

The Basics

No matter how long you've been around youth soccer, some of the rules (laws) are still confusing to fully understand. Here are some of the ones we get the most questions about.

Law 4: The Players' Equipment: All players are required to wear a jersey, shorts (without pockets), shin guards, socks and cleats. The socks must cover the shin guards entirely. If the referee deems a player's equipment unsatisfactory, the player can be sent off until the issue is remedied.

Law 5: The Referee: The referee is the authority on the field, and their word is law. If you question a referee's decision you can be disciplined further simply for dissent.

Law 9: The Ball In and Out of Play: The ball is out of play when it **fully crosses** either the goal line or the touch line. All of the ball must be completely across the farthest outside part of the the line. It is also out of play if the referee stops play for any reason. If, for any reason, the ball strikes the frame of the goal or the referee and remains within the goal and touch lines, it is still in play.

Law 10: The Method of Scoring: A goal is scored when the **entire ball** has crossed the goal line.

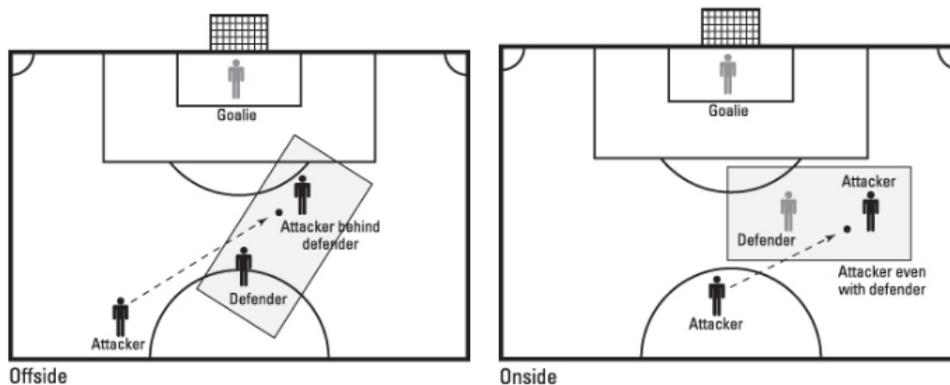
Law 11: Offside: The offside rule is the most debated soccer principle (no matter where the game is played). Here's what offsides is all about:

A player is caught offside if they are nearer to the opponent's goal than both the ball and the second-last opponent (including the goalkeeper) when their team-mate plays the ball to them. In other words, a player can't receive the ball from a team-mate unless there are at least two players either level with them or between them and the goal or unless their team-mate plays the ball backwards to them.

It's **not** an offense in itself to be offside. A player is only penalized for being offside if they are deemed to be involved in active play. So a player can only be called offside if they are:

- In the opposition's half
- Interfering with play (that is, they are part of the attacking move).
- Interfering with an opponent (that is, they are preventing the opponent from defending against the attacking move).
- Gaining any advantage by being in that position

A player can't be offside from a goal kick, throw in, or corner kick.



Law 12: Fouls and Misconducts:

An **indirect** free kick is awarded when a player:

- Plays in a dangerous manner
- Impedes the progress of an opponent
- Prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball
- Commits any unmentioned offense

A **direct** free kick is awarded when a player:

- Kicks, trips, strikes, or attempts to do these to an opponent
- Jumps at, charges, pushes, tackles, holds, or spits at an opponent
- Handles the ball deliberately
- Commits an indirect kick penalty inside their team's penalty area.

Yellow cards are awarded as a caution or warning to a player and can be issued for:

- Unsporting behavior
- Dissent by words or actions
- Persistent infringement of the Laws of the Game
- Delaying the restart of play
- Failure to respect the required distance when play is restarted with a corner kick, free kick, or throw-in
- Entering or deliberately leaving the field without the referee's permission

Red cards are used to send a player off the field and can be issued for:

- Serious foul play or violent conduct
- Spitting at an opponent
- Deliberately handling the ball to stop a goal (the goalkeeper is an exception)
- Denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by an offense punishable by a free kick or penalty kick
- Using offensive or abusive language and/or gestures
- Receiving a second caution (yellow card) in the same game.

Law 13: Free Kicks: Free kicks are broken into two categories, direct and indirect. A **direct** kick can be shot directly into an opponent's goal without touching another player. An **indirect** is indicated by the referee raising their hand during the kick. An indirect kick can only go into the goal if it has been subsequently touched by another player before it enters the goal. The ball must be stationary for both types of kicks.

Law 14: Penalty Kicks: A penalty kick is awarded when a defensive player fouls an attacking player or commits a handball in penalty area. The penalty kick is placed at the penalty spot and all players must remain outside the penalty box during the shot. They may enter the box immediately after the shot is taken. The goalkeeper may move horizontally along the goal line, but may not come off the line until the ball is struck.

Law 15: Throw-In: A throw-in is awarded when the possessing team plays the ball out of bounds over the touch line. While taking a throw-in, a player must release the ball with both hands simultaneously and keep both feet firmly planted on the ground. If these conditions are not met, play is stopped and the throw-in is given to the opposing team. Players are not allowed to score directly off a throw-in.

Law 16: Goal Kick: A goal kick is awarded when the offensive team plays the ball out of bounds over the defensive team's goal line. After the ball is out of play, the defender or goalkeeper may place the ball anywhere within the six-yard goal box and kick the ball back into play.

Law 17: Corner Kick: A corner kick is awarded to the offensive team when the defensive team plays the ball out of bounds over its goal line. The ball is placed within the corner area and is kicked back into play by the offensive team. Players can score directly off a corner kick.