

SSA Game Day Handbook

U5 to U8 Recreational Program



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Accessing Schedules and Rosters

Schedules are available on the Recreational homepage of your SSA website.

Rosters are emailed by the club via Blue Sombrero to the email address associated with your account.

Only those players that are on your team roster are able to practice and play on with your team.

KINS Philosophy

Overview

SSA supports GA Soccer's Kicking Is Not Soccer (KINS) philosophy for Under 5 to Under 12 soccer players. For most, the Recreational Program at these ages is essentially the players' first experience with the game of soccer, so it is important for the players to be given the opportunity to develop in a fun and purposeful environment.

Main Objectives

First Objective: To promote and emphasize the skill of dribbling at the U5 through U12 age groups, and discourage aimless kicking of the ball.

When young players are conditioned to just kick the ball forward as far as possible, their skill development is stunted, making it harder for them to reach their true potential. Dribbling is the foundation and preparation for all the other fundamental skills of soccer, such as controlling, passing, and shooting. Laying the proper dribbling foundation at the youngest years will enhance the players' ability to improve all soccer skills. No matter what level the players will end up playing, recreational or select, they

will derive increased pleasure from the game if they can control the ball better and become more adept at manipulating it.

Second Objective: To promote decision making by the players on the field and reduce their dependence on adults for problem solving. Soccer is a player's game, meaning that it's the player who must make the decisions on the field. Therefore, frequent positive reinforcement (praise and encouragement) should be given but limited instruction.

Role as a Parent

It's often hard for you to watch your child lose the ball in front of his/her own goal and for the other team to score. So, the next time your child has the ball in his/her half, you can't help it and shout "kick it!" But every time they kick it, they lose another opportunity to learn to dribble. Therefore, instead of using the words 'kick it' during the games or practices, replace this with '**Soft First Touch**' and '**Keep It Close**'. Every time your child goes to the ball, his/her first touch on the ball should be a soft one, providing the opportunity to dribble.

Dribbling and Passing

There is a strong correlation between the ability to dribble and the ability to pass. Typically, the best dribblers in the team are also the best passers. This is because both of these skills require the ability to shift body weight quickly from one foot to the other and balance on one foot while propelling the ball with the other. Once a player becomes a good dribbler, he/she automatically starts to look up and survey the field in between touches, increasing the chance of a pass.

Player's Equipment

- Players must wear their uniform, (SSA jersey, shorts, and socks) for each game
- Shin guards are mandatory and must be a commercially manufactured product specifically designed for the purpose. Home-made products will not be allowed
- Shin guards should be covered with socks
- Soccer cleats are recommended for U5 and U6 players. (Tennis shoes are allowed)
- Soccer cleats are mandatory for U8 players
- No baseball, softball, or football cleats are allowed
- Players should bring their soccer ball (size 3)
- Players should bring a drink
- No jewelry should be worn by players
- Players are not allowed to play with a cast (hard or soft)
- For safety, players may not participate with improper equipment

Avoiding A “Blowout”

In an effort to provide an environment that is both fun and productive for teams to continue to develop, avoiding a “blowout” is key. A “blowout” is a game in which one team is scoring a significantly higher amount of goals than the opposition, for example 6-0. This type of scoreline does not help the development of either team and can hurt the collective psychology of the opposition. A few helpful hints in avoiding this are listed below:

- 1) If your team has a dominant player (player who is scoring all of the goals)....
 - a) Challenge that player to dribble only with their weaker foot
 - b) Challenge that player to pass the ball to a teammate to see if their teammate can score
 - c) Challenge that player to only shoot with their weaker foot
 - d) Challenge that player to perform at least one move (e.g. a turn move) before dribbling towards opponent’s goal

- 2) If your team has more than one dominant player...
 - a) As well as the options above, attempt to balance your team so you don’t have all of the dominant players on the same field at the same time
 - b) Have one of the dominant players in goal and rotate them with other dominant players
 - c) Ask team to make a certain number of consecutive passes before going to goal
 - d) Ask team to shoot first time (which forces players have to pass to each other)
 - e) Ask all players on your team to touch the ball before they can go to goal. If opponent’s touch the ball then they all must touch it again before going to goal

*** Identify these dominant players to Recreational Director so the club may provide an opportunity for them to play in a more challenging environment the following season

Although it may be difficult for players (and some parents) to comprehend what you are asking of your team, by manipulating the environment it will hopefully provide your team with a greater challenge to further their development while allowing the opposition an opportunity to develop also. Remember the emphasis of recreational soccer is Player Development, and not winning!

