

SPARTA SOCCER CLUB TOWN LEAGUE RULES

Revised August 2017

PLAYERS ON THE FIELD

SEE [“Town League Players on the Field”](#) listed in the Town Tab of the home page for the specific information for the current season.

The goal of the club is to provide a place to play soccer for all children who would like to do so. Therefore, the divisions, the number of teams in each division, the number of players on a roster and the number of players on the field will be determined each season by the Town Vice-President, the Director of Town and the Town Registrar based upon registration.

- In any Division, when the required numbers of players are not present, the coaches MUST agree on an EQUAL number of players to place on the field before the game starts. This is a recreational league where the purpose is to provide a place to play and not to take an unfair advantage because players are missing.
- Should the situation occur where one team does not have enough players PLEASE have players from the full team play for the other team. Make every attempt to play even numbers against each other.
- Remember the coach sets the tone for the game and the players are just here to have fun! The rule is that every player plays at least 75% of every game. This is why there is some flexibility in the numbers on the field, it allows for intelligent subbing, while still making sure everyone plays at least 75%. If this is not happening - please contact someone from the board so we can address the problem. When a player is a sub on the sideline this is a great time to coach/ instruct!
- Use common sense - if the day is hot - have fewer on the field - more subs so everyone can rest / get a drink as necessary.
- Coaches are also encouraged to take action to not run up lop-sided scores. Switch positions, etc. Players should all experience different positions.

PLAYER EQUIPMENT

1. A player may not wear any jewelry or anything that, in the opinion of the referee, is considered to be dangerous.
2. The goalkeeper is required to wear colors (or pinnie) that clearly distinguish him from the other players and the referee.
3. Players on the same team are required to wear the same colored shirts as distributed by the league.
4. All players are required to wear shin guards under socks.
5. Soccer cleats are recommended but optional.
6. Hard casts or other protective devices that may cause injury to other players are not permitted.
- 7.

Goalkeepers:

One player on the field from each team shall be designated as the goalkeeper **except in Div. 7 and Pre-K where there should be no goal keepers in small sided play.**

Any player may change places with the goalkeeper provided that the referee is informed before the change is made and provided that the change is made during a stoppage of play, with advantage to the changing team, except in the case of injury. There is no rule covering the positioning of players with the exception that only one player may be designated as the goalkeeper.

THE BALL

The ball shall be spherical; the outer casing shall be made of leather or other approved materials. The size of the ball to be used for each of the various levels is shown below; Sizes apply to both Girls and Boys Divisions:

Division: 3 (U14,U13,U12)	Size 5
Division: 4 or 5 (U11,U10, U9)	Size 4
Division: 6, 7 & Pre-K (U8,U7,U6,U5)	Size 3

It is the responsibility of the referee to select a game ball, from either of the teams, prior to the start of the game. The ball shall not be changed during the game unless authorized by the referee.

START OF PLAY

At the beginning of the game, the referee shall meet with the designated captain(s) of each team at the center of the field. Opposing captain(s) shall shake hands. The referee shall toss a coin, and the team winning the toss shall have the option of kicking off or choosing a goal to defend. The team losing the toss shall have the remaining choice. Goals defended shall be switched at half-time. Kickoffs shall be alternated at quarters. When a goal is scored during a quarter, the kickoff shall be taken by the conceding team.

Division 3, 4, 5 & 6 – Coaches are not permitted on the field during the game. They are to stay on their side of the field and show respect to the other coaches and all referees. No Coaching from the Endlines.

METHOD OF SCORING

A goal is scored when the entire ball passes over the entire goal line, whether in the air or on the ground, between the goal posts and below the crossbar. The goal is scored provided that it has not been thrown, carried or intentionally propelled into the goal by the hand or arm of a player of the attacking team except for a goalkeeper who is within his own penalty area.

DURATION OF GAME

The Duration of games is provided below for each of the various levels. In all cases, there are two minute break intervals between quarters and a five minute break interval at the half. The time is kept as running time. Time may be extended or shortened only by the referee or league official.

