



# ***TOPSoccer-Rama***

Georgia Youth Soccer

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# What is TOPSoccer-Rama?

- TOPSoccer-Rama is a one day event that introduces the game of soccer to the optimum number of disabled youth within our communities.
- TOPSoccer-Rama is an event that is used to grow the TOPSoccer program across the state.
- TOPSoccer-Rama offers disabled youth a fun and exciting day of soccer related activities.

# Overview of GA TOPSoccer-Rama

- GA soccer hosts two events per year. In 2002 more than 800 children with disabilities attended and participated in these events.
- The events are held during the school week which enables the children to utilize school transportation.
- Participants receive a TOPSoccer-Rama t-shirt and a goody bag full of soccer/donated goodies and the ever important medal.

# What they do ...

- The children are engaged in a variety of soccer skills activities and small-sided game opportunities.
  - Soccer Bowling
  - Big Ball Monkey in the Middle
  - Soccer Croquet
  - Parachute Soccer
  - Shoot on goal
  - Small-sided game areas
  - Inflatable games (provided by local professional teams)
  - Bulls-eye Soccer

# Big Ball Soccer

- Big Ball Soccer ...
  - Children have fun with the giant soccer ball. The ball is visually stimulating to the severely intellectually impaired and is easily moved around the field by kids on crutches or in chairs, the higher functioning athlete just has lots of fun with this giant toy!

# Parachute Soccer

- Children use the parachute to play “Popcorn Soccer” ... see how long you can keep 1, 2, 3 or even 4 balls in the air. Or pass the ball under the parachute calling names of the receiver. The severely intellectually impaired are stimulated by the colors, everyone else is enthralled by the fun!

# Soccer Croquet

- Athletes navigate a croquet course. This activity is geared toward the moderately to higher functioning athlete.

# Small-Sided Games

- Several small-sided game areas are provided. The children engage in games for about 20 minutes. Every child can participate in this area ... games are modified to meet the needs of the participants. Practice vests are provided for team identification purposes.

# Inflatable area ...

- Local professional teams are invited to participate in the event. The Atlanta Beat is extremely supportive of TOPSoccer-Rama. They send players, the mascot and their “Speed Kick” game to the event ... you guess which the kids enjoyed more!

# How do we do it?

- The GA TOPSoccer Committee is comprised of a group of talented individuals
  - ❖ A DOC from a local league that has a TOPSoccer Program in place.
  - ❖ An Adaptive P.E. Teacher who brings all of her peers to the events.
  - ❖ A Physical Therapist who also has a program of her own.
  - ❖ The Beta Club Advisor from a local high-school.
  - ❖ The GA Soccer Special Programs Director (me).

# What they bring to the table ...

- The DOC brings a wealth of coaching experience and soccer ideas.
- The Adaptive P.E. teacher brings knowledge and experience in working with the disabled. She is invaluable in terms of skills ideas that meet the needs of ALL participants.
- The Physical Therapist brings much the same as our Adaptive P.E.
- The Beta Club Advisor brings the volunteers!
- The GA Soccer representative brings the support and benefits of GA Soccer membership.

# How it all comes together ...

- Local school authorities are contacted to ensure that we can advertise the event in the various school systems. This has yet to be denied – most systems are thrilled to have such an opportunity offered to their disabled population.
- Approximately 8 - 10 weeks prior to the event registration forms are sent out to the special education teachers throughout targeted school systems. The registration forms are due back to the administrator at least 3 - 4 weeks prior to the event.. Children are registered by the class not on an individual basis, though this does occur in certain circumstances.

## In the meantime ...

- Our Beta Club Advisor has contacted clubs from the area high schools and asked for volunteers (buddies). Ideally we like to have 1 “buddy” for every three participants. The schools are asked to have their “buddies” on site at least 1 hour prior to the scheduled event start time and are advised that end time is 1 hour past scheduled event end time.
- Committee and park/league officials meet at the selected event site to determine event map. Generally we keep the elementary aged kids separate from the middle and high school kids.

