

Creating the Lineup

The single biggest difference you as a coach make on game day is the line up. Recognizing that Player Development is a [core philosophy](#), that means that all players should get exposure to all positions over the course of a season. That doesn't mean that you randomly distribute and rotate players through, you indeed want to give your team the best chance at success (subject to good player development). That means that during regular season play you should first adhere to this minimum standard:

- No player plays 4 quarters until all players have played 3 quarters
- No player shall rest 2 quarters twice until all other players have rested 2 quarters once
- Players do not rest the same quarter each game and should never rest 2 quarters in a row
- No player (including keeper) should play the same position the entire game. Every player should play on defense and offense at least 1 quarter every game

A lineup spreadsheet where you track previous lineups will come in very handy. The above is all you need to factor in for 8u (4v4). You can simply rotate each player through each position (as you'll have a max of 3 positions and sometimes only 2).

For 10u and up, you have some more decisions to make. Here are the passes I make through my lineup template:

- Record any players that are absent so you know how many subs are needed each quarter. You are tracking [availability](#), right?
- Starting with your best player on down one at a time complete their full game assignments. I tend to value my Center Mid(s) and Centerback(s) as my most important

position, followed by Center Forward

- Try to not have players playing high work rate positions (e.g. center midfield) twice in a row to give them rest
- Balance out the quarter by not having your stronger players resting at the same time

Here is a simple [Google Sheet template](#) that I use for my games you should easily be able to adapt for your needs. There are plenty of websites, Excel docs, and apps you can seek out if you want to get fancier.