



# West Region Soccer

## Recreational Soccer - Coaches Technical Manual



### Age Group - U16/18(Boys & Girls)

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## INTRODUCTION

### Dear Recreational Coaches,

I would like to welcome you to an exciting 2008 soccer season. I am looking forward to my first season in Canada since my appointment as the West Region Regional Technical Director in December 2007.

As soccer coaches you play a very important part in teaching players the game as well as allowing the players to enjoy playing the most played sport in Canada and the World. Soccer is such a simple and easy sport to play that no matter the age, size, gender or ability anyone can play soccer.

I hope this Coaching Manual will offer you with vital information to assist you with your coaching and provide understanding on how children you coach operate and function. As coaches you can make a major impact on your player's enjoyment of the game and a successful season is when your players return and play again next season and the future. The Coaching Manual includes information on the characteristics of a player of a certain age, how to organize a training session, your role as a coach and what players you are coaching should have been introduced, learnt, developed and mastered at the end of the season.

Another exciting tool that all Recreational Coaches will receive this season to assist with your coaching is a Session Plan each week for eleven weeks during the soccer season. The Session Plan will be emailed to you and also be published on the West Region Soccer website [www.westregionsoccernb.org](http://www.westregionsoccernb.org). The weekly Session Plan is designed for coaches to use during their training session each week with clear diagrams and supporting information which are customized for each age-group with progressions and coaching/teaching key points.

Remember, be passionate and enjoy coaching then your players will learn, develop, improve and enjoy the game a lot more. I am looking forward to meeting you sometime during the season and I hope that the resources I have developed to assist your coaching sessions during the season are valuable and beneficial.

If you have any questions regarding this Coaching Manual, Session Plans or any technical aspects of soccer, please contact me and I will do my best to assist you.

Best of luck to the season!! Enjoy.

**Macky Singh**  
West Region Regional Technical Director





CONTENTS PAGE

TOPICS	PAGE
Recreational Soccer	4 - 5
Development of Individual Group	6 - 8
▪ Technique, Tactics, Physical, Physiological, Game	
ACTION - Planning your session	9
Training to Compete Practice Routine	10
Player Development - U16	11
Player Development - U18	12
Role of A Coach	13
Team Management	14
Coaching Activities Checklist	15
Coaching Technical Elements - Passing	16 - 17
Coaching Technical Elements - Running with the Ball	18
Coaching Technical Elements - Dribbling	19
Coaching Technical Elements - Heading	20
Coaching Technical Elements - Turning	21 - 23
Coaching Technical Elements - Shooting	24
Technical Skills Developed & Mastered - Checklist	25
References & Resources	26





## IRECREATIONAL SOCCER

Recreational soccer is a soccer program primarily devoted to the enjoyment and development of soccer players without the emphasis on travel and high-level competition but encourages participation. The purpose of recreational soccer is to provide an opportunity for the participants to have fun, learn the sport and develop life skills including a lifelong love of the game.

### Therefore:

- Access is open to all who desire to participate.
- Emphasis is on active participation.
- Objective is for the players to enjoy the experience.
- Success and excellence are measured in players attracted and retained.
- Recreational soccer is all about fun, recreation, love of the game and winning is not a measure of success.

### Some of the main characteristics of recreational play and recreational players are as follows:

- Almost every player and parent will start out in recreational soccer.
- Two-year age groups are typical of recreational teams so there is a wide range between the most skilled player and the least skilled.
- Wider age gaps create great differences in physical, mental and social development.
- Players new to the sport are constantly being introduced into the mix.
- Enthusiasm and dedication varies widely from the highly motivated to the socially involved.
- Soccer for the child, who wants to play, is an outlet for energy and enthusiasm. For others it is an imposed activity, something selected for the child by the parent.
- Fit and unfit players play together.
- Participation stretches from always there to when it is convenient.
- Parents often sign up a player for the next season without the child being involved in the process.
- Recreational players generally do not develop strong feelings against the opposing team because they often have friends on the opposing team.





- Many young children start out in soccer especially at the very young level where all skill levels of children can participate and have fun.
- Many young children try out many sports at a young age and may jump from one sport to another during the year or even the same season.