Rescheduling Games

Given the impact that the weather can have on game schedules, SSA administration may proactively reschedule rained-out games as a means to ensure that teams end up playing a reasonable number of games over the course of a season.

Please note that games will not be rescheduled for Under 5 to Under 8 teams due to a coach conflict. Games will be played as scheduled and although the club will help, it will be the responsibility of the team to provide an appropriate replacement (i.e. assistant coach or willing parent/guardian).

We do not anticipate coach conflicts, but if they do occur we hope that each team would be willing to support the players and help with games. At these young ages, there is very limited “coaching” involved during the game. As long as you are familiar with the game format, the game should run smoothly and the players will have an enjoyable experience.

U5 and U6 Game Format

The following is a brief overview of how games are conducted for the Under 5 and Under 6 program:

Start Of Play

- o Teams are split into 2 groups and play simultaneously on 2 fields against another team
- o Games are 3v3 so all players can be involved in the action and get touches on the ball
- o HOME team kicks off
- o Players should dribble from kick off
- o Parents/helpers/coaches should remain around the perimeter of the playing field allowing the players to have a chance to play

Game Play

- o Coaches should communicate before the game and attempt to match up players on the two fields to create a more balanced environment
- o Players may be rotated between fields during games
- o The game begins and 10 minutes of soccer is played
- o A short water break is taken for both teams
- o Players return to the field and play another 10 minutes of soccer
- o A short water break is taken for both teams
- o Players return to the field and play 10 minutes of soccer
- o A short water break is taken for both teams
- o Players return to the field and play another 10 minutes of soccer
- o Game ends. A total of 40 minutes of soccer is played

New Ball Method

- o “New ball method” means that when a ball goes out of the field of play, players remain on the field and a different ball is ROLLED along the ground onto the field from the side where the ball went out of play
- o A minimum of 2 helpers (coaches or parents) is needed per field (1 from each team per field)
- o A helper is on one sideline, and the second helper on the opposite sideline
- o Helpers should have a soccer ball in hand and are responsible for keeping the game going

- o If the ball goes out on their side then they ROLL a new ball to the team that did not kick it out (preferably toward a player that has not been as involved in the game)
- o Upon a goal, both teams return to the middle. One helper puts a new ball in the middle and the other can get the ball out of the goal

Substitutions

- o Additional players are substitutes and should be rotated in to the game every 3-4 minutes so all players receive equal playing time
- o All players must receive a minimum of 50% playing time
- o It is recommended to have a parent/helper manage the subs on game day in order to keep track of who has played.
- o It is recommended that substitutions occur quickly, and at the same time, to reduce delay in game play

Basic Rules

- o *Goal* - both teams return to the middle. One helper puts a new ball in the middle and the other can get the ball out of the goal
- o *Handball* - Players are not allowed to use their hands to touch/control the ball. If this is occurring frequently then quickly stop the game and inform everyone that they must use their feet and not their hands and then quickly get the game going again
- o *Pushing* - At these ages players are bound to bump into each other but pushing is not allowed and should be addressed if this is occurring by reminding players during practice activities and Saturday games that pushing is not allowed
- o If a player is consistently pushing during the game, then sub them out. Once subbed, walk over to that player and ask them why they have been subbed? If the player doesn't know, then inform them that they were pushing and show them the action that is not allowed. Hopefully, this will help the player to become aware that they are not meant to be doing this. When they return to play keep an eye on their behavior to see if it has improved.