Division: 3	2 halves @ 30 minutes each
Division 4 & 5	4 quarters @ 15 minutes each
Division: 6	4 quarters @ 12 minutes each
Division: 7	4 quarters @ 6 minutes each

All players must play a minimum of 75% of all games. (Div 3 Crosstown rule is 50% but Sparta Coaches are encouraged to keep the minimum as close to 75% as possible - see Crosstown guidelines)

KICKOFFS

1. Kickoffs will be taken from the center of the field at the beginning of the game and at the start of each half or quarter and after a goal has been scored. All players must be on their own half of the field at the time the kickoff is taken.
2. All players on the team not taking the kickoff must be outside the circle until the ball is kicked.
3. **The kickoff can be in any direction** and may not be replayed by the kicker until it has been touched by another player on either team. Should the ball be so replayed by the kicker, an indirect free kick shall be awarded to the opposing team.
4. The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves in any direction. A goal may not be scored directly from a kickoff. (FIFA says it can be)

THROW IN

1. When the entire ball passes over a touch line (sideline) whether in the air or on the ground, it shall be thrown in at the point it left the field.
2. The thrower shall be a player of the team opposite to that of the player who last touched the ball.
3. The thrower, at the moment of throwing the ball, must be facing the field of play. Both feet must remain on the ground, either on or behind the touch line. The ball must be thrown from behind and directly over the head and is in play upon entering the field.
4. The ball may not be replayed by the thrower until it has been touched by another player on either team. Should the ball be so replayed by the thrower, an indirect free kick shall be awarded to the opposing team.
5. In Divisions 4,5&6 Players will be given two opportunities to throw the ball onto the field. If the first throw is incorrect the referee will explain why to the player and that same player may have a second opportunity. A foul on the second throw will result in the ball being given to the opposing team for a throw-in. **Division 3 only allows one Throw in attempt**
6. In **Division 6** the referee instructs player on the correct procedure. The game will continue.
7. A goal may not be scored directly from a throw in.
8. A goalie may not pick up a ball thrown to him. A direct kick will be awarded.
9. If, when the ball is being thrown in, players on the opposing team in any way attempt to impede or distract the thrower, it shall constitute unsportsmanlike conduct. The offender shall be cautioned and a and the throw may be taken over.

GOAL KICK

When the entire ball passes over the goal line, whether in the air or on the ground, and is last touched by a member of the attacking team, a goal kick is awarded to the defending team. The ball is placed down within the goal area and is kicked into play by any member of the defending team.

The following rules apply during the taking of a goal kick:

1. The goalkeeper may not receive the ball into his hands directly from a goal kick.
2. The ball must be kicked completely out of the penalty area to be in play.
3. The kicker may not replay the ball until it has been touched by another player on either team.
4. A goal may not be scored directly from a goal kick.

5. In Division 6 & 7 a goal kick may be taken halfway between the edge of the goal area and the penalty area.

CORNER KICK

When the entire ball passes over the goal line, whether in the air or on the ground and is last touched by a member of the defending team, a corner kick is awarded to the attacking team. The ball is placed down in the corner of the field, nearest to the point where the ball crossed the goal line and is kicked into play by any member of the attacking team.

The following rules apply during the taking of a corner kick;

1. All players on the team not taking the corner kick must remain at least ten yards away from the ball until it is played.
2. The kicker may not replay the ball until it has been touched by another player on either team.
3. The corner poles (or cones if used) may not be moved during the taking of a corner kick.
4. A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick.
5. In Divisions 6 & 7 a corner kick may be taken from the corner of the penalty area. From this location it is **indirect** and a goal may not be scored until it has been touched by another player on either team.

FREE KICKS

Free kicks are awarded to a team when a rule infringement is called by the referee on the opposing team within the field of play.

Free kicks are classified under two headings:

1. **DIRECT**- From which a goal may be scored directly against the offending team.
2. **INDIRECT** - From which a goal may not be scored unless it is first played or touched by a member of either team after it has been played by the kicker.