**Some of the main characteristics of recreational coaches are as follows:**

- Virtually every recreational coach will be an unpaid parent volunteer.
- Many recreational coaches are coaching their own children.
- Many of these children are “would-be stars” in the eyes of their parents. Equal treatment may not happen as a result sometimes.
- About half of youth sports coaches will drop out of coaching within the first year.
- Most experience of the youngest age-group coaches are the first-time coaches with little or no soccer experience, knowledge of the game and no coaching experience.





## DEVELOPMENT OF INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP

This is a critical time in the player's development. Many stop playing due to other interests, lack of success, shortage of playing opportunities, poor leadership or other reasons. Players tend to lack mental toughness and self-confidence. They tend to be self-critical and struggle with their desire to be competitive or need to be more competitive. There is a need for attention and security. A great focus on team spirit, leadership and discipline within the team.

### Coach must be:

Charismatic, experienced, knowledgeable, articulate, a disciplinarian, have managerial know-how, a thoughtful persuader.

### Factors of Player Development:

- Technical
- Tactical
- Physical
- Physiological
- Game

## TECHNIQUE

Begin to master skills. Emphasize the development of individual skills under the pressure of time, space, and an opponent. Continuing to increase technical speed.

- Skills should be mastered leading to artistry and improvisation, all under match conditions.
- Individual skill covered during the warm-up and/or in competitive situations.
- Increase technical speed. It is important that technique is still highly emphasized at this age.
- Strike balls cleanly over distance with accuracy under pressure.



DEVELOPMENT OF INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP

TACTICS

Increase tactical speed (decision making under pressure).

Technique	Description
Individual	<p>Decisions based on thirds of the field.</p> <p><b>In attack:</b> Application of varied technical abilities in order to increase tactical options. Have an aggressive attacking mentality in final third. Emphasis on predicting what the game will need next.</p> <p><b>In defense:</b> Clear understanding of how the quality of pressure affects team defending success. An ability to take options away from the attacker.</p>
Small Groups	<p>Games: 4 v. 4, 7 v 7, 9 v 9.</p> <p><b>In attack:</b> Players must understand the balance of needing possession and penetration. Continued work on combination play (wall pass, take over, overlap, double pass, third player running etc.). Playing for penetration and creativity in solving problems becomes important.</p> <p><b>In defense:</b> Compactness; Cover, delay, dictate and recover; Communication (who, what, when, where); Defending as a group of three (forwards, midfielders and defenders); Enjoy winning possession of the ball and dictating the play; Set plays</p>
Team	<p>Clearly defined team tactics, how the team decides to play as a group.</p> <p><b>In the attack:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Comfort with direct and indirect styles</li> <li>▪ Sustained possession as a means to break down the opponent's defense Understanding how to counterattack</li> <li>▪ Decisions based on thirds of the field</li> </ul> <p><b>In defense:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Comfort with "high pressure" and "delayed high pressure" styles Understanding of zonal and man-to-man marking play</li> <li>▪ Goalkeeper as the last defender</li> <li>▪ Keeping good team compactness</li> <li>▪ Stopping the counterattack</li> <li>▪ Decisions based on thirds of the field and different systems of play</li> </ul>
System	The recommended system for player and team development is a 3-4-3; 4-3-3 & 4-4-2.

*Note: a great deal of coaching/teaching within 7 v 7 and 9 v 9 games.*





## DEVELOPMENT OF INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP

### PHYSICAL

Fitness should take place with and without the ball.

- Flexibility - static stretching after training/matches.
- Dynamic flexibility - partner stretching
- Importance of discipline for warm-up and cool-down
- Agility - with and without the ball
- Footwork - keeping the feet active when moving/playing
- Endurance - Aerobic and anaerobic
- Strength - Upper and lower body. Core strength and stability
- Balance
- Nutrition - Proper diet pre-game, post-game, at tournaments
- Prevention and care of injuries
- Importance of rest/recovery - schedule issues relative to the physical demands

### PHYSIOLOGICAL

- Increased concentration
- Leadership/player responsibilities
- Discipline
- Respect for the game
- Goal setting
- Vary program - satisfy players' urge for competition
- Establish pre-practice and pre-game routine (as individuals and team).

### THE GAME

- 11 v 11 (includes keepers)







## ACTION

Plan in your practice sessions.