U8 Game Format

The following is a brief overview of how games are conducted for the Under 8 program:

Start Of Play

- o Games are 5v5 including a GK
- o HOME team kicks off
- o Players should pass to their teammate from kick off
- o Players should rotate positions and not spend too long in goal
- o Coaches should remain on opposite sidelines and are responsible for refereeing the game. If the ball goes out on their side then they can give the other team a new ball.
- o Parents/helpers/coaches should remain off of the playing field allowing the players to have a chance to play

Game Play

- o The game begins and 12 minutes of soccer is played
- o A short water break is taken for both teams
- o Players return to the field and play another 12 minutes of soccer
- o A short water break is taken for both teams
- o Players switch sides of the field
- o Players play 12 minutes of soccer
- o A short water break is taken for both teams
- o Players return to the field and play another 12 minutes of soccer
- o Game ends. A total of 48 minutes of soccer is played

Substitutions

- o Additional players are substitutes and should be rotated in to the game every 6 minutes (half way through each quarter) so all players receive equal playing time
- o All players must receive a minimum of 50% playing time
- o It is recommended to have a parent/helper manage the subs on game day in order to keep track of who has played.
- o It is recommended that substitutions occur quickly, and at the same time, to reduce delay in game play

Basic Rules

- o *Goal Kick* - If team A kicks the ball out of bounds for a goal kick then team A must retreat to the half way line. Team B goalkeeper places the ball on the ground inside the goal area/box and passes to a teammate as quickly as possible. As soon as the goalkeeper passes the ball, Team A can attempt to get the ball
- o *Goalkeepers Ball/Not a Goal Kick* - If team A shoots the ball and Team B goalkeeper picks the ball up in the goal area/box, then play continues. The goalkeeper does not have to put the ball on the ground but should throw or kick (pass) the ball to a teammate as quickly as possible. Team A does not have to retreat to the half way line if the goalkeeper picks the ball up and the ball does not go out of play
- o *Corner Kick* - If Team A kicks the ball out on the end line where their own goal is then it is a corner. A player from Team B places the ball down in the corner and his/her teammates should be positioned close to the goal so the corner taker can pass the ball into the middle to them. Players should not retreat to the halfway line
- o *Goal* – When a goal is scored, teams return to the half way line. A coach puts a new ball in the middle and the game is restarted
- o *Pushing* - At these ages players are bound to bump into each other but pushing is not allowed and should be addressed. An intentional push results in a foul to the player/team that was pushed. If frequent pushing occurs by a certain player then this player should be substituted and the behavior addressed.
- o *Foul* – Any intentional handballs, pushing, tripping, kicking etc results in an indirect free kick from the spot where the foul occurred. The game is stopped and ball is given to the opposing team.
- o *Indirect Free Kick* – awarded to the opposing team when a player commits a foul. Defending team must remain 6 yards away from the ball before it is kicked. A goal may not be scored directly from an indirect free kick, rather it must be touched by a second player (either team) before a goal can be scored. If the ball goes in goal directly from an indirect free kick, a goal kick is awarded to the defending team.

Rules and Regulations

U5 and U6 LAWS OF THE GAME

Law #1: The Field of Play

- The field of play must be rectangular and shall be approximately 20 yards by 30 yards
- There shall be no penalty area, goal area or penalty kick mark
- The goal shall be approximately 6 feet wide and 4 feet high. Goals must be anchored securely to the ground. Portable goals may only be used if they satisfy this requirement
- No one (spectators or participants) shall be allowed behind the end lines during the course of a game

Law #2: The Ball

- Players shall use a size 3 ball

Law #3: Number of Players & Substitutions

- A match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than three (3) players
- Minimum of two (2) players per side needed to start or continue the game
- There are no goalkeepers
- Each player must play a minimum of 50% of the total playing time, unless he or she is unable to do so, or at the parent's request
- Teams and matches may be coed
- Substitutions may occur at any stoppage and unlimited, and are recommended every 3-4 minutes, and at the end of each half
- If one team substitutes for an injured player, the opposing team may also substitute (one player for each injured player substituted)

Law #4: Player's Equipment

- Shin guards are mandatory and must be a commercially manufactured product specifically designed for the purpose. Home-made products will not be allowed
- Shin guards should be covered with socks
- For safety reasons, molded soccer cleats are strongly recommended, but tennis shoes are acceptable. No baseball, softball, or football cleats are allowed
- Players are not allowed to play with a cast (hard or soft)
- All players on the same team shall wear the same color uniforms

