



Soccer Rules

Neighborhood Sports World Cup Recreational Soccer

RULES OF THE GAME

In general, the Neighborhood Sports World Cup Recreational Soccer rules conform to the internationally recognized FIFA laws of the game while taking into account recommendations from US Youth Soccer guidelines for small-sided soccer. Neighborhood Sports is not affiliated with either organization. What follows is a rules summary where league specific rules may exist or where certain rules are emphasized.

Rule 1: The Field.

4 yr old co-ed: 20 yards wide x 30 yards long; goal size 4' high x 6' wide

5 yr old co-ed: 20 yards wide x 30 yards long; goal size 4' high x 6' wide

6 yr old co-ed: 20 yards wide x 30 yards long; goal size 4' high x 6' wide

7 yr old boys/girls: 30 yards wide x 50 yards long; goal size 4' high x 6' wide

8-9 yr old boys/girls: 30 yards wide x 50 yards long; goal size 4' high x 6' wide

10-12 yr old boys/girls: 30 yards wide x 50 yards long; goal size 4' high x 6' wide

The league reserves the right to modify game day field dimensions from specifications if necessary to meet host field location requirements.

Rule 2: The Ball.

4 yr old co-ed: Size 3 ball

5 yr old co-ed: Size 3 ball

6 yr old co-ed: Size 3 ball

7 yr old boys/girls: Size 3 ball

8-9 yr old boys/girls: Size 4 ball

10-12 yr old boys/girls: Size 4 ball

The league reserves the right to modify player age groupings from specifications if necessary to accommodate league location registration demographics.

Rule 3: Number of Players.

4 yr old co-ed: 3v3 - 3 players per side; no goalies; team sizes not to exceed six

5 yr old co-ed: 3v3 - 3 players per side; no goalies; team sizes not to exceed six

6 yr old co-ed: 3v3 - 3 players per side; no goalies; team sizes not to exceed six

7 yr old boys/girls: 4v4 - 4 players per side; no goalies; team sizes not to exceed eight

8-9 yr old boys/girls: 4v4 - 4 players per side; no goalies; team sizes not to exceed eight

10-12 yr old boys/girls: 4v4 - 4 players per side; no goalies; team sizes not to exceed eight

The league reserves the right to modify team sizes from specifications if necessary to accommodate league location registration demographics.

Fixed Interval Substitutions:

To minimize play stoppage and to facilitate 50% playing time requirements, substitutions will be limited to mid-quarter and quarter breaks (including halftime). The referee, following an out of bounds play, initiates mid-quarter substitutions. Both teams must substitute at this time. No other substitutions are allowed, except in the case of injuries.

Injury Substitutions:

After the referee has stopped play, substitutions are allowed for injured players only.

Rule 4: Players Equipment.

For all age groups:

Replica Jersey (shirt) provided by the league, worn tucked into shorts

Shorts (no belt loops)

Socks must fully cover shin guards

Shin guards

Footwear: tennis shoes (minimum required) or soccer cleats/turf shoes (strongly recommended) (note: no metal spikes or toe cleats allowed, no running shoes allowed)

Restrictions: no jewelry, no hats, no hard casts, or any other equipment or apparel deemed dangerous to the player or other players (at the referee's discretion)

Rule 5: The Referee.

For each game and for all age groups, one league referee is provided. The referee is responsible for all on field calls and for tracking game time. The referee will use a combination of whistles, hand signals and verbal instructions to explain the call and re-start play.

Rule 6: Assistant Referee.

In general, only one league referee is used per game. However, assistant referees may be utilized at the league's discretion to assist the primary referee.

Rule 7: Duration of the Game.

4 yr old co-ed: 4 – 8 minute quarters; 1 minute break between quarters; 3 minute halftime

5 yr old co-ed: 4 – 8 minute quarters; 1 minute break between quarters; 3 minute halftime

6 yr old co-ed: 4 – 8 minute quarters; 1 minute break between quarters; 3 minute halftime

7 yr old boys/girls: 4 – 10 minute quarters; 1 minute break between quarters; 3 minute halftime

8-9 yr old boys/girls: 4 – 10 minute quarters; 1 minute break between quarters; 3 minute halftime

10-12 yr old boys/girls: 4 – 10 minute quarters; 1 minute break between quarters; 3 minute halftime

Game time is running time with no stoppage except at the discretion of the referee (due to an injury or 'lost ball', for example). No overtime for regular season games.

