

# Mini-soccer improves players' skill level

By Steven Lee

Every year a number of parents are surprised to discover that their new soccer player plays a variant of the "traditional" soccer game, called mini, or 7-a-side soccer. This year, U6 to U9 players, both boys' and girls' teams, will play mini in Georgetown. Mini-soccer is strongly endorsed by both the Canadian and Ontario Soccer Associations as the preferred version of soccer for younger players.

Mini-soccer, is played on a smaller field, with smaller goals and ball, and a minimum of the more-complex rules. While there are usually 12 players on a team, only seven, (six players and a goalkeeper) play one at a time. The game is divided into four quarters, and players are rotated to ensure that everyone gets an equal opportunity to play. The game is also reduced from the traditional 90 minutes.

The basic principles behind mini-soccer are simple. The equipment, field, game length, etc. are adjusted to meet the needs of younger children. The reduced number of players increases the opportunity for each child to "touch" the ball more frequently in the game - and ball-handling skills are improved in direct proportion to the opportunities presented. Everyone gets a chance to get involved, no matter what his or her ability. Some of the rules are adjusted for safety reasons. For example, each goalkeeper has a "safe" area, directly in front of the goal, within which opposing players are not permitted to shoot on goal. This reduces the possibility of a melee in which a small goalie gets kicked or injured by point-blank shots, and thus discouraged. Other rules, such as the off-side rule, are also eliminated, because of the difficulty of very small children understanding the implications, resulting in a large number of stoppage in play. Coaches are allowed on the field during play, where they can encourage players, keep them going in the right direction, and tie up the odd bootlace!

Equipment needs for the younger player are quite simple, as the Club provides shirt, shorts, and socks. Inexpensive soccer boots are available in local sports and department stores, although "turf shoes" and running shoes are quite adequate. Shin guards, also quite inexpensive, are very strongly recommended. Parents may also want to consider providing an athletic support or pelvic protector - a "jock" or "jill". Most kids also bring a water bottle to the game to wash down the traditional half-time orange slices (for some, the highlight of the game!). Registration fee for a

mini player is \$50. Games are played one night a week throughout the season (May - September). A typical game might have the team meeting at 6 p.m. for a 30 minute practice, followed by a game till about 7:15. Emphasis is placed on participation, building skills, and having a good time, not on "winning", and thus no team standings or individual statistics are kept. At the end of the season, the "final day" involves every team playing one game, and all participants receive identical awards, together with team photos.