### Activity

Must be one of your main goals when dealing with young players. You must understand that, "players come to practice to play". Therefore, any activity that does not involve playing soccer may become disruptive.

### Clarify

Your practice session rules and expectations through individual and team discussions. That is, having the team decide what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior. Then you must act firmly, fairly and consistently and when their actions go against their own established rules.

### Teach less!!

When players and balls are moving, soccer learning is taking place. When players and balls stop moving, soccer learning stops!

Ask yourself - Does it happen in the game (i.e., drills)?

If the answer is YES	then do it in practice.
If the answer is NO	then don't do it in practice.

### Interest

You may be faced with players who are not interested in playing our wonderful game and you must adjust accordingly. Give appropriate attention to the disinterested players but not at the expense of the rest of the team. Make the practices so much FUN that the disinterested players may want to join. Remember that when you are working with your players you must be as helpful, understanding and patient as you are with your own children when they are learning other skills in life.

### No

No Lapse. No Lines. No Lectures! Running around the field may be considered punishment. They already know 'how to' stand in a line. Their attention span is less than 15 seconds. You must create a practice environment that minimizes listening/lecture time and maximizes touches with the ball and playing time. Allow them to play the game of soccer which forces them to make decisions and learn on their own. Allow them to experiment and fail their way to success!

## ACTION

You may want to put into ACTION the Training to Compete Soccer Routine!!!





## THE TRAINING TO COMPETE PRACTICE ROUTINE

**Coach:** Before Each Practice - Establish a Theme - What they will learn

### Step 1. BEGIN PRACTICE

Give a Demonstration/Explanation of your Theme

### Step 2. WARM-UP

Play a Fun game related to Theme & Stretch

### Step 3. TECHNIQUE SESSION

Players = Focus on Learning the Theme

Coach = Help only those who need help

### Step 4. SKILL SESSION

(Competitive Play)

Players = Test the Theme vs. one opponent at a time

Coach = Observe & Take notes!

### Step 5. PLAY - FUNCTIONAL/PHASE OF PLAY/SMALL SIDED GAME(s)

(Cooperative)

Players = Focus on Learning Theme vs. more opponents

Coach = Help only those who need help

(Competitive)

Players = Test the Theme vs. more opponents

Coach = Observe & Take notes!

### Step 6. PLAY - SCRIMMAGE

(Cooperative)

Players = Focus on Learning Theme vs. opposing team

Coach = Help only those who need help!

(Competitive)

Players = Test Theme vs. opposing team

Coach = Observe & Take notes!

### Step 7. COOL-DOWN (Stretch)

### Step 8. END PRACTICE (Review & Compliment)

When explaining new skills and practices use the following method:





## PLAYER DEVELOPMENT - U16

### Characteristics

Players in this age group are experiencing great change, both physically and psychologically, with the increasing resistance to authority - parent, coach and teacher. Normally, there is rapid skeletal growth (with increased danger of injuries). Youngsters relate to one another (peer pressure) better than with adults; they are becoming accustomed to working and socializing in larger groups.

### Recommended Environment - Games

Field Size:	50m X 80m
Ball Size:	Size 5
Goals:	Regulation goals (24' x 8')
Duration:	2 x 40 mins
Team Size:	16 - 18 Players
Game:	11 v 11

### Recommended Environment - Practice

Continued skill development but without huge demands. More emphasis should be given to team tactics.

### Coach / Administrator

Because there is a large range in ability during this stage of development, one must be careful when and how they criticize players.





## PLAYER DEVELOPMENT - U18

### Characteristics

Players are physically maturing into full grown adults. The physical components of speed, power, and strength become increasing more important. Players should be technically confident and a significant amount of the training should revolve around team play and tactics.

### Recommended Environment - Games

Field Size:	50m X 80m
Ball Size:	Size 5
Goals:	Regulation goals (24' x 8')
Duration:	2 x 45 mins
Team Size:	16 - 18 Players
Game:	11 v 11

### Recommended Environment - Practice

Continued skill development but without huge demands. More emphasis should be given to team tactics. Physical training becomes critical at this level.

Focus - The intensity of training should be more game related. Good playing habits should be instilled. A commitment to excellence becomes increasing important.

### Coach / Administrator

Because there is a large range in ability during this stage of development, one must be careful when and how they criticize players.