Frequency & Duration of Practices:

4 yr old co-ed: 1 practice per week not to exceed 60 minutes

5 yr old co-ed: 1 practice per week not to exceed 60 minutes

6 yr old co-ed: 1 practice per week not to exceed 60 minutes

7 yr old boys/girls: 1 practice per week, 60-90 minutes duration

8-9 yr old boys/girls: 1 practice per week, 60-90 minutes duration

10-12 yr old boys/girls: 1 practice per week, 60-90 minutes duration

Rule 8: Start of Play.

Team captains meet at midfield for the coin flip. The winner of the coin flip begins with the ball. The coin flip loser chooses the side of the field to defend. Teams alternate kick-offs each quarter. Teams switch sides of the field after halftime.

At the start of the game, at the start of each quarter, and for a re-start after a goal is scored, play begins with a kick-off at midfield. The kick-off is an indirect kick (as described in Rule 13). Each team must be on its side of the field and the defending team must remain outside of the center circle until the ball is kicked. The ball must be kicked forward for play to begin. On a kick-off, failure to kick the ball forward results in a re-kick.

Coaches on the field:

4 yr old co-ed: coaches allowed on the field to help position players to re-start play (kick-offs, free kicks, etc.); coaches encouraged to get back to the sidelines when play resumes

5 yr old co-ed: coaches allowed on the field to help position players to re-start play (kick-offs, free kicks, etc.); coaches encouraged to get back to the sidelines when play resumes

6 yr old co-ed: no coaches on the field; can coach from one or both sidelines to help re-start play on throw-ins and corner kicks

7 yr old boys/girls: no coaches on the field; opposing teams and coaches on opposite sidelines

8-9 yr old boys/girls: no coaches on the field; opposing teams and coaches on opposite sidelines

10-12 yr old boys/girls: no coaches on the field; opposing teams and coaches on opposite sidelines

Parents on the field:

In all age groups, parent seating on the sideline is OK as long as it is well behind the field of play to allow a separation from the players & free movement by coaches up and down the sideline.

Note: some host field locations restrict parent access to the field surface. In that case, the league will comply with and enforce the host field rules.

Rule 9: Ball in and Out of Play.

Out of bounds is defined by the position of the ball, not the player. A ball must completely cross the goal line/end line or sideline/touchline to be considered out of bounds. The ball is in play if any part of the ball is on the line or if the ball is still in the air before touching the ground out of bounds.

Rule 10: Method of Scoring.

The ball must completely cross the goal line, between the goalposts and beneath the crossbar to count. One point is awarded for each goal scored.

Rule 11: No Camping.

For all age groups: no goal area "camping" allowed as described below.

While traditional off-sides rules do not apply in these age groups, "camping" in the goal area is strongly discouraged and will result in an infraction. "Camping" in the goal area is defined as maintaining a player or players (offense or defense) in or near the goal box when the ball is away from the immediate area and across the midfield line.

The first "camping" infraction per team will result in a team yellow card warning. Subsequent camping infractions will result in a red card team infraction (but no player dismissal) and a direct free penalty kick for the opposition as described in Rule 14.

4 yr old co-ed: players must leave the goal box when the ball is away from the immediate area and across the midfield line.

5 yr old co-ed: players must leave the goal box when the ball is away from the immediate area and across the midfield line.

6 yr old co-ed: players must leave the goal box when the ball is away from the immediate area and across the midfield line.

7 yr old boys/girls: when the ball is away from the immediate area and across the midfield line, players must leave the goal box and proceed to the "no camping line" near midfield.

8-9 yr old boys/girls: when the ball is away from the immediate area and across the midfield line, players must leave the goal box and proceed to the "no camping line" near midfield.

