

## Recreation Level

### Phase 1: KEEP IT FUN

#### Primary Focus



Recreation

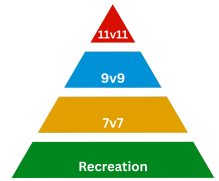
*“Just make sure the children are having fun. That’s what it’s all about.”*

#### Guiding Principles

- **Smiles First**  
The #1 measure of success at this level is smiles. If the children are smiling, they are engaged and enjoying the game. This is the core objective.
- **Fun Over Formality**  
This is a **slightly non-competitive, joy-driven phase**. Emphasis is on the experience, not performance. It is intentionally positioned **below all travel-level play**, and should never carry the pressures of higher-tier competition.
- **Positive Environment**  
Coaching at this level should be **gentle, encouraging, and supportive**. Instead of dictating play, coaches should **guide and nurture** players through praise, enthusiasm, and light structure.

#### This Phase Is For...

- **New Players**  
Children experiencing soccer for the first time and discovering their love for the game.
- **Casual Players**  
Kids who simply want to play with friends and enjoy recreational activity without commitment to a travel team.
- **Dual Participants**  
Younger 4v4 team players(practice only) that are seeking **extra touches** in a **relaxed and social setting**, especially alongside friends who aren’t on their competitive teams.



## Core Values at the **Recreation** Level

<b>Value</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Joy</b>	The game should be associated with positive emotions and light-hearted fun.
<b>Inclusion</b>	Every player should feel welcome and valued regardless of skill level.
<b>Freedom to Explore</b>	Let kids play creatively without fear of mistakes or excessive correction.
<b>Stress-Free Zone</b>	No pressure, no yelling, no over-coaching. This is soccer at its purest.
<b>Soccer basics</b>	Players are introduced to skills, games, rules, and concepts to develop their understanding of the game.

## Travel Level

### 7v7 Phase 2: WE GOT WORK TO DO

#### Primary Focus - Development



*"We got work to do."*

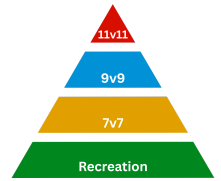
At this stage, players are transitioning into **structured, competitive soccer**. The foundational joy from the recreational phase is still essential, but now the emphasis shifts toward learning the **rules, structure, and emotional demands of real match play**. Phase 2 is about laying down the technical and tactical groundwork that prepares them for long-term development.

#### Team Formation

Our goal is to create balanced teams to the best of our ability while also considering player experience, development, and enjoyment. In some cases, players may be asked to play up when needed. However, we also recognize the importance of players being with friends, especially at younger ages, as this helps build confidence, connection, and a lasting love for the game.



# The MLBTB Philosophy



If necessary and the numbers permit it, we may create a fall-only team and rebalance full-season teams accordingly. This approach is intended to avoid negatively impacting players who participate in both seasons by unnecessarily moving them to a new team in order to reallocate players.

In Year 2, some additional rebalancing may occur as teams become organized into A and B-level groups, numbers permitting. This is done to place players into appropriate divisions to maximize further development.

Our goal is to maximize player participation while maintaining appropriate roster size for each team. However, with parent acknowledgment, some players may have reduced playing time early in the season if they do not yet meet certain developmental expectations. The goal is for each player to continue improving throughout the season and work toward earning full playing time as their development progresses.

## Key Development Objectives

- **Rules Education (Progressively Introduced):**

Teach core game concepts in digestible chunks over the season:

- Offsides
- Fouls & Free Kicks
- Throw-ins
- Goal kicks & Corner kicks
- Team shape and spacing

Don't overload early, **pacing** is key. Prioritize the most critical rules first, layering in complexity as the season progresses.

- **Emotional Development:**

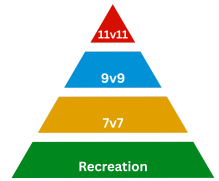
Help players navigate **emotions tied to winning, losing, pressure, and teamwork**. Coaches should **guide players through those feelings**, not intensify them.

- **Introduction to Competition:**

Results begin to matter here, but **development is still the core mission**. Winning is encouraged, but not at the expense of integrity, participation, or emotional health.

## Importance of Individual Ball Skill

- Emphasis on juggling & skill moves, and most importantly, maximizing touches on the ball at each training session



## Guiding Principles

Principle	Application
<b>Teach the Game</b>	Introduce rules clearly, gradually, and consistently throughout the season.
<b>Structured Learning</b>	Use more advanced drills, concepts, and tactical elements.
<b>Positive Reinforcement</b>	Stay encouraging even in competitive moments.
<b>Emotional Coaching</b>	Model calm, maturity, and respect in challenging moments.
<b>Professional Tone</b>	Coaches are supportive but maintain clear boundaries with players and parents.