## ROLE OF A COACH

- To provide positive encouragement and support.
- Make training enjoyable and positive experience for children.
- Provide safe environment that is conducive to learning and development.
- Emphasis should be on:
  - Maximum participation
  - Skill improvement
  - Fostering good spirit
- Foster the promotion of good attitude and behaviour of players through:
  - Fair play
  - Good hard working ethics
  - Striving for success
  - Assisting with overcoming adversity
  - Having fun
- Promoting a healthy life style and nurturing the players with:
  - Self esteem
  - Raising his/her sense of responsibility
  - Fostering positive relationship within the team
- Providing an environment that makes participating in soccer challenging, exciting and lots of fun.





## TEAM MANAGEMENT

To make coaching a lot more enjoyable the first step is to organize a parent-coach meeting prior to the beginning of the season.

### Identify your philosophy of coaching and goals for the season

- Based on fun, learning and development
- Success based on how many players return next season

### Collect player information

- Medical information
- Reason why they choose to play soccer
- Their individual goals

### Collect parents' information

- Contact details

### Identify player responsibilities

- Bring drink bottle
- Be dressed with appropriate gear such as shin pads and cleats
- Be enthusiastic and ready to learn
- Adhere to Fair Play

### Identify parents' responsibilities

- Ensuring their children are at training and picked up on time
- Contact the coach if their children are unable to attend trainings and games

### Identify communication methods between parents/players and coaches

- Email
- Texting
- Phone

### Identify and communicate to the parents sideline behaviour expectations

- Applaud children's success
- Refrain from yelling out instructions
- Be positive and encourage the children
- Adhere Fair Play



## COACHING ACTIVITIES CHECKLIST

When planning training sessions it is important a coach reviews how the training session went. The checklist below will help the coach to analyze and help with planning the next training session.

- ◆ Are the activities fun?
- ◆ Are the activities organized?
- ◆ Are the players involved in the activities?
- ◆ Is creativity and decision making being used?
- ◆ Are the spaces used appropriate?
- ◆ Is the coach's feedback appropriate?
- ◆ Is the coach guiding or controlling the players in the activity?
- ◆ Are there implications for the game?





## COACHING TECHNICAL ELEMENTS - PASSING

**Passing is one of the most important techniques in soccer. It allows players to mover and position the ball accurately to other players and to move up the field the goal.**

### INSIDE OF THE FOOT OR PUSH PASS

The most accurate method of passing. The surface of the foot used should be from the bottom of the big toe joint area to the bottom half of the arch of the foot. The approach to the ball should be almost in a straight line. The non-kicking foot should be alongside the ball pointing at the target. The kicking foot should strike the ball at the mid-line or slightly above, enabling the ball to stay on the ground. The knee should be bent and the swing action from the hip followed by a proper follow through with the foot ending up pointing at the intended target. The arms should be used for balance.

#### COACHING POINTS:

- Approach the ball almost in a straight line
- Strike through the middle part of the ball
- Point kicking foot outward
- Leg swing action from the hip

#### COMMON FAULTS:

- Young players often approach the ball from the side and attempt to use the inside of the foot making it almost mechanically impossible to pass the ball accurately.
- They may swing their leg across their body which also makes it impossible to kick the ball correctly.

### DO

- Get in-line with the ball.
- Select the surface of the foot to make contact on the ball to bring under control.
- Use correct surface of the foot to make appropriate and effective pass.
- Keep head still and kick through the ball.

### DONT'S

- Stand on the ball with your leading foot.
- Approach incorrectly.
- Set body position and/or posture incorrectly.







## COACHING TECHNICAL ELEMENTS - PASSING

### OUTSIDE OF THE FOOT

Approach at an angle and it will go straight.

Approach straight on it will bend or swerve.

This method can be used to perform one of three things:

1. bend the ball into the path of a team-mate
2. bend the ball into space away from a player to run onto
3. bend the ball during a shot on goal

The kicking foot should be pointed down and towards the inside of the player with the ankle locked. The foot should strike the ball either left or right of the centre, which will make the ball bend. The knee should be bent with the kicking action coming from the hip. The follow through should have the kicking leg come across the player's body. The non-kicking foot should be along side and slightly behind the ball at impact.

