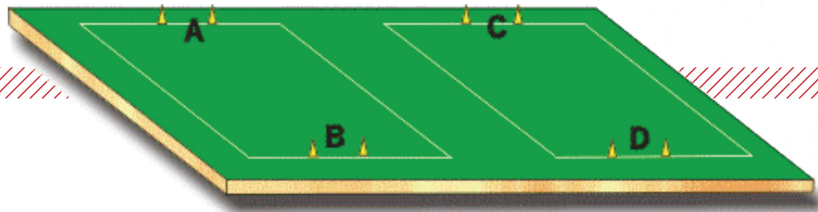


## GAME DAY



### Game Day Schedule

1. Staff Set-Up (15 min.)
2. Warm-Up & Opening Circle (10 min.)
3. Scrimmages (55 min.)
4. Cool Down (5 min.)
5. Closing Circle & Cheer (5 min.)
6. Staff Debrief (15 min.)

Game Days are a wonderful opportunity for coach-mentors and players alike to enjoy the game in an open setting and experience the learning opportunities that arise from competition. Game Days provide opportunities to teach the rules of the game, soccer skills, and character development. Leadership, teamwork, communication, work ethic, and many other character traits may be built on the field with purposeful direction and teaching from coach-mentors.

### GUIDELINES

- Use the “small-sided” strategy (preferably 5v5 or 7v7 for 3-5), to encourage physical activity and inclusion
- Set-up 25 x 35 yd. fields for 5v5
- Place one small goal on each end line and a supply of balls at each field, provide pinnies for at least one team on each field
- Group players by anatomical age (how physically mature they appear) instead of chronological age (how old they are)
- Boys and girls can play together
- Create a “tournament” format that allows each child to play as much as possible - do not implement “knock-out” formats that require teams to wait or sit out
- Use Continuous Play - collect all balls and place into 1 or 2 “ball banks” - when a game ball goes out of bounds, roll a new ball onto the field immediately
- Integrate a review of the weekly nutrition topic (e.g. label fields with names relating to the weekly nutrition topic, ask players to choose team names relating to the weekly nutrition topic, conduct activities during breaks relating to the weekly nutrition topic)
- Teach the rules of the game - rules to focus on for grades 3-5 include: out of bounds, in bounds; hand balls; all fouls result in an indirect kick, positions on the field; (basic introduction to) set-pieces. Rules not to focus on include: off-sides.
- Players should shake hands before and after each game

### TOURNAMENT EXAMPLES

**Round-Robin Tournament:** All teams take turns playing each other. After each 5-10 minute game and corresponding break, each team will play a new opponent. Coach-mentors should learn team names for the day and emphasize the importance of being part of a team, learning the game, and having fun.

**Dutch-Style Tournament:** Coach-mentors randomly assign players to a team for every game. Make the random assignment of players into an activity (See *To Create Groups Randomly*).

**Line Soccer:** Create two teams. Teams stand on opposite sidelines of the field. Players on each team are given a number (Team A – 1, 2, 3, etc., and Team B – 1, 2, 3, etc.). Each team is assigned a goal to attack and defend. The coach calls out a number (“2!”), throws a ball onto the field, and the #2s from each team run onto the field to play 1v1 and try to score a goal. Gradually increase the number of players being called (“3 and 4!”, “1, 2, 3, and 4!”) until all players are playing. Allow the players to continue as a full game until the break time.