### Playing Time Policy - Year 0 (U8)

- **Players play similar minutes in a rotation, maximizing playing time while also maintaining a competitive team dynamic**
- **No player is to sit for more than half the game**
- **Playing time is earned**, not equal, but **every child must participate**. Playing time can be earned by **effort, performance, coachability, and attendance**.
- **Balance** team goals and individual growth.

### Playing Time Policy - Year 1 (U9)

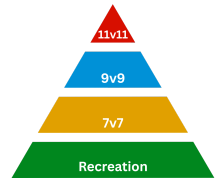
- **Players play similar minutes in a rotation, maximizing playing time while also maintaining a competitive team dynamic**
- **No player is to sit for more than half the game.**
- **Playing time is earned**, not equal, but **every child must participate**. Playing time can be earned by **effort, performance, coachability, and attendance**.
- **Balance** team goals and individual growth.

### Playing Time Policy - Year 2 (U10)

- **All players must play at least 8–10 minutes per half** with a partial rotation model.
- **No player is to sit an entire half.**
- **Playing time is earned**, not equal, but **every child must participate**. Playing time can be earned by **effort, performance, coachability, and attendance**.
- **Balance** team goals and individual growth.



# The MLBTB Philosophy



## Positional Authority

The coach at this level:

- Maintains a **professional and respectful presence**.
- Clearly **communicates expectations** to both players and parents.
- Continues to **foster enjoyment**, but with **accountability and structure**.
- Uses more **complex drills and game scenarios** than in recreation levels.

## 9v9 Phase 3: TEAM DEVELOPMENT IS KEY

### Primary Focus



9v9

*“Team development is key.”*

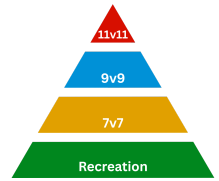
At the 9v9 level, players experience a significant leap in **field size, positional discipline, and team structure**. While individual skills continue to develop, the emphasis is now placed on **team execution, positional awareness, and strategic play**. This is the bridge between foundational competition and full-sided, tactical soccer.

### Team Formation

Depending on registration numbers, teams may be organized into A and B-level groups. These structures may vary by age group and do not necessarily need to follow the same format across all teams.

Full-season players will generally receive placement priority over seasonal players. When possible, seasonal players will be placed on a team in order to maintain roster consistency and avoid significant team changes between the fall and spring seasons.

Our goal is to provide a roster spot for every player whenever possible. However, players must meet a minimum participation and developmental threshold, which will be determined and communicated in advance. Roster sizes also must remain consistent and beneficial for all players.



## Key Development Objectives

- **Importance of Individual Ball Skill**

- Emphasis on juggling & skill moves, and most importantly, maximizing touches on the ball at each training session
- **Defined Positions & Roles:**  
Begin to **solidify player roles** based on their natural tendencies and field instincts (defenders, midfielders, forwards).

*“Strengthen their instincts first, the rest will follow.”*

- **Team-Oriented Play:**

The larger field and additional players demand a **shift from individualism to collectivism**.

- Teach use of **width and depth**
- Emphasize **ball movement and off-ball support**
- Encourage **communication** across all zones of the field

- **System Play:**

Guide players in understanding how to function within a **9v9 system**:

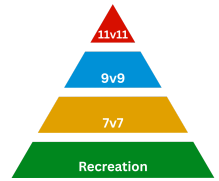
- Structured formations
- Coordinated transitions
- Responsibility to team shape

- **Vision & Awareness:**

Begin developing **field vision, spatial recognition**, and the ability to **anticipate movement**. These are essential traits for success at the 11v11 level.

## Guiding Principles

Principle	Application
<b>Team Unity First</b>	Individual growth is best achieved within a cohesive team structure.
<b>Play Smart, Not Just Fast</b>	Teach players to read the game, move off the ball, and communicate.
<b>Defined Structure</b>	Every player has a role. Coaches should start implementing consistent positions.
<b>Real Competition Prep</b>	Create the mentality and structure needed to succeed at 11v11 levels.



