

Rules of the Game

4 Year Old Academy

Updated 09/15/16

Field Dimensions: Length – 30yds; Width – 20yds

Goal Size: Width – 8ft; Height – 4ft

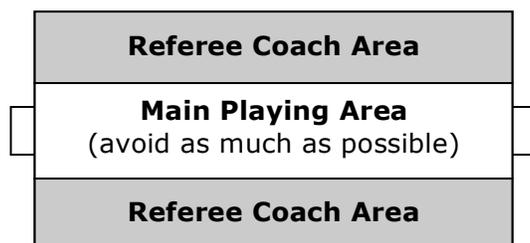
The Ball: Size Three (3)

Player Equipment: Shin-guards are **MANDATORY** for all players. Players will not be permitted to play without shin-guards. Standard soccer shoes or tennis shoes are allowed. Cleats shall be soft molded. Hard casts are not allowed – even if they are padded. Jewelry, watches, and other dangerous equipment must be removed during games.

Number of Players on the Field: There will be NO goalkeepers. There will be either three (3) or four (4) players on the field for each team at all times depending on overall numbers that day.

Scrimmage Duration: 15-20 minutes at the end of the session. Coaches should “sub” every 3-4 minutes.

Referee Coaches: Two (2) on-the-field coaches will referee all scrimmages – one from each team. Referee Coaches should position themselves according the illustration below to avoid being an obstacle for the players. A large portion of the scrimmage is played inside the “Main Playing Area”. ***All other coaches from both teams must remain outside the playing area at all times.*** If an infringement is called, Referee Coaches should explain to the players what happened and how to avoid making the same mistake in the future before re-starting the scrimmage. Sideline coaches are encouraged to assist in refereeing duties but must remain outside the active playing area at all times. Referee Coaches are expected to encourage, teach & assist ***all players***, not just their own.



Opening Kickoff: All scrimmages will begin with a center kick-off.

Re-Starts: When play stops or the ball goes out-of-bounds, the scrimmage is re-started in one of the four ways below. All re-starts involving a kick are to be considered indirect free kicks. Coaches should allow players from both teams to get set.

1. Over the Sidelines --- with a kick-in (unless players have been taught how to make a throw-in)
2. Over the Goal Line --- with a goal kick if attacking team last touched the ball (from designated area marked on field); with a corner kick if defending team last touched the ball
3. After a Goal is Scored --- with a center kick-off

Indirect Free Kick Rule: All infringements result in an indirect free kick (i.e. ball must be touched by another player before crossing the goal line). There are to be NO penalty kicks called during these games (players of this age rarely commit deliberate fouls).

Scoring Goals: Goals can be scored from anywhere on the playing field. Goals cannot be scored directly from a goal kick, throw-in, corner kick, center kick-off or indirect free kick. If a defending player uses his/her hands in front of the goal, a goal is awarded **only if** the Referee Coaches feel the defending player prevented the ball from going into the net. Otherwise, an indirect free kick is awarded. The overall game score should not be kept.

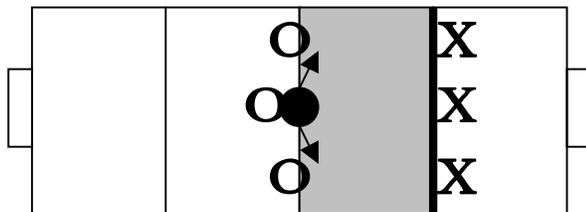
Defensive Rules:

Defending teams must:

1. be at least three (3) yards away from the ball on all re-starts
2. avoid "camping out" a player in front of the goal but should teach players to "defend their goal" at the proper times (remember, there are no goalkeepers for a reason – we want to encourage scoring)
3. be actively involved in **both** attacking and defending at all times

Center Kick-Off Positioning:

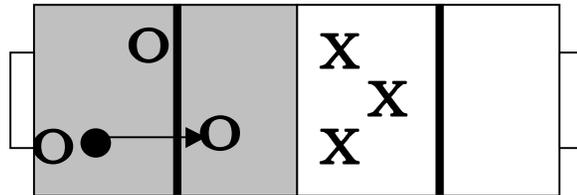
An offense player must pass the ball forward to a teammate. Defenders must stay on or behind the **BLUE** line until the offensive team advances the ball forward towards the **BLUE** line.



Shaded Area:
Off-Limits for Defensive
Players (X)

Goal Kick Positioning: Defenders must stay behind the MIDFIELD line until one of the following occur:

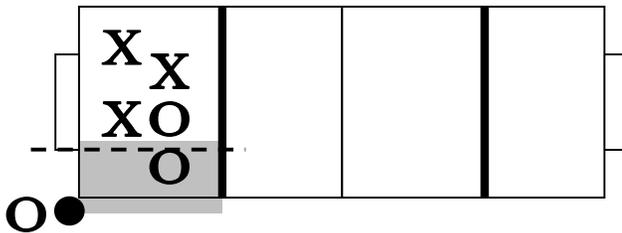
1. An offensive player – other than the person executing the goal kick – touches the ball
2. the ball crosses the MIDFIELD line



Shaded Area:
Off-Limits for Defensive
Players (X)

Corner Kick Positioning: Defenders must stay behind the **IMAGINARY GOAL POST LINE** (line extending from the goal post closest to the corner of the kick) until one of the following occur:

1. An offensive player – other than the person executing the corner kick – touches the ball
2. the ball crosses the IMAGINAREY GOAL POST line



Shaded Area:
Off-Limits for Defensive
Players (X)

Keeping the Ball in Play: Due to the small field size and end-to-end nature of this type of scrimmage, the ball may go out of play frequently. Coaches should encourage spectators to participate as “ball walls” by blocking the ball from going out-of-bounds or lightly kicking it back into play. This will help the flow and the enjoyment of the scrimmage.