

WSLA 12U 8v8 Cheat Sheet

Key Reminders

With increased touches and involvement, the games will be fast and fun! Like basketball, players will run the field more often with less play stoppage. More touches and involvement for all players = Increased Development

The 8v8 format will increase player skill and involvement as there is 'no where to hide.'

Roster size recommendation > WSLA encourages 14-18 players per team: the pace of 8v8 format at the 12U level will be fast. Players will tire quickly, thus the need for substitutions (on the fly during offensive transition).

Practice & Coaching Strategies with 12U Shift

Keep things as they are! Practice all your 12U players together with your typical coach(es) and make a plan for game coverage.

Coaches are encouraged to teach the same defensive, offensive, transition and draw strategies. With less bodies to manage while teaching said concepts, all players get more reps and develop at a faster pace (5v5 settled play is less crowded than 7v7).

Coaching is more approachable under 8v8 game format. To most 12U players, it will feel like a continuation of 10U play with slightly advanced rules. Home games can be scheduled singularly, simultaneously or back-to-back (allows coaches to be available for multiple teams should you have more than one team under the new format)

Away games - if your program has 2 teams and they are playing in different locations, split coaches and bring HS player helpers! Game management and subbing is easier with 8v8 play.

Adult volunteer coaches, HS player coaching assistants, HS Player Coaches, Paid coaches - we don't want you to change what is already working for your program.

Field Setup and Play (8v8, including goalie)

5v5 settled play at either end of field, holding 2 back over mid restraining line, 1 goalie

Play a 2/3/2 model (like a miniature full field 4/3/4 model) OR 5/2 where the first 5 players to transition over play offense/defense while holding 2 back. BOTH WORK!!

Maximize length of the field widthwise

Goalie crease and 8m are required (field lining, dots, flat cones, tape etc.)

Game/Field time = 1 hr

Settled play = identical to full field play & concepts but with less players.