## Competitive Focus

- **Results Matter:**  
This is the first phase where **division performance starts to become a collective goal**. The objective is to **finish at the top of the table**, creating unity and shared ambition. **Fun is still the ultimate goal**, but 9v9 is where we start our shift from more social to playing to win.
- **Growth Through Competition:**  
Players must learn to compete as a team; not only to win, but to **earn trust, responsibility, and pride** in a shared mission.

## Playing Time Policy

- **All players must play** at least **7–10 minutes per half**.
- Playing time is **not equal**, but **all players must be meaningfully involved**. Playing time can be earned by **effort, performance, coachability, and attendance**.
- Coaches must **strategically rotate** based on performance, effort, and team needs while still nurturing confidence and growth.

## Positional Authority

The coach now takes on the role of a **team builder**:

- Designs sessions that reinforce **team tactics and coordinated play**
- Maintains **positive energy**, but with a more serious tone during instruction and match execution
- Builds **trust and accountability** among players and with parents
- Begins preparing players and team culture for the **full-scale jump to 11v11 soccer**

## 11v11 Phase 4: FINAL SCORE

### Primary Focus

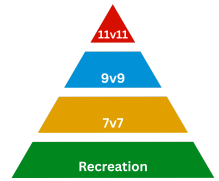
*“Final score.”*



This is the **final developmental phase** before full maturity in youth soccer. At the 11v11 level, players enter a version of the game that mirrors professional and collegiate formats. **Field size, positional responsibility, and game tempo all increase**, requiring strategic thinking, technical excellence, and a cohesive team identity.



# The MLBTB Philosophy



## Team Formation

Depending on registration numbers, teams may be organized into A and B-level groups. Team structures may vary by age group and do not necessarily need to follow the same format across all divisions.

Full-season players will generally receive placement priority over seasonal players. When possible, seasonal players may be placed on the team in order to maintain roster consistency and avoid significant team changes between the fall and spring seasons.

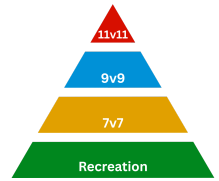
Tryouts and player evaluations will play an important role in team placement. Player skill level, development, commitment, and overall readiness will all be considered when forming teams.

At this stage, roster spots may become more selective. Players may not be guaranteed placement if they do not meet the minimum program standards, which will be determined and communicated in advance. In some cases, a player may still be offered a roster spot with parent acknowledgment that playing time may be more limited, including potentially less than the minimum playing time guideline outlined below.

## Key Development Objectives

*"We taught them the game, now they play it to win."*

- **Full-Sided Play Mastery**  
Players must now understand how to operate **within zones and across lines** on a full-sized field. Movement is both **individual and collective**, emphasizing tactical awareness and spatial intelligence.
- **Position Solidification**  
Players are expected to **know their positions**, both strengths and limitations. Their **primary roles are now established**, although flexibility remains valuable.
- **System Play & Tactical Flexibility**  
Coaches guide teams through **multiple formations** and tactical setups:
  - Shape shifting in and out of possession
  - High press vs. low block
  - Using width, managing central overloads
- **Off-the-Ball Intelligence**  
Communication and movement away from the ball become **crucial indicators of maturity**. First touch, vision, and decision-making all matter more at this stage.



## Guiding Principles

Principle	Application
<b>Team Unity = Family Bond</b>	Build a sense of belonging, trust, and chemistry that elevates on-field performance.
<b>Play to Win</b>	Winning is the team's collective goal. It must be pursued through structure, strategy, and unity.
<b>Strategic Positioning</b>	Place skilled players in roles where they best serve the system and the team.
<b>Respect for the System</b>	Players must commit to the team's tactical identity and play within their roles.

## Competitive Focus

- **Results Drive the Mission**  
Phase 4 introduces a **true competitive culture** — where winning games and finishing on top of the division reflects both individual growth and collective mastery.
- **Tactical Execution Over Raw Talent**  
Coaches must **build game plans** around their personnel and use **system-based tactics** to achieve results.

## Playing Time Policy

- **\*The goal is for all players to play at least 10 minutes per half\***
- Playing time is **not equal**, but it is still **intentional and developmental**
- Rotations must reflect:
  - **Effort and attitude**
  - **Performance and consistency**
  - **Tactical fit for the game plan**

## Positional Authority

At this level, the coach assumes full leadership responsibilities as both **strategist and mentor**:

- **Designs purposeful sessions** focused on game-day execution at full scale
- Maintains **positive, professional energy**, while clearly elevating expectations from prior phases
- **Communicates with clarity and direction** to both players and parents
- **Builds a culture of accountability**, where commitment and discipline are expected