



**KICKS FOR KIDS**  
**RECREATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE**  
**FOR U6 – U14**

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## Introduction

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In the spring of 2010, the High Country Soccer Association established Kicks for Kids to fill the need for a spring recreational youth soccer opportunity in the High Country. Kicks for Kids was created from an innovative concept based on a modern philosophy of player development at the recreational level. Kicks for Kids is a hybrid recreational program combining a recreational soccer league with a NCYSA Youth Academy coaching philosophy. All Kicks for Kids events are held at the Ted Mackorell Soccer Complex, the premier soccer facility of western North Carolina. The establishment of this program is a significant step in the growth and development of the HCSA. HCSA is very excited about the foundation that was set for this program and is enthusiastic about growing our recreational soccer league, Kicks for Kids!



## Who Should Play?

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Kicks for Kids is for the U6-U14 beginning or intermediate player interested in a fun recreational soccer experience. Kicks for Kids is a great experience for beginning players with no previous soccer experience but also continues to challenge and develop those with a few seasons of soccer experience.

## Philosophy

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The Kicks for Kids philosophy addresses the common shortcomings of recreational soccer leagues in the United States. Those shortcomings specifically are inequality in the level of coaching, an overemphasis on match results versus player development, and the failure to create a positive learning environment that fosters player creativity. The Kicks for Kids model seeks to address each of these shortcomings to lay the foundation for the total development of the youth soccer player.

Kicks for Kids players will be assigned to teams, with each team being assigned a parent/volunteer coach and a professional HCSA staff trainer. The role of the HCSA staff trainer is to run and manage the training sessions with the assistance of the parent/volunteer coach. This model serves as an opportunity for the HCSA staff coach to also educate and develop the parent/volunteer coach while leading practice for the team. By bringing in a professional HCSA staff trainer for each team the HCSA aims to create equilibrium in practice sessions. All teams will receive equal and qualified coaching and follow a consistent age appropriate curriculum. The curriculum, or training topics and activities, are developed by the HCSA Directors of Coaching. The practice curriculum is designed to teach age appropriate technical and tactical skills through fun activities and small-sided games. The Kicks for Kids matches will be coached and managed by the parent/volunteer.

## **Training & Match Schedule**

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The Kicks for Kids season will begin in mid March and last through the end of May. Teams will have a weekly consistent training session for one hour and fifteen minutes. Kicks for Kids matches will take place once a week on Friday evenings or Saturday mornings.

## **Match Formats & Team Formation**

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Skill development in soccer occurs by how frequently players touch the ball. Kicks for Kids will emphasize maximizing each player's opportunity to have touches on the ball in matches and will follow the United States Youth Soccer Association's recommendations for small-sided games in the following formats:

U6-U7 - 4 v 4 scrimmages, no set teams, no goalkeepers

U8-U10 - 6 v 6 with maximum rosters of 12

U11-U12 - 8 v 8 with maximum rosters of 14

U13-U14 - 8 v 8 with maximum rosters of 14

Teams will be formed in the above age groups. Criteria for forming teams will be age, gender and skill level. Separate boys and girls divisions will be made in age groups where participation numbers allow. To the extent possible, Kicks for Kids will strive to create teams of equal ability to maximize the benefits to all players. Every effort will be made to honor player and coach requests for team placement; however, maximizing player development and success will be prioritized.

## **Coaching and Fees**

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The cost of Kicks for Kids is \$70 per season but there is usually a \$15 discount by an early registration date. The cost includes NCYSA registration fees, HCSA administrative fees, referee fees, professional HCSA staff trainer fees, and a shirt. Practices will be coached by professional HCSA staff trainers with the assistance of the team's parent volunteer coach. Games will be coached by the team's parent volunteer coach.

## **Summary**

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HCSA is very enthusiastic about the future for player development in the High Country with the establishment of Kicks for Kids. We feel the Kicks for Kids community soccer program and its innovative philosophy are in the best interests of player development at the recreational level and will benefit your child while fostering a lifetime enjoyment in the game of soccer.

If you have additional questions please feel free to contact the HCSA Director of Coaching Kiki Wallace ([doc@hcavalanche.org](mailto:doc@hcavalanche.org), 828-406-5994).