- For safety, players may not participate with improper equipment

Law #5: Referees

- No referees are used. Instead the coach shall supervise the game for safety sake and will act as the game official

Law #6: Assistant Referees

- No Assistant Referees are used

Law #7: Duration of the Game

- A coach will act as official timekeeper
- The match day shall consist of two (2) games, each consisting of two (2) equal halves of ten (10) minutes
- There shall be a half-time interval of two (2) minutes
- There shall be a three (3) minute break between games

Law #8: The Start of Play

- Each team shall be represented at the field of play by a coach, assistant coach, or a parent appointed in his/her place for the duration of the game
- The opponents must be four (4) yards from the center mark while a kick-off is in progress
- The designated home team will begin with kick-off to start the match
- A kick-off will be taken to restart the game after a goal is scored

Law #9: Ball In and Out of Play

- The ball must be wholly over the goal-line or touch-line whether on the ground or in the air to be declared out of play
- New ball method is used to return ball back into play. Coaches/parents shall supervise the perimeter of the field and shall immediately roll a new ball to the appropriate team from where the ball went out of play

Law #10: Method of Scoring

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- The ball must be wholly over the goal-line to be declared a goal. A ball sitting on the line is still in play (no goal has been scored)

Law #11: Off-Side

- There is no off-side

Law #12: Fouls and Misconduct

- If a child is being too rambunctious then the coach can make a substitution of that player to give the child a chance to calm down before returning to play

Law #13: Free Kick

- There are no free kicks

Law #14: Penalty Kick

- No penalty kicks will be taken

Law #15: Throw-In

- There are no throw-ins

Law #16: Goal Kick

- There are no goal kicks

Law #17: Corner Kick

- There are no corner kicks

U8 LAWS OF THE GAME

Law #1: The Field of Play

- The field of play must be rectangular and shall be approximately 30 yards by 40 yards

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- There shall be a goal area but no penalty area, or penalty kick mark
- The goal shall be approximately 12 feet wide and 6 feet high. Goals must be anchored securely to the ground. Portable goals may only be used if they satisfy this requirement
- No one (spectators or participants) shall be allowed behind the end lines during the course of a game

Law #2: The Ball

- Players shall use a size 3 ball

Law #3: Number of Players & Substitutions

- A match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than five (5) players, one of whom is the goalkeeper
- Minimum of minimum (4) players per side needed to start or continue the game
- Each player must play a minimum of 50% of the total playing time, unless he or she is unable to do so, or at the parent's request
- It is strongly recommended that players be rotated equally
- Player's time spent as goalkeeper must not exceed player's time spent on the field
- Teams and matches may be coed
- Substitutions may occur at any stoppage and unlimited, but are recommended every 6 minutes and at the end of each half
- If one team substitutes for an injured player, the opposing team may also substitute (one player for each injured player substituted)

Law #4: Player's Equipment

- Shin guards are mandatory and must be a commercially manufactured product specifically designed for the purpose. Home-made products will not be allowed
- Shin guards should be covered with socks
- For safety reasons, soccer cleats are mandatory. No baseball, softball, or football cleats are allowed
- Players are not allowed to play with a cast (hard or soft)
- All players on the same team shall wear the same color uniforms
- For safety, players may not participate with improper equipment

Law #5: Referees

- Referees may be assigned to U8 games for referee training and player development purposes though this is not guaranteed and is subject to referee availability. In the event that a referee is not assigned, the coach shall supervise the game for safety sake and will act as the game official

Law #6: Assistant Referees

- No Assistant Referees are used

Law #7: Duration of the Game

- A coach will act as official timekeeper
- The match day shall consist of one (1) game, consisting of four (4) equal quarters of twelve (12) minutes
- There shall be a two (2) minute break after quarters one (1) and three (3)
- There shall be a half-time interval of three (3) minutes between quarters two (2) and three (3)

