



Securing Youth Players for Grassroots Licenses



As we now understand, having age appropriate (grassroots) youth players when hosting a US Soccer Grassroots In-Person Course is just as necessary as having classroom space, fields to use and candidates to instruct. Here are some ideas to secure them:

Before even scheduling a course, you may want to consider the availability of the players based on their season. You may want to first find out when players are available, then to schedule the courses rather than vice-versa. Reaching out to your candidates to encourage them to bring their own team(s) is also a good way to start. The most important thing is to recruit players regardless of whether or not they are from the same team or club.

It is also helpful to have the assistance of an administrator that can help on-site. The administrator or lead instructor should then confirm the players' attendance, and then get them organized as they arrived.

Be sure to establish a relationship with the hosting club or organization. Likely, there is someone within that club that will help organize and recruit players. Find out who the contact is and reach out to discuss the purpose of the course and your needs. Hosting a U.S. Soccer Grassroots course is a benefit to not only the coaches, but also to the club's players and parents. Essentially, it's another opportunity to inform about the benefits of P-P-P.

Once your course is set, we suggest that one of the most important connections is between the instructor and the coach of the team the kids come from. It is good to have the contact information of the coach and to check at one week prior to the course and then again at least two days prior to the course.

Next, choose a platform that will allow you to advertise the event and gather the necessary data so that you may communicate with players' parents for the purpose for the players' attendance, provide links to the fields, specific field numbers, or if any changes arise within the course. Google forms, survey monkey, and or your own player registration platform are all web-based platforms that have this capability. Once you have selected the platform to use, define the date/times, location, age group needed, and maximum number of players required. For example:

Age Group:	10 & Under, 9 & Under (7v7 Grassroots Course)
Date/Time:	February 1 st , from 9:30am - 11:00am
Location:	Field name and address
Max # of players needed:	12 - 24***

Important considerations:

1. Time: think about exactly when you will need the players. For example, a Grassroots course using the 2-2 format that begins on the field, will likely involve a 30-minute briefing on the session plan before you need the players. Factor this in when setting the schedule for the players.
2. Players Needed: The Max # of players needed gets tricky. If you have more than 12 candidates on the course, then you need another instructor, and can use two "sets" of players. Use discretion in this area.
3. Contact/safety information for the players' parents.

Once you've determined the above data you are ready to create an "event". Use a fun title like, "FREE PLAYER CLINIC as part of a U.S. Soccer Coaching Course – Calling all 8 – 10-year olds!" or something that will attract parents to have their child participate. In the details of the event, be certain to list the information parents need to know. Think of the "5, W's". Here is a screenshot of a google form used in the past:



The screenshot shows a Google Form titled "US Soccer - Free Clinic for 6 to 10 year olds!". The form has a header with the USA Soccer logo and a background image of a soccer field. The form is currently in the "RESPONSES" view, showing 65 responses. The main question is "Would your child like to participate in a free clinic hosted by US SOCCER??" with a "YES" button. Below this, there are details about the event: "WHEN: January 6th, 2018: 10:30am - 12:00am & 2:30pm - 4:30pm", "WHERE: Briarwood Church, 2200 Briarwood Way, Birmingham, AL 35243.", "WHY: To play soccer with some outstanding coaches for free!", and "WHAT: A free clinic hosted by US Soccer to teach coaches new US Soccer Coaching Methodology that kids will love!". There are also two required questions: "What is the name of your child who will participate?" and "What year was the child born?".

You may want to note in your event information if you will only accept a certain number of players. If so, make it a first come, first serve sign up. Doing so will also help attract people to sign up fast and give you a better idea of the number of kids you will have to use in the course.

Once the event is created, insert survey questions to gather the information you need for each player. Here are some important items to consider (make these questions "required" on the survey):

- Player's name
- Player's birth year
- Parent/guardian's name
- Parent/guardian's cell phone
- Parent/guardian's best email (Note all communication about the event will be sent to this address)
- A waiver agreement to release you and all parties involved from any liability

You may want to consider collecting data like which team each child currently plays with. This information could help you form groups if you have players with different ability levels attending the event. Insert questions for any other important items that will help you successfully run the event.

Once you complete the survey, send the link out to the groups of players you are targeting. Here are some suggestions:

- Local club academies
- Local club recreational programs
- State Association members
- Programs outside of membership base, for example a local park district recreation program, Boy's and Girl's Club

Whichever platform you use will have a method to download the responses into a spreadsheet. Use this to collect the responses, organize groups for the sessions, and communicate with all participants. Be sure to download and print the roster and keep phone numbers readily available.

Be sure to keep players safe and engage with the parents to the purpose of the Play-Practice-Play methodology.

Have a great course!!