10-12 yr old boys/girls: when the ball is away from the immediate area and across the midfield line, players must leave the goal box and proceed to the "no camping line" near midfield.

If an opponent gains possession of the ball (for instance on a goal kick or to begin a fast break), player(s) may fall back to defensive positions near their goal area, even if the ball is on the opposite half of the field. However, if their team gains possession again on the opposite half of the field and their goal is no longer under threat, the defensive player(s) must proceed away from their goal box in Ages 4-6 and to the "no camping line" in ages 7-12.

Rule 12: Fouls and Misconduct.

Common fouls in soccer include hand balls and illegal contact. Also under this section is an explanation of the two-touch rule.

Hand balls are defined as the deliberate touching of the ball by a field player with any part of the arm from the shoulder to the fingertips. Balls that inadvertently touch the hands/arms are not considered an infraction nor are hand balls resulting from attempts to protect the face.

Illegal contact includes any slide tackle, tripping, pushing with the arm or elbows, dislodging an opponent from their position, holding, kicking an opponent, high kicking (leg/foot extends above the waist whether another player is actually contacted or not), or playing the ball from a seated or fallen position.

All Infractions as described above will result in a free kick for the opposition.

At the discretion of the referee, dangerous play, severe fouls or any player misbehavior will result in a yellow card warning, in addition to the free kick. A player receiving a yellow card must leave the game via immediate substitution. A second yellow card infraction for that same player will result in a red card and their dismissal from the game.

A red-carded player may not return to the game at any time nor may that ejected player be immediately replaced with a substitute. Teams with a red carded player must play a player short until the next substitution period, at which point they may return to a full complement of players.

At the discretion of the referee, any coach or parent sideline misconduct (including arguing of calls or heckling) will result in a yellow card infraction for the team. Any subsequent sideline misconduct will result in a red card infraction, dismissal of the offending parent or coach from the premises, and a direct free penalty kick for the opposition as described in Rule 14.

Two-touch Rule

As with all free kicks or throw-ins, the player executing any start of play cannot touch the ball twice in a row; it must touch another player first. Violation of the two-touch rule will be treated differently by age group.

4 yr old co-ed: two-touch violations will result in only one do-over

5 yr old co-ed: two-touch violations will result in only one do-over

6 yr old co-ed: two-touch violations will result in only one do-over

7 yr old boys/girls: two-touch violations will result in a turnover and an indirect free kick for the opposition

8-9 yr old boys/girls: two-touch violations will result in a turnover and an indirect free kick for the opposition

10-12 yr old boys/girls: two-touch violations will result in a turnover and an indirect free kick for the opposition

Rule 13: Free Kicks.

Free kicks are the primary way play is restarted after the referee stops play for an infraction. The ball must be stationary before it is kicked. The opposing team must allow sufficient room for the kick to be made. Direct free kicks can be kicked directly into the goal without touching another player. Indirect free kicks must touch another player before a goal is allowed. Indirect kicks that enter the goal prior to touching another player result in a goal kick for the opposition.

All infractions outside of the goal box and offensive infractions within the goal box result in an indirect free kick. All defensive infractions within the goal box result in a direct free penalty kick as described in Rule 14.

4 yr old co-ed: for free kicks, opposing players must be 10 feet from the ball
5 yr old co-ed: for free kicks, opposing players must be 10 feet from the ball
6 yr old co-ed: for free kicks, opposing players must be 10 feet from the ball
7 yr old boys/girls: for free kicks, opposing players must be 15 feet from the ball
8-9 yr old boys/girls: for free kicks, opposing players must be 15 feet from the ball
10-12 yr old boys/girls: for free kicks, opposing players must be 15 feet from the ball

Drop Ball:

In the event of play stoppage due to injury, play will re-start via a drop ball at the point where the ball was in play when the stoppage whistle blew. One player from each team gathers near the referee, facing the direction of their opponents' goal. The referee stands between the players and drops the ball. Once the ball hits the ground, the players are free to kick it to try and gain possession. If the ball is kicked before it hits the ground, the result is a new drop ball.

