

UNDER 8 (7 v 7) GAME RULES AND FORMAT

1. FIELD OF PLAY

- Goals: 6' x 18'
- Field dimensions: width = 40-50 yards, length = 60-80 yards
- Penalty area: 14 yards out to the side of each goal post along goal line and 14 yards out from goal line. Goal area 6 yards out to the side of each goal post along goal line and 6 yards out from goal line.
- Markings: half line, center spot, center circle with a 8 yard radius, 4 corner arcs with 1 foot radius, touch lines and goal lines, penalty spot 10 yards out from the center of the goal, build out line.
- Flags: corner flag at each corner at least 5 feet tall.
- The Home team chooses a side of the field for their coaches, subs, and parents. The Away team uses the opposite side of the field, unless specified differently by the Director or Division Director.

2. THE BALL

- Size 4 ball.
- Ball should be slightly soft to encourage contact with body.
- Game ball provided by Home team.

3. NUMBER OF PLAYERS

- 7 players from each team on the field one of whom must be the goalkeeper.
- Home team is the first team listed on game schedule.
- Unlimited substitutions allowed with the Referee's permission when the game is stopped for injury, throw-in, goal kick and kick off.

4. PLAYER'S EQUIPMENT

- Jersey with number, shorts, socks, shin guards (mandatory), soccer cleats (no metal cleats and no toe cleats).
- No rings, earrings (cannot tape over), bracelets, necklaces, jewelry, or hard hair clips. No casts or splints even if padded.
- In case of color conflict the Home team needs to change shirts or put on pinnies.
- Socks must be worn outside of the shin guards and completely cover them.
- Goalkeeper shirt must be different color than those of all field players.

5. REFEREES

- One center referee will be assigned for this age group.
- Protect the players. This is their first duty.
- Enforces the rules and briefly explains rule violations to player.
- May change decision as long as play has not been restarted.
- Keep game time – ensure that games start and end on time.

6. DURATION OF THE GAME

- The game is to be divided into two 20-minute halves with a 5-minute half-time break. The game must end before the next game's start time.

7. START OF PLAY

- Before the game a coin toss is held between the home and away team captains. The away team calls the coin toss. The coin toss winner gets to choose goal to attack.
- Game starts with a kickoff at the center spot by the team that lost the coin toss. The team kicking off must be on their side of the half line. All defenders must be on their side of the field and outside the center circle.
- Second half starts with the other team taking the kickoff and the two teams have switched sides of the field.
- Kickoff cannot be taken until the referee blows the whistle.
- Play starts when the ball is kicked and goes in any direction.
- The player taking the kickoff cannot touch it a second time until another player touches it.

8. BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY

- The ball is out of play when the whole ball crosses the outside edge of the touchline or the goal line or the referee stops the game.
- The ball is in play at all other times; even if it bounces off the referee, corner flag, goal posts and crossbar, as long as it does not go out of play first.

9. METHOD OF SCORING

- A goal is scored when the ball goes completely over the goal line, between the goal posts and under the crossbar.
- A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw-in, an indirect free kick or a drop ball.

10. BUILD OUT LINE

The build out line is marked half way between the top edge of the box and the center line. The build out line promotes playing the ball out of the back in a less pressured setting.

- When the goalkeeper has the ball in his or her hands during play from the opponent or during a goal kick, the opposing team must move behind the build out line until the ball is put into play.
- The goalkeeper can pass, throw or roll the ball into play (punts and drop kicks are not allowed).
- After the ball is put into play by the goalkeeper and touched by a player on the goalkeeper's team, the opposing team can cross the build out line and play resumes as normal.
- If a goalkeeper punts or drop kicks the ball, an indirect free kick will be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense.

The build out line will also be used to denote where offside offenses can be called.

- Players cannot be penalized for an offside offense between the hallway line and the build out line.
- Players can be penalized for an offside offense between the build out line and goal line.

11. PLAYER FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

Player fouls will result in either a direct free kick or an indirect free kick with opponent 10 yards away. Referee should explain all infractions to the offending player.

