



KINGSTON UNITED SOCCER CLUB PRESENTS

TAMARACK HOMES “Tip of The Week”

Often parents and/or players are not sure about which boot they should invest in for their child.

Historically boots we first constructed with protection in mind. Some of the very first boots originate back to the 1800's in the form of a heavy steel toed work boot with studs. As the game developed and styles of play changed so did the football boot -- from a boot that had protection in mind to a lighter weighted boot that would boast to enhance performance.

Today a parent shopping for boots for a child ages 4 or 5 need look no further than standard running shoes. It is not important at this age and often a child's first experience is better when they feel more stable in footwear they are familiar and comfortable with. It's okay to wear runners at this age.

Fifa laws of the game #4 – Player's Equipment - under Basic Equipment simply stipulates footwear must be worn. Further explanations under Law #4 relates:

- A player must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous to himself or another player
- the referee checks that the player's equipment is correct before allowing him to re-enter the field of play

(Leagues may prohibit specific types of cleats that do not fall within the regards of safety in mind. For example the use of metal cleats and or cleats that may be long and sharp)

Parents will start looking closer into types of footwear at the age of 6 and up as many children now continue on with a specific sport of interest

Seasonal weather and depending on how a field is maintained throughout the season can determine whether the field is hard or soft, flatter or uneven in spots.

The types of programs a child may be involved in during the off season will also have parents shopping for the most appropriate boot. Surfaces indoor may be gymnasium, indoor flat carpet type turf, or artificial grass turf. The layers beneath the turf surface will vary as well where a good base has been laid vs. a thinner layered base.

When shopping for your boots ask yourself?

Is the playing surface hard or soft?

How long will my child be able to wear the boots?

How much money should I spend? More expensive or the best deal? What is the trade off?

When youth stop growing and they have now been playing the game for many years it makes sense that some parents / youth may start to look at a more expensive investment in a soccer boot. This may mean investing in a turf boot in addition to an outdoor boot. It could also have parents looking at what type of material the boot is made of. Synthetic vs. leather will make a difference in the cost but what are the considerations?

Natural leathers are known for their softness, excellent ball touch and ability to shape to the foot. Natural leathers are made from animal hides, while synthetic leathers are man-made materials.

Consider how long you expect them to last, how much you are willing to spend and your style of play. You should know that while leathers are the preferred for many of the more serious minded soccer players they do tend to absorb more water and so would not be recommended when constantly playing in wet fields. A leather boot can stretch up to half a size, is more comfortable but requires more care.

Synthetic constructed boots are usually lighter and more durable than natural leather boots however they do not provide the same comfort as a natural leather. They are less expensive and don't need as much care as leather. Synthetics seem to be the popular trend for new cleats.

The more expensive shoes may not be as durable as a more affordable type but the best boots are designed with performance and weight in mind.

Cleaning your boots regularly after each game will help to extend length of time you will be able to use them. With a lot of wear and tear in a game typically expect to get a full season out of a pair of boots.

Womens shoe sizes are available and offer a more streamlined fit for females however some women prefer to wear shoes with male sizing if they find the right fit.

What Type of Boot and When Do I Wear Them?

Indoor - In a gymnasium -- a flat runner is most appropriate They are created for playing indoor soccer in a gym. Look for runners without a heavy blunt toe and can be worn like a regular street running shoe.

On Turf -- shorter rubber multi studs or boots with patterns on the outsole. Will help improve traction and can be used for training or as back up pair of shoes on hard surfaces. The outsole of a turf boot should be very durable.

Outdoors – Hard Surface – bladed cleats or a mix of bladed / conical cleats will give the player more traction and less opportunity for injury.

Outdoors- Soft Surface -- Soccer shoes created for soft ground play have longer cleats for maximum traction on wet, muddy fields. Soft ground cleats may have metal-tipped and/or detachable studs. The studs on soft ground shoes are also usually varying lengths. Exchangeable and removable studs can be customized for playing conditions and fields. Check with your league to see if there are restrictions with the use of metal cleats.

Lots of choices and at the end of the day the individual youth will determine his or her ability level, not really the boots so common sense can help you make the right decision.

Good Luck with Your Soccer Boot Shopping!