# And ...

- As registrations come in a running total is kept in terms of school type and student ability (see hand-out).
- T-Shirts are ordered.
- Medallions are counted and bagged by class.
- Final communication sent to the classes (see handout).
- Goody bags are stuffed.
- Adult volunteers are garnered via the GA Soccer website.
- Local club and state DOC's are invited to attend and assist. They are particularly useful at the small-sided areas. It is also beneficial in introducing them to TOPSoccer ... they become incredibly supportive after having attended our little event!

# Last week preparations ...

- Number of skills areas are determined based upon age groups registered (Elementary, Middle and High Schools)
- Visit of facility to determine location of skills areas, port-a-lets and other equipment. (You will probably need to have port-a-lets just as a matter of convenience to the more severely impaired participant)
- Balls are inflated and bagged. Other equipment is accounted for and signs are made for each skills area.
- Volunteer attendance is confirmed and assignments are given (where possible).
- Key volunteer areas are
  - Registration
  - Parking (it isn't easy to park 200 buses)
  - Skills area supervisors
  - Water cooler and cup suppliers

# Equipment Needed

- Soccer Bowling
  - Bowling Pins
  - Balls
  - Bowling ramp (used by athletes in wheelchairs)
  - Configure pins in groups of 3 or 4 so that more than 1 athlete can play at a time.

# Soccer Croquet

- Croquet Set
- Balls
- Set up at least 2 courses per set so that more than one child goes at a time.

# Big Ball Soccer

- Big ball

# Parachute Soccer

- Parachutes
- Soccer Balls

# Small Sided Game Areas

- Portable goals
- Balls
- Practice vests
- Cones
- Whistles
- Big balls for wheelchair athletes.

# Shooting on Goal

- Goal
- Balls
- Cones (form a large arc of cones outside the goal area so that more than one child shoots on goal at a time)

# Bulls-Eye Soccer

- Paint (to paint bulls-eye)
- String (to form bulls-eye circles)
- Balls

## Other items etc.

- Adequate handicapped accessible bathroom facilities including cleaning supplies (hand sanitizer etc.).
- Changing area/facility for the severely impaired.
- Whistles
- Walkie Talkies/Cell Phones for key personnel.
- Coolers and cups.
- Signs indicating skills area number and activity.

# The Big Day!

- Committee members and select group of adult volunteers arrive at the field by 7:00 AM to set-up areas.
- Equipment is unloaded and distributed to assigned areas. Coolers and cups are set up at strategic areas around the facility.
- Bulls-eye areas are painted.
- Beta-Club “Buddies” begin to arrive at least one hour prior to scheduled start time.
- Volunteers and Buddies are given their assignments and await the arrival of the school buses.

# The buses arrive ...

- “Buddies” have been assigned to specific schools/classes. As the buses arrive key personnel confirm the identity of the school/class and call for the assigned buddies. The children unload.
- Traffic control person advises bus driver where to park.
- The buddies greet their group and proceed to the appropriate field area. The teacher registers her group and provides a list of needed t-shirt sizes.

# On the field of play ...

- The athletes are led and assisted by their “buddies” around the various skills areas. We encourage them to stay at each area 15 – 20 minutes and at least 30 minutes at the small-sided area ... depending on the size of the group.
- The teacher determines when his/her group is ready to stop for lunch (the schools bring lunches). While the children are resting/eating the teacher picks up the t-shirts (which have been bagged), medals and other goodies.
- After lunch the children go back to play.

# End of the day ...

- Schools leave at different times and the teachers determine when their students are ready to depart. They locate their buses and go! This part of the operation is very simple ... the groups are quite self-sufficient.
- When all of our guests are gone, everyone pitches in on the clean-up and loading of the truck. Then we all go home for a much needed rest!

# For more information on hosting a TOPSoccer-Rama contact ...

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