Rule 14: Penalty Kicks.

A direct free penalty kick results from offensive or defensive camping, or a contact foul or handball by the defending team that occurs within its goal box.

The penalty kick location is marked with an 'X' on the field of play.

4 yr old co-ed: Penalty Kicks from 9' in front of unprotected goal
5 yr old co-ed: Penalty Kicks from 15' in front of unprotected goal
6 yr old co-ed: Penalty Kicks from 15' in front of unprotected goal
7 yr old boys/girls: Penalty Kicks from 20' in front of unprotected goal
8-9 yr old boys/girls: Penalty Kicks from 25' in front of unprotected goal
10-12 yr old boys/girls: Penalty Kicks from 25' in front of unprotected goal

A penalty kick results either in a goal for the offensive team or, if missed, a goal kick for the defensive team. No defenders are allowed on a penalty kick nor are any follow-up shots allowed in the case of a short kick or rebound off the goal post, etc.

Except for the shooter, all players from both teams will line up well behind and to the side of the X, allowing plenty of room for the shooter. No heckling or distracting the shooter – it's an automatic "make" if that happens. For the Fours, coaches can help "point the way" for their shooter, but can't interfere with the actual attempt.

Rule 15: Throw-In.

A ball last touched or kicked out of bounds is awarded to the opposition. On the sideline, the ball re-enters play via a throw-in. In younger age groups, the 'throw-in' will actually be a 'kick-in,' treated like an indirect free kick from the sideline at the point the ball went out of bounds. On a throw-in/kick-in, the ball must enter the field of play. If it fails to enter the field of play, the result is a do-over.

4 yr old co-ed: all kick-ins are indirect, opposing players must be 10 feet from the ball
5 yr old co-ed: all kick-ins are indirect, opposing players must be 10 feet from the ball
6 yr old co-ed: all kick-ins are indirect, opposing players must be 10 feet from the ball
7 yr old boys/girls: all kick-ins are indirect, opposing players must be 15 feet from the ball
8-9 yr old boys/girls: all throw-ins are indirect, legal form: with two hands, bring ball behind head, release over top of head with both feet on ground. Opposing players must be 15 feet from the ball. Improper throw-in form results in a throw-in for the opposition.
10-12 yr old boys/girls: all throw-ins are indirect, legal form: with two hands, bring ball behind head, release over top of head with both feet on ground. Opposing players must be 15 feet from the ball. Improper throw-in form results in a throw-in for the opposition.

Rule 16: Goal Kick.

A ball last touched or kicked out of bounds by the offense along the goal line/end line re-enters play via a goal kick for the defending team. Goal kicks can be taken from anywhere within the goal box.

4 yr old co-ed: all goal kicks are indirect, opposing players must be behind the midfield line

5 yr old co-ed: all goal kicks are indirect, opposing players must be behind the midfield line

6 yr old co-ed: all goal kicks are indirect, opposing players must be behind the midfield line

7 yr old boys/girls: all goal kicks are indirect, opposing players must be behind the nearest no camping line

8-9 yr old boys/girls: all goal kicks are indirect, opposing players must be behind the nearest no camping line

10-12 yr old boys/girls: all goal kicks are indirect, opposing players must be behind the nearest no camping line

Rule 17: Corner Kick.

A ball last touched or kicked out of bounds by the defense along the goal line/end line re-enters play via a corner kick for the team on offense. To re-start play via a corner kick, the ball is placed within the corner arc on the side of the field that the ball passed the goal line.

4 yr old co-ed: all free kicks are indirect, opposing players must be 10 feet from the ball

5 yr old co-ed: all free kicks are indirect, opposing players must be 10 feet from the ball

6 yr old co-ed: all free kicks are indirect, opposing players must be 10 feet from the ball

7 yr old boys/girls: all free kicks are indirect, opposing players must be 15 feet from the ball

8-9 yr old boys/girls: all free kicks are indirect, opposing players must be 15 feet from the ball

10-12 yr old boys/girls: all free kicks are indirect, opposing players must be 15 feet from the ball

The Golden Rules:

The Neighborhood Sports World Cup Recreational Soccer League demands high standards of sportsmanship and fair play. No abusive language towards players, referees, coaches, or parents will be tolerated.