The following rules apply during the taking of either a direct or indirect free kick:

1. The ball must be stationary at the instant that it is kicked.
2. All players on the team not taking the kick must remain at least ten yards from the ball until it is played (unless they are standing on their own goal line between the goal posts).
3. The kicker may not replay the ball until it has been played by another player on either team. Should the kicker so replay the ball, an indirect free kick shall be awarded to the opposing team.
4. When a player is taking a free kick from within his own penalty area, all players on the opposing team must remain outside the penalty area until the kick is taken and the ball must be kicked completely out of the penalty area to be in play.
5. The goalkeeper may not receive the ball into his hands directly from a free kick by his team in their own penalty.

FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

(A) **Direct free kicks** are awarded to a team when a player of the opposing team intentionally (in the opinion of the referee) commits any of the following offenses:

1. Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent.
2. Trips an opponent.
3. Jumps at an opponent.
4. Charges an opponent in a violent or dangerous manner.
5. Charges an opponent from behind unless the opponent is obstructing him.
6. Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent or spits at an opponent.
7. Holds an opponent.
8. Pushes an opponent.
9. Handles the ball or carries, strikes or propels the ball by the use of the hand or arm (this does not apply to a goalkeeper within his/hers penalty area).
10. There is no slide tackling allowed.

The direct free kick is taken from the point where the offense occurs, unless the offense is committed by a player of the defending team within his own penalty area, in which case a penalty kick is awarded to the attacking team.

(B) Indirect free kicks are awarded to a team when a player of the opposing team commits any of the following offenses:

1. Obstructing an opponent so as to form an obstacle to the opponent (e.g., running between an opponent trying to play the ball for the purposes of preventing him from doing so).
2. Playing in any manner considered to be dangerous by the referee (e.g., attempting to kick the ball when it is being held by the goalkeeper, slide tackling in any Div.)
3. Charging an opponent unfairly, such as with the shoulder, at a time when the ball is not within playing distance of the players concerned.
4. Charging the goalkeeper.
5. When a goalkeeper holds the ball in his hands for more than 6 seconds after having taken control of the ball. In Division 6 the referee shall stop play and instruct the player on the correct procedure. The play will be redone. The indirect free kick is taken from the point where the offense occurs.

(C) Yellow cards are NOT issued in the Recreational Program However; an indirect free kick will be awarded to the opposing team at the point at which the Referee determines any of the following:

1. Entering or leaving the field of play without the permission of the referee unless in the act of playing the ball.
2. Persistent infringement of the rules.
3. Showing by words or actions of any kind, dissent from any decision made by the referee.
4. Unsportmanlike conduct in the opinion of the referee.

(D) Red cards (ejections) are NOT issued in the Recreational Program. However It is the coach's responsibility to ensure proper conduct from their players and spectators. In the event that players or spectators are acting inappropriately, the referee will ask the coach of the offending team to deal with the issue. In the event it is a coach acting inappropriately, the referee will ask for assistance from other coaches or from Club Directors present at the field:

1. Being guilty, in the opinion of the referee, of violent conduct or serious foul play.
2. Use of foul or abusive language. (This includes "Trash talking")

3. The referee may ask a player to be substituted for continued misconduct. Player can return to game once the coach has addressed the behavior , An indirect free kick will be awarded to the opposing team at the point at which the game was stopped.

DROP BALL

There are two occasions when a drop ball will be used to restart a game:

1. Play has been suspended temporarily for any reason other than an infraction of the rules, or
2. The ball has gone out of play and it cannot be determined which team should have possession.

The referee will drop the ball where it was when play was stopped unless the ball was within the goal area. In this case the ball will be dropped on the 6-yard line nearest the point where the ball was. If the ball was near the touchline or goal line it may be moved up to 5 yards onto the field. It will be dropped between one (player) from each team. The ball must touch the ground before it may be played by any player.

PENALTY KICKS

A penalty kick will be awarded to the attacking team when the defending team commits a foul (e.g., intentional handball, intentional trip or push) within the penalty area. The penalty kick is taken from the penalty mark (12 yards directly in front of the goal, or $\frac{2}{3}$ of the distance from the goal line to the penalty box line)

Conditions that apply during the taking of a penalty kick:

1. All players on both teams except the player taking the penalty kick and the opposing goalkeeper must remain on the field of play, but outside the penalty area and at least ten yards from the penalty mark.
2. The kicker must play the ball forward and may not replay the ball until it has been touched by another player on either team.
3. The goalkeeper must stand on the goal line, between the goalposts, facing the kicker until the kick is taken. The goalkeeper may move from side to side on his goal line.
4. Time must be extended at the end of a quarter, half or the game, to allow the proper taking of a penalty kick.