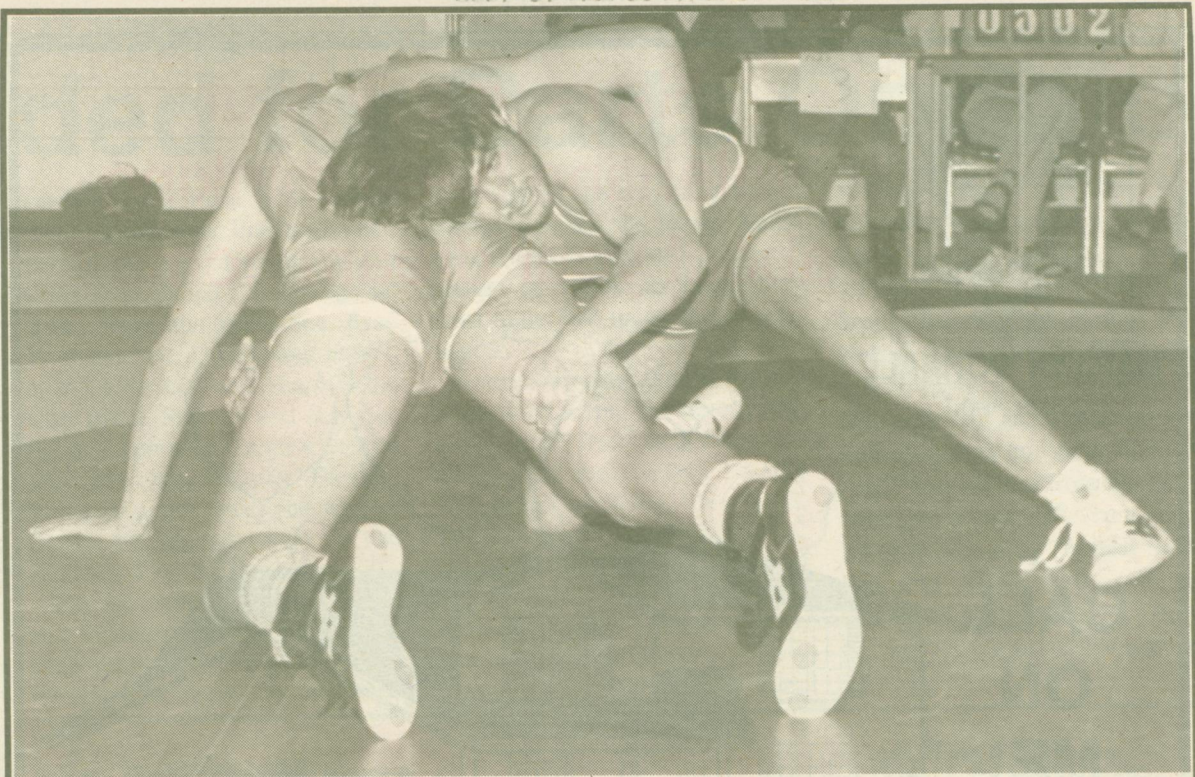
Soccer is a terrific game for young children, providing excellent exercise, building stamina, and improving coordination. The games are fast-paced and usually entertaining, leaving little time for boredom. Kids learn the importance of playing as a team, and valuing the contributions of everyone, and a sense of accomplishment. - while not everyone will score a goal, they will get a chance to "give the ball a boot" - a pretty satisfying feeling. Soccer is also, of course, excellent off-season training for hockey, as in addition to improving balance and other physical skills, the basic structure of the game - forwards, defenders, goalie, passing, shooting, quick transition from defensive to offensive play, and blending individual skill and creativity with team-work - is very similar to that of hockey. (Two years of soccer game my own eight-year old daughter the confidence to try hockey this winter - which she loves!).

Registration for all soccer for the upcoming season takes place at Alcott arena (upstairs) on Saturday, February 27th, 1 - 4 p.m. and Wednesday, March 10th, 6 - 9 p.m. Please bring a photocopy of your child's birth certificate or other proof of age. And we always need coaches and managers!!

## Georgetown bowl

### Monday Men's League

LJB Contractors	81
Countrywide Real Estate	73
Acid Rainbow	64
Custom Car Sound	57
Sam's Service Centre	55
Los Amigos	51
Arnies	51
<b>High Averages</b>	
Bryan Creasey	225
Gord Lane	224
Brinley Hole	221
Paul Chaplin	218
Bruce Clarke	213
<b>High Triples</b>	
Bryan Creasey	803 (275)
Tom Prouse	725 (303)
Brinley Hole	711 (344)
Gord Lane	699 (266)
John Prouse	691 (251)



Competition was tough at the Halton Junior Wrestling Championship at Georgetown District High School Wednesday, but Georgetown captured 1st for the third year in a row with 92 points. Some 112 competitors from 11 schools toughed it out on the mats. E.C.Drury finished 2nd with 80 points, Burlington Central was 3rd with 43 points. Photo by Wendy Long.

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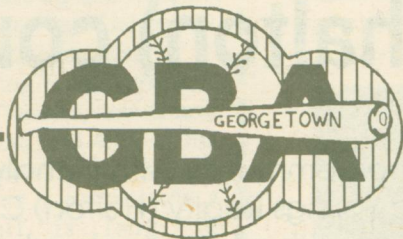
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## GEORGETOWN BASEBALL ASSOCIATION REGISTRATION

**Tuesday, February 16 6 - 9 p.m.**  
**Alcott Arena**

**"Open" Indoor Workouts** begin next week,  
check your newsletter or phone 877-7954

**"Rep" Tryouts** begin after March Break