#### COACHING POINTS:

- Approach on the angle or straight on
- Point toe of kicking foot down
- Lock ankle
- Strike the ball slightly off centre

#### COMMON FAULTS:

- Approach angle to the ball wrong. Non-kicking foot too away from the ball.
- Unlocking the ankle.

### CHIP PASS

To pass the ball in the air to players or into space. The approach to the ball is the same as for lofted/floated but a stabbing motion with the foot is made with limited or no follow through.

#### COACHING POINTS:

- Approach on the angle.
- Selection of the foot surface and which part of the ball to contact to achieve the desired result.
- Stabbing action with no or limited follow through.
- Correct posture and stance

#### COMMON FAULTS:

- No approach angle.
- Head comes up too early.
- Non-kicking foot too close or too far.
- Wrong foot surface used.
- Ankle unlocked.



## COACHING TECHNICAL ELEMENTS - RUNNING WITH THE BALL

**Travel/run with the ball quickly into unoccupied area or space of the field. Move at pace in possession of the ball in straight or angled running movements.**

The first touch of the ball should be well in front to allow an opportunity to look up. Use the laces of the front foot to push the ball forward quickly. Once running with the ball, ensure players keep touching the ball well in front of them. This will enable the player to keep his/her head up and travel quickly. The fewer the touches the faster the player travels. When passing while running with the ball use the laces, as this will not slow the player down.

### DO'S

- Take the first touch of the ball well in front to allow time to look up and travel quickly.
- Take fewer touches for greater speed.
- Keep your head up.

### DONT'S

- Touch the ball too far in front of you.
- Touch it with the inside of the foot.
- Keep head down.





## COACHING TECHNICAL ELEMENTS - DRIBBLING

**Dribbling is an exciting and exhilarating technique by beating and moving past opponents with the ball by recognizing space between and behind players, unbalancing, changing direction with pace which allows the player to move past an opponent.**

When dribbling use every part of the foot. The player should use either foot, keep the ball close to the foot about a stride away and able to change direction quickly without losing the ball.

The inside of the foot - allows the player to push or carry the ball.

The sole of the foot - allows the player to stop the ball quickly or pull it back to change direction.

The outside of the foot - allows the player to run at speed.

### COACHING POINTS:

- Head up
- Awareness of other players and space
- Close control
- Bend knees
- Change direction and pace player and ball
- Decide on a technique to use to beat/pass an opponent eg: scissors
- Decide on a technique to use after a dribble eg: passing

### WHERE?

Dribbling should be encouraged but it involves risk. Definitely dribble in and around your opponent's half, but not as much in defending half, depending on the situation.

### WHEN?

As often as possible. DON'T be afraid to have a go as it is the best way to beat/pass an opponent.

### WHY?

Good dribblers dribble for a purpose - to beat players, to cross, to pass or to shoot.





## COACHING TECHNICAL ELEMENTS - HEADING

Using the head is another surface of the body which can be used to cushion or guide the ball. Heading should be encouraged as it is important element of both attacking and defensive play. Heading should only be introduced at seven or eight years old.

### COACHING POINTS:

- Watch the ball to assess the flight, trajectory and pace of the ball.
- Withdraw head back and look through the ball.
- Arch the back and propel forward.
- Contact the ball below the mid-line.
- Head with forehead not the top of the head.
- Keeps eyes open.

### DO'S

- Attack the ball - feet apart, head back and arch body.
- Use centre of the forehead.
- Keep your eyes open until your contact the ball.
- Head THROUGH the ball.  
Attack the ball.

### DONT'S

- Head the ball with the top of the head.
- Close your eyes.
- Let the ball hit the forehead.



## COACHING TECHNICAL ELEMENTS - TURNING

Turning is an exciting technique used in order to change direction done while dribbling or running with the ball or losing an opponent. Turns helps to get out of tight areas, confuse opponents and maintain possession.

### COACHING POINTS:

- Head up and body balanced
- Start slowly and get the technique right
- Bent knees
- Accelerate away as soon as you turn

### DO'S

- Practice turns often.
- Learn at least three turns.
- Accelerate away after turning.