If an infringement is committed by the defending team during the taking of a penalty kick (e.g., goalkeeper not having his feet on the line at the time the kick is taken or a defending player entering the penalty area before the kick is taken) the referee will allow the kick to be taken. If a goal is scored, it will be allowed. If a goal is not scored the penalty kick will be retaken.

If an infringement is committed by the player taking the penalty kick or by the kicker's teammates (e.g., playing the ball a second time before it has been played by another player) and a goal is scored it will be disallowed and the referee shall award an indirect free kick to the defending team at the spot of the infringement. If a goal is not scored the kick is not retaken.

OFF SIDE POSITION

It is **not** an offence in itself to be in an offside position. A player is in an offside position if:

He is nearer his opponent's goal line than both the ball and the second last opponent

A player is not in an offside position if:

1. He is in his own half of the field of play
2. He is level with the last defender (i.e., the last defender before the goalie)

OFFENCE:

A player in an offside position **is only penalized if**, at the moment the ball touches or is played by one of his team, he is, in the opinion of the referee, involved in active play by:

1. Interfering with the play *or*
2. Interfering with an opponent *or*
3. Gaining an advantage by being in that position.

A player who is in an off-side position cannot put himself on-side once the ball has been played to him.

NO OFFSIDE OFFENCE:

There is **no** offside offence if a player receives the ball directly from:

1. A goal kick
2. A throw-in
3. A corner kick

In the event of an offside offence, the referee awards an indirect free kick to the opposing team to be taken from the place where the offside offence occurred.

Offside will not be called in Division 6 However, no players should be deliberately placed in an offside position to gain unfair advantage. If in the opinion of the referee this occurs, coach should be warned, subsequent infraction may cause a free-kick to be awarded to the opponent.

HAND BALL

When a player deliberately plays the ball with any part of his/her arm, or puts the arm in an unusual position and contacts the ball (i.e. arms out to the side). Result will be a free kick.

SUBSTITUTIONS

Substitutions are unlimited at any appropriate time with the explicit consent of the referee.

Substitutions may take place at the following times:

1. Prior to your team's throw-in.
2. Prior to a goal kick.
3. Following a goal.
4. After an injury if the referee stops the game.
5. Half time, or at the beginning of a period.
6. ***Illegal equipment: A player wearing illegal equipment must leave the field and may not be substituted for. He/she may re-enter the field with permission of the referee at the next stoppage of play.***

GOALKEEPER

Inside his/her own penalty area the keeper may handle the ball.

Restrictions:

1. Once the ball is in control the keeper must put it into play within six (6) seconds. The keeper may take as many steps as desired within this six (6) second period. He may not delay the game by holding the ball (Penalty: indirect kick for the opposing team). Once released into play by being kicked or thrown the keeper may not handle the ball again unless an opponent inside the penalty area or any player outside the penalty area plays it.
2. If the ball is kicked to the keeper by a teammate the keeper may not touch the ball with his hands. The keeper may play the ball with the feet, body, or head only. Should the keeper touch the ball with his/her hands the opposing team shall be awarded an indirect kick from the point of infraction. The keeper may use his/her hands if the ball is passed back from the head or body of a teammate. No player may kick the ball to his/her own head in order to pass it to the keeper. Penalty: Caution to the player; indirect kick if the keeper touches the ball with the hands.
3. The keeper may not be charged while going for the ball or while in possession of it. "Possession" means control by either or both hands. A ball pinned to the ground by one hand is in control.
4. Outside the penalty area the Keeper must obey all rules as any other player on the field.
5. **In Div. 6 referee will instruct player of foul(s). No penalty will be called.**

REFEREES

A referee or referees shall be appointed to officiate each game. Decisions and judgments made by the referee(s) concerning the playing of the game are final. Referees are there to protect the safety of the players and enforce the rules of the game.

