo Galeano

A small field with a small number of players; this means the action will be constant and quick. Nowhere else do such at once elementary and highly differentiated processes take place in so small an area and with such simple means.

Uniform clothing is not a requirement to play in a pick-up game.



What is "Street Soccer"...

- Soccer is the undisputed # 1 game in the world and the primary way kids around the world developed their ball skills was through "street soccer". World-class players came out of this environment. Most pro players did not see a coach or join a club until the age of 12.
- Traditionally, kids played in open spaces, schoolyards, on the street, or anywhere they could put together a field. The kids directed this free play. The kids, with little input from adults, carried out the creation & management of the game. The game was theirs.
- They played everyday, sometimes for hours, no subs, no lines, no boring drills, no laps or lectures, no parents or coaches pacing up and down the sidelines yelling instructions. They played without pressure to win or perform for anyone.
- They allowed the game to be their teacher, and thus learned to experiment, solve problems, make decisions, learn from trial & error, observed other players, become self-reliant, self-directed and expressed their imagination & creativity. In the beginning "discovery learning" is more time-consuming than the traditional approaches of drills & coaching, but in the end this process actually speeds up development.
- They saw "The Big Game" through their own eyes and played their version of it and they enjoyed it!
- All over the world that game is disappearing. The risks of modern life and the rise of organized youth programs have all but eliminated the unstructured, child-centered games of the past. The consequences of these changes are being felt deeply in soccer countries around the world. Even in North America, the realization of too much structure in young ages is not conducive to the development of players.
- There is little free time in modern life, playing in one's own free time has been replaced with the obligatory overly coached & overly structured soccer time.
- The players don't gather themselves to play for fun, and when they do play they are outnumbered 2 to 1, parent to player. The fields are marked & lined, goals are in place. The fields rest idle until it is soccer time, and soccer time is organized time. The soccer ball sits in the closet & the child plays video games until they are told to play.
- Our game, which was free and spontaneous, is now organized and obligatory...so where do we go from here?

Freddy Adu: Just Going Out To Play

Says Pele, "I told him, 'Listen. God give you, you know, the gift to play football.'" Freddy learned the game as soon as he learned to walk, in his native Ghana, in West Africa. He didn't just play soccer; he lived it.

"I did not go one day without playing," he recalls, and it was just kicking and learning.

"It was awesome," he explains, "because, you know, like, there was no coaches, no one to tell you what to do. It was just, you play and learn stuff on your own." It was during those early days in Ghana that Freddy's mother, Emelia, first encouraged her soccer prodigy.

Freddy recalls: "My mom was always the supplier of soccer balls, and so people were always knocking on my door, and trying to get me out so we could play." Freddy's street soccer days ended in 1998, after his parents entered a visa lottery at the U.S. embassy in Ghana. They won the lottery and got visas to come to the United States. Freddy was 8 years old.

Somagic Street Soccer

<http://www.in-the-zone.org/index.html>

Modified soccer

<http://www.osysa.com/ModifyingStreetSoccer.html>

Street Soccer in England

http://fp.futsal.f9.co.uk/Articles/what_was_street_soccer.htm

Academy – street soccer

http://fp.futsal.f9.co.uk/Articles/what_was_street_soccer.htm

Street Soccer lessons from a World Cup Star

http://www.finesoccer.com/soccer_edition_112.htm

Nor is a grass field.



Mixed age groups can play together ... even adults and kids.



Resources:

http://www.cnsfund.org/DVD/index_E.html

<http://www.iowasoccer.org/coaching/articles.html>

<http://www.thepitch.org/text/a5.htm>

Street Soccer Commercial:

<http://www.planetpoint.com/jerrydugan/flf3.html>



Street Soccer And Small Sided Games

By Andy Roxburgh

It was lunchtime in Turin, and while others around the table spoke about the UEFA Champions League match which would take place that evening in the Stadio Delle Alpi between Juventus FC and Manchester United FC, Roberto Bettega, Juve's vice-chairman and former star player, talked to me about street football.

'Time for self-expression'

"Although I was attached to this club from the age of nine years, much of my development took place in the streets – it was there that I practised and refined my basic skills," said Roberto, who won seven championships for the 'Old Lady' of Turin and represented Italy on 42 occasions. What troubles Roberto, who played alongside Michel Platini, Paolo Rossi, Zbigniew Boniek and other icons of the game, is the dominating style of many youth coaches. With the passion of a street fighter, he added: "Young players need some time for self-expression, for spontaneity. Their coaches need to watch and listen more and instruct a little less."

Valid philosophy

In many parts of Europe, street football has all but disappeared, but the philosophy and the mentality remains valid. The street game was player-centred, competitive, skilful and fair, and the small-sided game, with one-on-one a key element, was the basic form of play. Youngsters practised for hours on tricks and on passing and shooting techniques, using a wall as their silent partner. A love of football permeated all activities, and cups and medals (extrinsic motivation) had no immediate significance for the fierce young dreamers who were dedicated to the ball and lost in the romance of the game.

Grassroots Programme

UEFA, through its Grassroots Programme, is committed to supporting the associations and the clubs with their community schemes and player development programmes. Football leaders are acutely aware that the loss of the street environment, particularly in industrial regions, has provoked a greater need for training facilities, free-play areas, and appropriate equipment. But equally, there is an increasing demand for well-educated coaches who have the specific knowledge and the ability to work with young players. Just as the smart

referee knows the difference between a foul, a dive and a legitimate tackle, so the sensitive youth coach understands when to drill, when to teach creatively, and when to encourage self-reliance and free expression.

Football maxim

Every player, even the stars, were once grass-roots players. Every Sunday morning, as a youngster, Michael Owen of Liverpool FC played two v two games with his father and two elder brothers. Ronaldo claimed that his 'toe-poke' goal against Turkey in the semi-final of the FIFA World Cup was the product of his Futsal (five v five) experiences as a young player. Wayne Rooney, Everton FC's 17-year-old striker, who recently became the youngest player to play for England, still plays in the streets with his friends. It is a football maxim: if the grass roots are strong, then the game will grow and blossom.

Street mentality

As facilities improve and programmes become more sophisticated, there is the danger that some will lose sight of the heart and soul of the game. Coaches who have a street mentality, who appreciate the value of free play, self-expression, and passion, will never allow the game to become sterile and mechanical. The Japanese have a saying: "You are never too old to have a happy childhood." For the youth coach, this translates into a simple message: stay young at heart – it is a sentiment, which Roberto Bettega would fully endorse.

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