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Manitoba Soccer Announces New U12 Provincial Grassroots Festival

A modern, small-sided weekend celebration of soccer designed to expand access and elevate player development across all Manitoba regions.

WINNIPEG, MB — November 2, 2026 — Manitoba Soccer is excited to announce the launch of the Manitoba Soccer U12 Provincial Grassroots Festival, a new provincial grassroots event debuting in 2028. Centered on modern Long-Term Player Development (LTPD) principles and Canada Soccer Grassroots Standards, this initiative is designed to provide hundreds of young players from every corner of the province with an inspiring, high-action soccer experience.

As part of this progressive direction, Manitoba Soccer will transition its provincial programming away from participation in the multi-sport Manitoba Games model. While traditional games structures focus heavily on early selection and podium pathways, Manitoba Soccer's strategic priority for U12 players (*Learn to Train* stage) is rooted in broad participation, multi-position learning, and positive grassroots experiences.

"Our responsibility is to build environments that reflect modern child development and keep kids in love with the game," said Chris Lourenco, Manitoba Soccer Technical Lead. *"By evolving our Manitoba Games model into a dedicated grassroots festival, we remove the pressure of early selection and static rosters. We are opening the doors to more players from rural and urban communities alike to represent their clubs on a provincial stage."*

Key Highlights of the U12 Provincial Grassroots Festival:

- **Fast-Paced 5v5 Match Format**: Shifting from 11v11 or 9v9 to a continuous 5v5 environment (4 outfield players + 1 goalkeeper) to provide up to five times more ball contact, constant 1v1 opportunities, and rapid decision-making.
- **Club Pools & Fluid Rosters**: Rather than locking kids into rigid "A" or "B" teams, clubs will register player pools. Club technical leads will have the autonomy to rotate players dynamically across the weekend, ensuring balanced competition and equal, meaningful minutes for every participant.
- **Centralized Celebration with a Rotating Future**: Year one will be hosted centrally in Winnipeg to accommodate province-wide participation and multi-pitch infrastructure, with the vision of rotating host communities across regional Manitoba in future editions.

- **Festival Culture**: A vibrant atmosphere featuring continuous match blocks, different activations, and coach/referee mentorship, without the stress of tournament standings or medal tables.

Comprehensive technical packages and event dates will be shared directly with Clubs in early 2027.

For more information, please contact the Manitoba Soccer Association at (204) 594-5809 or visit www.manitobasoccer.ca.