### VARIOUS TURNS

- Inside and outside hook turn
- Step over/Figure eight
- Drag back
- 'Cruyff' turn
- Stop and turn
- Stop and roll





## COACHING TECHNICAL ELEMENTS - TURNING

### HOOK TURN

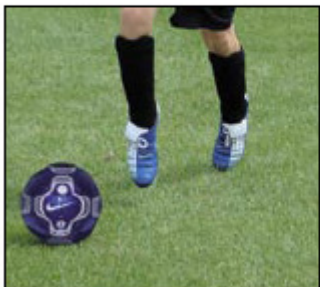
#### Hooking the ball with the inside of the foot

Reach and hook the ball back with the inside of the foot, move the ball into the opposite direction and push away.



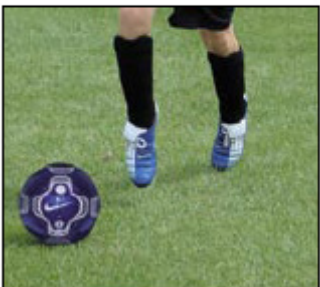
#### Hooking the ball with the outside of the foot

Reach and hook the ball back with the outside of the foot, move the ball into the opposite direction and push away.



### STEP OVER OR FIGURE OF EIGHT

Step over the ball in a figure of eight movement, swivel your hips and hook the ball back with the inside of the foot and push away.





## COACHING TECHNICAL ELEMENTS - TURNING

### THE DRAG BACK

Stop the ball with the bottom part of your boot, half turn your body out and drag the ball in the opposite direction and push away.



### THE "CRUYFF" TURN

Feint to shoot or pass, position the standing leg in front of the ball, turn your foot inward with the toe and touch the ball with the inside of your foot. Push it through your legs, turn and push away.



### THE STOP & TURN

Stop the ball with the bottom part of your boot, go past the ball, turn and push the ball away.



### THE STOP & ROLL

Roll the bottom part of your foot over the ball, stopping it and pushing it in the opposite direction with the outside of the foot, turn and push away.





## COACHING TECHNICAL ELEMENTS - SHOOTING

Shooting is an extension of passing, projecting ball towards the goal with a variety of techniques. The golden rule of shooting is to force the goalkeeper to save. You will not score if you don't shoot.

### COACHING POINTS

- Place non-kicking foot along side and slightly behind the ball
- Point kicking foot downward and inward (from the knee running down the shins all the way to the toes should be one straight line)
- Strike the ball with the laces and full instep
- Make contact with the middle of the ball
- Keep the ball low
- Keep the body forward and eyes on the ball (remember the goal does not move)
- At least make the goalkeeper save your shot
- Focus initially on shooting accurate than power

### DO'S

- Place non-kicking foot alongside and slightly behind the ball.
- Point kicking foot down and inward.
- Strike ball with the laces.
- Make contact with the middle of the ball.
- Keep the ball low.
- Accuracy in shooting is more effective than power.
- Lock your angle.

### DONT'S

- Stretch to shoot.
- Look up.
- Make contact under the ball.





## TECHNICAL SKILLS DEVELOPED & MASTERED - CHECKLIST

By the end of the season players should have at least been **developed** and **mastered** the following technical and tactical skills:

### Develop:

- Decision making
- Crossing technique
- Long passes
- Tactical aspects - 9 v 9; 11 v 11

### Master:

- Wall passes
- Heading technique
- Volleys with the inside foot
- Movement and creating space
- The technique of tackling
- Handling skills for goalkeepers
  - catching and throwing
- Passing with the outside of the foot and laces
- Ability to run with the ball
  - in different direction & with different pace
- Dribbling using different surfaces of the feet:
  - inside, outside and laces
- Dribbling in 1 v 1 situation
- Stop turn & Drag back turn; Inside & Outside hook turns
- Short passes with both feet using the inside of their feet
- Passing to feet
- Ability to receive the ball with the inside of the foot
- Ability to shoot at a goal



## REFERENCES & RESOURCES

- “Wellness To World Cup LTPD” - Canada Soccer Association
- “Age Specific Player Development Characteristics” - Soccer New Brunswick
- “Small Whites Coaching Manual” - New Zealand Football
- “Recreational Coaches Manual” - Kanata Soccer
- “Grassroots and Youth Development Coaching Manual” - Asian Football Confederation





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# West Region Soccer

## New Brunswick



**CLUBS:**  
Fredericton District Soccer Association  
New Maryland Soccer Club  
Oromocto Soccer Club