A direct free kick will be awarded for the following penal fouls:

- Intentionally kicking or tripping an opponent or attempting to kick or trip an opponent
- Jumping at an opponent
- Charging (running into) an opponent
- Striking or attempting to strike an opponent (automatic sendoff)
- Pushing an opponent without attempting for the ball
- When tackling an opponent to gain possession of the ball, making contact with the opponent before touching the ball.
- Spitting at an opponent
- Deliberately handling the ball with hand or arms (not to be called unless the player is trying to contact the ball)
- Holding an opponent

An indirect free kick is given when:

- Intentionally heading the ball. No heading is permitted for players U12 and younger.
- Dangerous play (for example: high kicking near an opponent's head; playing the ball while lying on the ground when an opponent is near; trying to head a low ball that an opponent is trying to play with their foot)
- Impeding the progress of an opponent when not playing or attempting to play the ball (previously called obstruction)
- Interfering with goal keeper releasing the ball into play.

Goalkeeper violations:

- Touches the ball with hands after receiving it directly from a throw-in taken by a teammate.
- Touches the ball with hands after a teammate intentionally played it to him with his foot.
- Releasing a ball (after he has it in control) and picking it up again.
- Takes more than 6 seconds to release the ball into play.

Advantage rule: Referee should not call a foul or misconduct on the defending team in the attacking part of the field if allowing play to continue would be to the advantage of the attacking team (i.e. "a breakaway"). The referee may call the foul if the advantage does not happen within 2 to 3 seconds.

12. FREE KICK

Free kick is given due to a player breaking a rule while the ball is in play and causing

the referee to stop the game

- Direct free kick – can score directly. Referee indicates by pointing in the attacking direction of the team taking the kick.
- Indirect free kick – a player besides the kicker must touch the ball before a goal can be scored. Referee indicates by holding arm straight up until the kick is taken and touched by another or goes out of play.
- Opponents must be 10 yards from the ball when the kick is taken.

13. PENALTY KICK

Penalty kick is given if a player commits one of the penal fouls within his or her own penalty area.

- Referee indicates by pointing toward penalty spot.
- The ball is placed on the penalty spot, 10 yards from the goal.
- The goalkeeper must have both feet on the goal line and can move laterally on the goal line, between the goal posts, before the ball is kicked. He may not move forward.
- All other players, except the kicker, must be behind the penalty spot, and outside the penalty area and the penalty arc.
- If someone on the defending team encroaches into the penalty area before the kick is taken and the kick scores, the goal counts. If the shot misses, the shot is retaken. If someone on the kicking team encroaches and the shot is made, then it must be taken over. If it misses, the opposing team gets an indirect free kick from where the player encroached.
- If someone from each team encroaches, the kick is retaken in any case.
- The ball must be played forward and the kicker cannot strike it again before another player touches it.

14. COACH AND SIDELINE MISCONDUCT

- Referees will issue a warning to the coaches if they or their sideline become loud and disruptive.
- After the initial warning, if the unfavorable sideline behavior continues, the referee will approach the coach and give an additional warning and time-limit for gaining control of the sideline.
- If the unwarranted behavior persists, disruptive parents and coaches will be asked to leave the game.
- If the referee cannot regain control, the game will be called off.

15. THROW-IN

A throw-in is taken to restart play when the ball goes over touchline. Opponents must be at least 2 yards from the throw-in location. Restart for bad throw-in is throw-in to opponent.

- Part of each foot has to be on ground, on or behind the touchline, prior to release of the ball.
- The thrower at the moment of delivering the ball must face the field of play.
- Throw must be started with the ball behind the head.

- The ball must be thrown, not dropped.
- The player must face the direction of the throw.
- The thrower cannot play the ball again until another player touches it.
- A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw-in.

16. GOAL KICK

During play, if the attacking team propels the ball over the goal line, but not into the goal, play stops. The Opposing team puts the ball back into play using a Goal Kick.

- Goal kick may be taken from any part of the goal area, by any member of the opposing team.
- Opponents must remain outside the build out line.
- Ball must go outside of penalty area directly from kick to be in play.
- The opponent cannot attack the ball until the goal kick is taken and touched by a player on the kicking team.

17. CORNER KICK

If the defending team propels the ball over the goal line, but not into the goal, play stops. The opposing team puts the ball back into play using a Corner Kick.

- Kick taken from quarter-circle in corner area.
- Corner flag or cone cannot be moved.
- Ball is in play once it is kicked.
- Kick is taken from corner nearest the spot where the ball went out of play.
- All opponents must be at least 10 yards (8 yards for Div. 5 & 6) from the corner arc.
- Kicker cannot play ball again unless touched by another player (either team).
- A goal can be scored directly from a corner kick.

18. COMMON SENSE

- Do what is fair and right.
- No league standings are to be kept.
- Respect the referee's decisions.
- Coaches and players are encouraged to shake hands with opponent before after the game.