The referee stops the game for an infringement of the rules by blowing a whistle. Most referees carry the whistle in their hand instead of in the mouth. This is to prevent blowing the whistle in anticipation of an infringement or by accident. It also allows the referee a second to analyze the results of an incident and perhaps to cite the "advantage rule". The sound of the whistle will always be after an infraction, not at the same time. It is better to have a late whistle than an early whistle.

Penalties for infractions of the rules do not have to be called by the referee in soccer. The decision to interfere with the flow of the game for an infraction is the prerogative of the official. Because the infraction is not called does not mean that it did not occur or that the official did not see it. The referee may have cited the "advantage rule" which allows the game to continue if the offended team has retained possession of the ball.

The decision to make the call or not is entirely with the referee. If the referee improperly cites a rule his/her call may be questioned through the proper channels, which may be as simple as *politely* bringing the referee's attention to the possible error. This should only be done at the end of the quarter or game

Referees are responsible for the following

1. Starting the Game

- 1.1. Introducing themselves to both coaches.
- 1.2. Inspecting the field and goals prior to the start of the game.
- 1.3. Inspecting all players on both teams prior to the start of the game to assure that no player is wearing anything, including jewelry, hair clips, casts or any equipment that, in the opinion of the referee, is considered dangerous. This inspection will assure that all players are wearing shin guards as required. No metal cleats.
- 1.4. Selecting a game ball from one of the teams.
- 1.5. Calling for captains from each team to meet at the center of the field for the coin toss.
- 1.6. Assuring that each team has the same number of players on the field for the respective age group or if playing uneven sides, that the number of players are within the rules.
- 1.7. Assuring that the goalkeeper on each side is clearly distinguishable from all other players on the field. Signaling goalkeepers that the game or quarter, is about to start.

2. During the Game

- 2.1. Selecting linesmen is optional. Referees may overrule the call of a linesman.
- 2.2. Maintaining clock and running time.
- 2.3. Positioning on the field: 2 referees: Referees should be on opposite sides of the field and on the defensive side of play. Referee should be to one side of the field not in the middle of the field.
- 2.4. Enforcing the rules of soccer.
- 2.5. Keeping a record of the game and the field on which it was played.
- 2.6. Stopping the game when an infringement occurs except when the non-offending team has the advantage at the time of the infringement.
- 2.7. Terminating a game when weather, spectators or other causes so require. A referee may terminate a game for weather only after the game has started. (Cancellation of a game prior to starting is the responsibility of the respective League Director.)
- 2.8. Being in control from the time he/she enters the field until the time that he/she leaves.
- 2.9. Allowing no other persons on the field except players and linesmen without permission.
- 2.10. Stopping the clock only for injuries, lost ball, cautions, ejections or extraordinary delays (e.g., time wasting tactics).
- 2.11. **Referees are not to assist injured players. Coach or Assistant should be called onto the field.**
- 2.12. Resuming play as soon as possible after a play stoppage.
- 2.13. Allowing substitutions on a dead ball (throw-ins, corner kicks, kickoffs.) The clock is not stopped during substitutions and substitutions may only be made by the team that did not cause the dead ball. However, either team may substitute on a

kickoff or on a goal kick. Substitutions are not allowed on a foul or infraction, except to replace an injured player.

- 2.14. Assuring that the teams change sides of the field for each half.
- 2.15. Extending time at the end of a quarter, half or the end of the game to allow the taking of a penalty kick.
- 2.16. The referee may ask a player to be substituted for continued misconduct. Player can return to game once the coach has addressed the behavior. Asking coach to quiet or remove unruly spectators.

3. At the end of the game and after

- 3.1. Leaving the field only after the game ball has been returned to the appropriate coach and team handshakes have been completed.
- 3.2. Reporting to the Director of Referees any problems encountered during the game. This includes, but is not limited to:
- 3.3. Advising if a field was not properly lined.
- 3.4. Advising if a field had any inherent problems affecting safety.
- 3.5. Advising if there is missing equipment such as nets, corner poles, etc.