



Bridgewater Youth Soccer Association

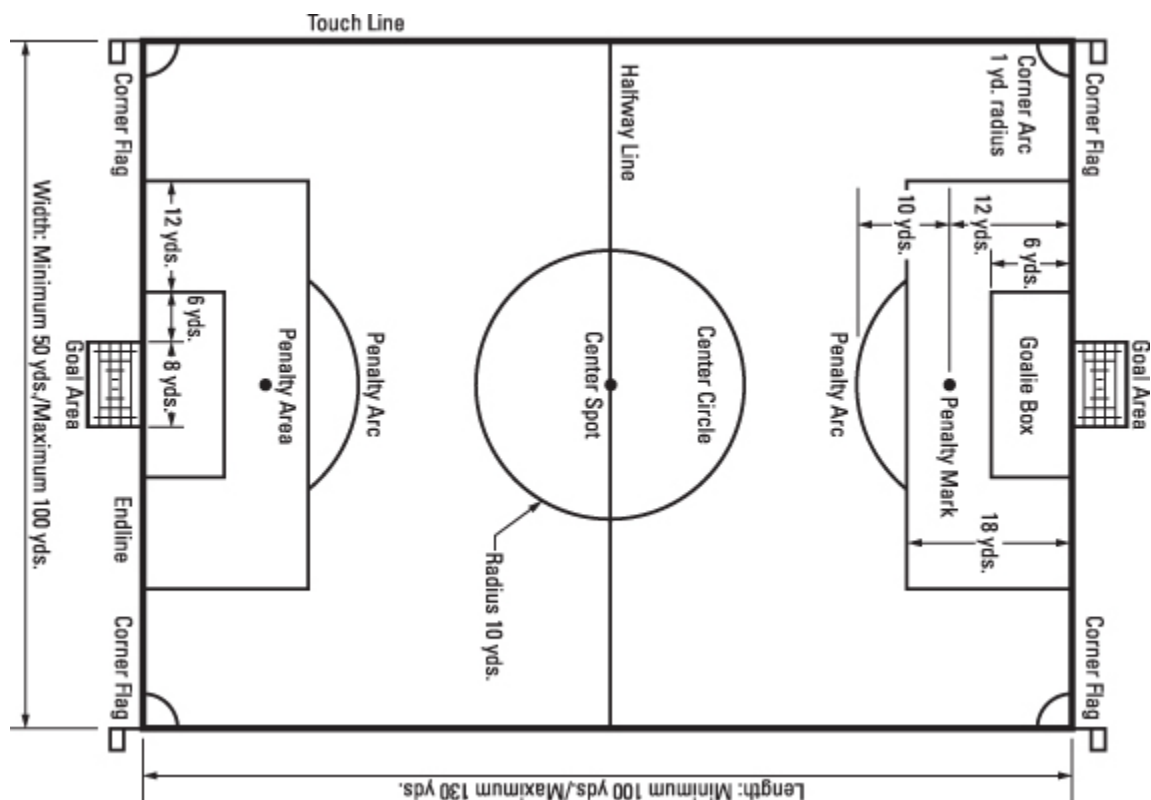
17 Basic Rules of Soccer

Soccer has 17 laws or “rules” by which the game is played. Most of these laws are easy to understand. The laws are designed to make soccer fun, safe, and fair for all participants.

The object of soccer is for a player to get the ball into the other team’s goal by using any part of the body except the player’s hands and arms. The goalie is the only player allowed to touch the ball with the hands and arms and then only while he is located in his own penalty area. A referee is in charge of the soccer game. **A referee’s main objective should be the safety of the players.** It is the referee’s responsibility to ensure that the game remains fun for everyone. This includes players, spectators and the officials.

You will undoubtedly question some of the officiating calls as you watch a soccer game. This is only natural. To be fair to the referee you should read and understand the 17 laws so that you have a good understanding of the rules of soccer. Try to keep in mind that everyone who is watching a game has a different perspective. Spectators will be most likely, rooting for one team or the other. This will influence how they view the game. The spectators will more than likely have a family member playing in youth soccer. Also keep in mind that everyone will be viewing the game from a different angle. Try to give the referee the benefit of a doubt. The referees are much closer to the play than spectators. They should be trained in the laws and impartial to the game’s outcome.