Law #8: The Start of Play

- Each team shall be represented at the field of play by a coach, assistant coach, or a parent appointed in his/her place for the duration of the game
- The opponents must be six (6) yards from the center mark while a kick-off is in progress
- The designated home team will begin with kick-off to start the match
- A kick-off will be taken to restart the game after a goal is scored

Law #9: Ball In and Out of Play

- The ball must be wholly over the goal line or touch line whether on the ground or in the air to be declared out of play

Law #10: Method of Scoring

- The ball must be wholly over the goal-line to be declared a goal. A ball sitting on the line is still in play (no goal has been scored)

Law #11: Off-Side

- There is no off-side

Law #12: Fouls and Misconduct

- It is recommended that the game officials (referees or coaches) explain all infractions to the offending player
- Goalkeeper can only handle the ball in their goal area
- Opposing players shall not play or touch the ball until it has left the goal area and are required to move away and to the side so as not to interfere with the goalkeeper putting the ball into play
- Teammates are not allowed to receive the ball in the goal area from a goal-kick. This would result in a free kick from where the teammate received the ball
- If during regular play, the goalkeeper rolls the ball to a teammate who is within the goal area then this is not an infringement
- If the goalkeeper punts the ball, and it strikes an opponent who is in the goal area, a free kick to the goalkeeper's team at the spot where the ball contacted the opponent will be awarded
- If the goalkeeper punts the ball, and it strikes a teammate within the goal area and rebounds into the goal, a goal to the opponents is awarded

Law #13: Free Kick

- All free kicks will be indirect and opponents must be at least six (6) yards from the ball until it is in play
- For a free-kick to be taken less than six (6) yards from the goal, the opponents may stand on the goal-line, between the goalposts

Law #14: Penalty Kick

- No penalty kicks will be taken

Law #15: Throw-In

- A throw-in will be taken from the point on the sideline at which the ball went out of play
- Opponents must stand at least three (3) yards from the point at which the throw-in is taken

Law #16: Goal Kick

- The kick may be taken anywhere in the goal area. Opposing team must remain in the opposite half from where the goal kick is taken until the ball is in play (ball travels outside of goal area)

Law #17: Corner Kick

- Taken from the corner of the field of play, and opponents must remain at least six (6) yards from the ball until it is in play

U5 to U8 Refereeing

In reference to the refereeing of the game by coaches....

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Coaches should...

1. Communicate at the beginning of game to decide whether...
 - a. both coaches are calling fouls in their half of the field only
 - b. both coaches are calling fouls regardless of where on field
 - c. whether one coach is taking the lead and calling everything
2. Inform spectators
3. Err on the side of caution and ensure the safety of players at all times

In reference to fouls...

1. Coaches should explain to all players (and spectators) what the foul was called for
2. If opposing coach did not call something that you (coach) felt was a foul then call it and explain to all the reason for the call
3. If both teams are making fouls (whether they are being called or not) then...
 - a. do not let the game get out of hand
 - b. coaches should communicate and any and all remaining fouls should be called for the remainder of the period...this should give the game (players and spectators) a chance to calm down
4. If fouls are being made by one team...
 - a. coach should discuss with opposing coach the types of fouls/behavior that is unacceptable and make sure both coaches are on the same page
 - b. coaches should discuss ways to help provide a safer environment
5. If certain players are getting "rough" with each other...
 - a. coordinate with opposing coach to have one of the players play in goal while the other is on the field, or have one player play on the field while the other is a sub
 - b. keep an eye on things and communicate to opposing coach
6. If a particular player is making continuous similar fouls (rough plays) then...
 - a. First foul - inform player (and all players/spectators) why the foul occurred and explain this behavior is not allowed. Leave player in the game.
 - b. Second foul - inform player (and all players/spectators) why the foul occurred and explain this behavior is not allowed. Sub player.
 - c. If you feel the player is ready to play then place in goal

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- d. If you feel the player is ready to play on field then remind player of unacceptable behavior so he/she understands then give player a chance to play on field
- e. Third foul - inform player (and all players/spectators) why the foul occurred and explain this behavior is not allowed. Sub player and player sits out for at least 6 minutes. Inform parents the reason also so they can help resolve.
- f. If player understands and is ready to play then allow back into play...if behavior continues then remove from game