All able-bodied players will play a minimum of 50% of the match.

Play time should be shared across the full roster. Players may not play the full game if substitute(s) are available. Maximum play time for any one player is 75% of the game (6 of 8 game segments - assuming substitutes are available).

Players and coaches will congratulate the opposing team with a handshake or 'high five' at the conclusion of every game.

The referee is ALWAYS right. Coaches are expected to follow this rule without exception and enforce it with their players and parents.

No alcohol or tobacco products allowed at practices or games.

World Cup Recreational Soccer

WORLD CUP TOURNAMENT SPECIAL RULES/RULE VARIANCES

Rule 7: Duration of the **Tournament Game**.

4 yr old co-ed: 2 – 8 minute halves; 2 minute halftime
5 yr old co-ed: 2 – 8 minute halves; 2 minute halftime
6 yr old co-ed: 2 – 8 minute halves; 2 minute halftime
7 yr old boys/girls: 2 – 10 minute halves; 2 minute halftime
8-9 yr old boys/girls: 2 – 10 minute halves; 2 minute halftime
10-12 yr old boys/girls: 2 – 10 minute halves; 2 minute halftime

Game time is running time with no stoppage except at the discretion of the referee (due to an injury or 'lost ball', for example).

For tournament games, Fixed Substitution rules apply. Referees initiate substitutions at the midpoint of the half, following the first out of bounds play.

Note: some tournament games will be Full Length, including most Finals. Full length tournament games will be designated as such in the tournament schedule.

Tournament Game Overtime:

In the event of a tournament game tie at the end of regulation, overtime will consist of a multi-player shootout. The shootout will start immediately following regulation (no rest time).

The shootout consists of open penalty shots on goal.
The penalty shot location is marked with an 'X' on the field of play.

4 yr old co-ed: Penalty Shots from 9' in front of unprotected goal
5 yr old co-ed: Penalty Shots from 15' in front of unprotected goal
6 yr old co-ed: Penalty Shots from 15' in front of unprotected goal
7 yr old boys/girls: Penalty Shots from 20' in front of unprotected goal
8-9 yr old boys/girls: Penalty Shots from 25' in front of unprotected goal
10-12 yr old boys/girls: Penalty Shots from 25' in front of unprotected goal

Shootout Procedures:

The team that won the coin toss at the start of the game will kick first in the shootout.

The coin flip loser will pick the goal to be used for the penalty shots.

All players and coaches from both teams will line up well behind and to the side of the X, allowing plenty of room for the shooter.

No heckling or distracting the shooter - its an automatic "make" if that happens.

For the Fours, coaches can help "point the way" for their shooter, but can't interfere with the actual attempt.

Round 1:

Three players (Four players for 7s, 8-9s, and 10-12s) from the bench who did not finish the game (they were substitutes at the end of regulation) will each kick a penalty shot. The total penalty shots scored will be kept by the referee.

The opposing team will then have its three bench players (four for 7s, 8-9s, and 10-12s) shoot penalty shots. The team with the most makes wins. Regardless of the shootout differential, the winning team will be awarded one more goal than the losing team.

Round 2 (if necessary):

In the event of a tie after the first round of shootouts, the three players (four for 7s, 8-9s, and 10-12s) who have not yet taken a penalty shot will then proceed as above. Same team kicking order as in round one. If you are short-sided and do not have enough "new" shooters, players can shoot again in round 2, but only after all eligible players from their team have taken a shot.

Round 3 (if necessary):

If still tied after the second round, the referee will move back two paces from the X, and teams shoot again per round 1 above.

Round 4 (if necessary):

If still tied after the third round, the next set of shooters from each team (per round 2 procedures) will shoot from the round 3 distance.

Round 5 (if necessary):

A coin flip between coaches to quietly settle the matter.