



U8 Rules of the Game

Ball:

Size 4. Home team provides game balls.

Number of Players:

There are 6 players from each team on the field, including the goalie (5 players and 1 goalie).

Length of Game:

The game shall consist of two 20-minute halves. There will be a 5-minute break at half time.

Equipment:

Shin guards are **MANDATORY**. Socks must be worn completely over the shin guards. Jerseys should be tucked in. Tennis shoes or soccer cleats may be worn. No baseball or football cleats, they have a toe cleat in the front that soccer cleats do not have. No jewelry or metal hair clips are permitted.

Field:

The field size is approximately 60 x 40 yards with small goals. The goals are centered on the goal lines or end lines. The sidelines are often referred to as the touch lines.

Sidelines:

All players, water bottles, spectators shall remain at least 6 feet from the sidelines at all times during the game. No spectators will be permitted along the goal lines or behind the goal.

Coaches:

No coaches are allowed on the playing field.

Referees:

One referee will be assigned to each field. The referees will check each player's equipment prior to the game. The referees are the sole authority on the field and all their decisions are final.

Substitution:

The coach must request permission from the referee prior to making a substitution. A team can substitute only – 1. At the beginning of a quarter or half. 2. After either team scores. 3. Before either team's goal kick. 4. Your own throw in. 5. For an injured player.

You cannot sub on a corner kick!

Goalies:

Goalies shall wear a different color jersey from either team. They have 6 seconds to release the ball. The goalie cannot use their hands if:

1. The goalie has picked up the ball and then placed it on the ground. They may not pick the ball up again until another player has touched it.
2. The goalie receives an intentional pass from their own team (other than a header).
3. The goalie receives the ball from a throw-in from their own team.

The goalie may only pick up the ball if it is in their defensive goal box.

Kick-Off:

Occurs to start off and after half time. Kick is taken from the center of the field and the ball must move forward. The kicker may not kick the ball again until it has touched another player. A goal may be scored on a kick-off. Defenders must remain 5 yards back until the ball is played. Players must be on their own side of the field during kick-offs. No coin toss. The home team takes the kick-off at the start of the game and the opposing team takes the kick-off at the start of the second half. If a goal is scored, the team that was scored on takes the kick-off to resume play.

Throw-ins:

Throw-ins are awarded at the point that the whole ball crosses the sideline. The throw-in motion starts from behind the head and proceeds straight over the top of the head with both hands on the side of the ball. Both feet must be in contact with the ground during this motion. If a throw-in is deemed incorrect the opposing team gets a throw-in at the same spot. A goal may be scored on a throw-in if any player, same or opposite team (including goalie) touches the ball before it enters the goal.

Goal Kick:

A goal kick is awarded when the ball crosses the goal line and was touched last by the opposing team. The kick is taken from the edge of the penalty box. The kicker may not play the ball again until it has touched another player first. Defenders must be at midfield or on their side of the field until the ball has been played. A goal may be scored from a goal kick.

Out of Bounds:

The ball is out of play when it completely crosses the goal line or sideline – whether it is on the ground or air. The team gaining possession is responsible for getting the ball.

Corner Kick:

A corner kick is awarded when the ball has crossed the goal line and was last touched by a defensive player. A kick is taken from the corner on the side nearest to where the ball went out. The kicker may not touch the ball again unless the ball has touched another player.

Direct Free Kick:

Awarded at the spot of the foul for the following:

1. Deliberate handball.
2. Tripping.
3. Pushing with hands or holding shirt of the opposite player.
4. Striking another player.
5. Spitting or making contact with an opponent without the ball

The kicker may not touch the ball again until it has touched another player. Defenders must stand 7 yards away. A goal may be scored from a direct free kick without requiring another player to touch the ball first.

Indirect Free Kick:

Awarded at the spot of the foul for the following:

1. Passing back to the GK with feet and GK picking up the ball.
2. Dangerous play (high kick).
3. Preventing the GK from releasing the ball
4. Delaying play by kicking the ball after the whistle is blown.
5. Preventing a throw in (standing in front is permitted, but jumping is NOT).
6. Obstruction (blocking access to the ball while not actively playing the ball).

The kicker may not touch the ball again until it has touched another player. Defenders must stand 7 yards away. A goal may not be scored from an indirect kick unless the ball has touched another person first.

Offside:

No offsides are called at this age.

Penalty Kick:

Awarded if a defensive player commits any of the major violations listed under direct free kicks in their own penalty area. All players, except the goalie and player taking the kick must remain outside the penalty area until the ball is played. The penalty kick is taken from 10 yards in front of the goal. The goalie must remain on the goal line until the ball is kicked. The kicker is not permitted to touch the ball a second time until another player has touched the ball.

Defensive Line:

Discourage defender withdrawn from the game waiting in the back. Impose that all players must play in front of a marked line. The line should be traced on the field at the defensive 1/3 (1/3 from goal line of the teams half). Players can play in this zone when actively playing the ball but cannot stay in that zone if the ball is away.

Slide Tackling:

No slide tackling is allowed at this age group. It will result in a direct free kick for the other team if it is done.

Playing Time:

Each player must play at least 50% of the total playing time.

Sportsmanship:

Coaches are responsible for the conduct of their assistant coaches, players and spectators at all times. No coach, player or spectator shall yell at the referee, opposing coach, players or fans. No coaches or fans shall run up and down the sidelines during the game. The coach shall have all players ready to be checked in by the referees before the scheduled game time. After the game is complete, players and coaches will line up and shake hands with the opposing team and referees along the centerline.

The final score is never recorded and no league standings are kept. The emphasis is on learning the game and having FUN, not winning and losing.

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