The 17 laws described below are the basic laws of soccer accepted throughout the world. These laws are usually altered slightly so the game is more fun and beneficial for young players. Each league should have a specific set of rules it will follow. These rules should be distributed to the coach. Look over the rules of your league to make sure you fully understand them.



LAW 1 – THE FIELD OF PLAY

This is the basic layout of a soccer field. The size of the field will vary from league to league, usually depending on the age of the players.

LAW 2 – THE BALL

A regulation size soccer ball for u8 is a No. 4 ball (Although US Youth Soccer recommends a size 3 ball). U6 uses a size 3 ball. U8-U12 use a size 4 ball. U14 and OLDER use a size 5 ball.

LAW 3 – NUMBER OF PLAYERS

- U8 There must be no more than 5 players (4 field players plus a goalie) on the field of play for either team. A minimum number of players is usually 4. One player from each team must be designated as a goalkeeper. The goalkeeper must wear a different color shirt from his teammates so that everyone can easily distinguish the goalie. The goalie can only use his hands inside the penalty area.
- U10 must be no more than 7 players (6 field players plus a goalie) on the field of play for either team. A minimum number of players is usually 5. One player from each team must be designated as a goalkeeper. The goalkeeper must wear a different color shirt from his teammates so that everyone can easily distinguish the goalie. The goalie can only use his hands inside the penalty area.
- U12 must be no more than 9 players (8 field players plus a goalie) on the field of play for either team. A minimum number of players is usually 6. One player from each team must be designated as a goalkeeper. The goalkeeper must wear a different color shirt from his teammates so that everyone can easily distinguish the goalie. The goalie can only use his hands inside the penalty area.
- U14 and older (and U15 Fall) must be no more than 11 players (10 field players plus a goalie) on the field of play for either team. A minimum number of players is usually 7. One player from each team must be designated as a goalkeeper. The goalkeeper must wear a different color shirt from his teammates so that everyone can easily distinguish the goalie. The goalie can only use his hands inside the penalty area.

LAW 4 – PLAYER'S EQUIPMENT

Players must wear the same colored jersey or shirts. All youth programs require shin guards to be worn by all players. If your players will be wearing cleats, make sure they are soccer cleats. A soccer cleat does not have a cleat at the front edge of the shoe like a baseball cleat. This is for safety. **NO JEWELRY OF ANY KIND CAN BE WORN**, unless it is medically related.

LAW 5 – REFEREES

The referee enforces the 17 laws. For u8 we use a two-referee system. There is one difference between soccer and most other sports played in America. In soccer, the referee may let play continue and not call a foul if he or she thinks that stopping play would give an advantage to the team committing the foul. This is called the “advantage clause”. The referee should say “play on” when this occurs.

LAW 6 – ASSISTANT REFEREE

Linesmen and Lineswomen are not used in U8. The referees on the field makes the official and final decisions. The assistant referees also assist the referee to control the match in accordance with the Laws of the Game. The assistant referees are placed one on each side of the field. The assistant referee's main job is to signal offsides, but they can also intervene when an offense takes place near their side of the field and the main referee needs their opinion. The assistant referee does not have any decision power. He/she has the ability to signal a game issue such as offsides, foul, handball etc. but it is the center referee who must make the decision.

LAW 7 – DURATION OF THE GAME

BYSA FALL

- U8 - four 10-minute quarters
- U10 and above – four 15-minute quarters, or two 30-minute halves

LAW 8 – START OF PLAY

A kick off is taken to start a game, to restart play after a goal has been scored or to start the second half or a new quarter. At kickoff all players must be on their team’s half of the field. The ball is placed on the center spot in the middle of the center circle. The ball must be kicked forward or backwards at least one full rotation. The team that kicks off to begin the game is determined by a coin toss between the captains and the referee. After a goal the team that was just scored upon starts the kick off. For new quarters and halves, the team, which did not kick off the previous quarter or half will kick off. A goal cannot be scored by kicking the ball directly into the goal on a kick off.

A drop ball is not used in U8, pic one team to take the kick off and rotate the team that starts if more than one drop ball would have been used.

LAW 9 – BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY

The ball is out of play whenever it is completely outside the outside edge of the touchline or the goal line either on the ground or in the air. Also it is out of play when the referee stops play for any reason. The ball is in play if any part of the ball is inside or touching the touchline or goal line. The ball is considered in play after bouncing off of a goal post, cross bar, corner flag, linesmen or referee if the ball remains on the playing field.

LAW 10 – METHOD OF SCORING

A goal can only be scored if the entire ball goes completely over the outside edge of the goal line, under the cross bar and between the goal posts while it is in play. Any player may score goals, including the goalie. Except when taking a free kick, throw-in, goal kick, penalty kick or kick off, a ball played by a player directly into his own goal is a score for the opposing team.

LAW 11 – OFFSIDES

Offside is not used at u8 - The offside rule is one of the trickiest rules of soccer and it is difficult for most bystanders to understand. The basic concept is that a player must have at least one defender (not including the goalie) between him/her and the goal when the ball is played to him when he is on the opponent's side gaining advantage. In the diagram below, the red player closest to the goal is offside because there weren't two defenders between him and the goal when the ball was passed to him.



LAW 12 – FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

There are two kinds of fouls in soccer: We do not issue yellow or red cards in u8 soccer. If an infraction occurs that would have normally resulted in a card of either color. Stop the game and discuss the infraction with the player and coach and have the coach remove the player from play. If a second infraction occurs have the coach remove the player for the remainder of the game. Report all infractions to the Referee Assignor.

LAW 13 – FREE KICK

There are two type of free kicks: Direct and Indirect. U8 does not utilize indirect free kicks as all kicks are direct.

LAW 14 – PENALTY KICK

A penalty kick is awarded when a defender commits a penal or major foul with the penalty area. The team that was fouled is given a penalty kick from the penalty mark. All players except the goalkeeper must remain outside the penalty area and penalty arc until the kick is taken. The defending goalkeeper must stand on the goal line, between the goal posts and is not allowed to move until the ball is kicked. If the goalkeeper moves and the penalty shot does not score, then the penalty kick is retaken. Encroachment is when a player enters the penalty area or penalty arc before the ball is kicked. If a defender encroaches, then a scoring shot counts, a non-scoring shot is retaken. If an attacker encroaches, a scoring shot is disallowed and the kick is retaken. If the shot was non-scoring then the defending team gets an indirect free kick or a goal kick depending on where the ball is when the referee blows his whistle. If both teams encroach, the penalty kick is retaken whether it was a scoring shot or not. The penalty kick must go forward and cannot be played again by the kicker until another player has touched the ball.

LAW 15 – THROW-IN

A throw-in is taken to restart a game after the ball goes out of play over the touchline. A throw- in is taken by a player from the team, which did not touch the ball last. The player throwing the ball in must have both feet on the ground and both hands on the ball over his head. Both feet must remain on or behind the touchline. The thrower must throw the ball with equal strength from both hands from the back of the head and over the top of the head. The thrower must not play the ball again until another player from either team has touched the ball. A player cannot score a goal directly from a throw-in.

LAW 16 – GOAL KICK

The box located directly in front of the goal is called the goal area. When the attacking team last touches the ball before it crosses over the goal line, the defending team is awarded a goal kick. A goal kick is taken by any player on the defending team. The ball must be played from within the half of the goal area on the side of the field where the ball went out of play. The opposing team must remain on their own defensive half of the field. The goal kick is played again if the ball does not leave the penalty area, if the ball crosses the goal line before leaving the penalty area or if the ball is played again by a player from either team before it leaves the penalty area. The kicker may not play the ball again until another player from either team touches the ball. A player in the offside position receiving the ball directly from a goal kick is not offside.

LAW 17 – CORNER KICK

If a ball goes over the goal line and is last touched by the defending team, the attacking team is awarded a corner kick. The corner kick is taken from within the corner arc on the side of the field where the ball went out of play. The corner kick may be taken by any player on the attacking team. The kicker is allowed to score a goal by kicking the ball directly into the goal. The opponents must be 10 yards back from the ball on a corner kick. The kicker is not allowed to play the ball again until a player from either team touches the ball. A player in the offside position receiving the ball directly from a corner kick is not offside.