

# ODESSA/LEXINGTON/RICHMOND/HIGGINSVILLE/CONCORDIA

## 2024 Spring Soccer Rules

These rules are based on the US Youth Soccer Association recommended modifications to the official FIFA Laws of the Game to support play at the younger grade levels.

*The last several pages of these rules contain simplified descriptions of the actual FIFA Laws of the Game that have been modified below to suit **younger grade play**. Any reference in those rules that states 'Conforms to FIFA' means the rule conforms to the official FIFA interpretation of what is written in the last pages of this document.*

### The following items apply to all age groups:

1. There will be no slide tackling allowed, whether intentional or unintentional. Fouls will be called on any player going to ground to play the ball or playing the ball while on the ground.
2. No jewelry will be worn by any player—watches, rings, earrings, necklaces, bracelets are not allowed. Hair bands for girls must be of a soft material. Shin guards may not be exposed and must be completely covered by socks. Cleats must be worn and may not be metal. If baseball/football cleats are worn the center stud at the front of the toe must be removed.

## 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Grade Modified Rules

Law 1 – The Field of Play: Dimensions are smaller to accommodate the **seven-versus-seven game** and are appropriate for the movement capabilities of eight- and nine-year-old children. These adjusted dimensions provide more practical space allowing players to be successful

Dimensions: The field of play must be rectangular. The length of the touchline must be greater than the length of the goal line.

Length: minimum 55 yards maximum 70 yards

Width: minimum 40 yards maximum 50 yards

Field Markings: Distinctive lines not more than five (5) inches wide. The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line. The center mark is indicated at the midpoint of the halfway line. A circle with a radius of eight (8) yards is marked around it. The penalty area is marked, but is smaller than the adult field size penalty area. The center circle is two yards smaller in radius than the adult size field marking. All other markings are per FIFA.

The Goal Area: Conform to FIFA.

The Penalty Area: A penalty area is defined at each end of the field as follows: Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line, ten (10) yards from the inside of each goalpost. These lines extend into the field of play for a distance of ten (10) yards and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is the penalty area. Within each penalty area a penalty mark is made eight (8) yards from the midpoint between the goalposts and equidistant to them. An arc of a circle with a radius of eight (8) yards from each penalty mark is drawn outside the penalty area.

Flag posts: Conform to FIFA.

The Corner Arc: Conform to FIFA.

Goals: Goals must be placed on the center of each goal line. They consist of two upright posts equidistant from the corner flag posts and joined at the top by a horizontal crossbar. The maximum distance between the posts is eighteen (18) feet and the maximum distance from the lower edge of the crossbar to the ground is six (6) feet.

Safety: Goals must be anchored securely to the ground. Portable goals may only be used if they satisfy this requirement.

Law 2 – The Ball: Size four (4).

Law 3 – The Number of Players: A match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than seven players, one of whom is the goalkeeper. A match may not start if either team consists of fewer than five players. The smaller number of field players will provide the opportunity for the children to further develop their physical and technical abilities. These are valuable traits for all soccer players to develop. With fewer players on the field each child has an increased number of contacts with the ball and has more actual playing time. Additionally the players will be required to make more decisions and experience repeating game situations more frequently. The work rate and involvement of players will be more consistent. While learning both offense and defense, players will become well rounded and will understand more readily the roles and importance of teammates. The need for the players to make the mental and physical transition from offense to defense and vice-versa will be enhanced in this playing environment.

Substitutions: At any stoppage and unlimited.

Playing time: Each player SHALL play a minimum of 50% of the total playing time. Teams and matches may be coed.

Law 4 – The Players' Equipment: Conform to FIFA. Non-uniform clothing is allowed based on weather conditions, but uniforms must still distinguish teams.

Law 5 – The Referee: Registered referee, especially Grade 9 or parent/coach or assistant coach. All rule infringements shall be briefly explained to the offending player. Clubs are urged to use this age group as

a field training opportunity for Grade 9 Recreational Referees. All rule infringements shall be briefly explained to the offending player.

Law 6 – The Assistant Referees: Not required. May use club linesmen if desired.

Law 7 – The Duration of the Match: Conform to FIFA with the exception of the match being divided into **two (2) equal halves of twenty-five (25) minutes each.** There shall be a half-time interval of five (5) minutes.

Law 8 – The Start and Restart of Play: Conform to FIFA with the exception of the opponents of the team taking the kick-off are at least eight (8) yards from the ball until it is in play.

Law 9 – The Ball In and Out of Play: Conform to FIFA.

Law 10 – The Method of Scoring: Conform to FIFA.

Law 11 – Offside: None.

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct: Conform to FIFA with the exception that an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team at the center spot on the halfway line if a goalkeeper punts or drop-kicks the ball in the air from his/her penalty area into the opponents penalty area.

Law 13 – Free Kicks: Conform to FIFA with the exception that all opponents are at least eight (8) yards from the ball.

Law 14 – The Penalty Kick: Conform to FIFA with the exception that the penalty mark is made eight (8) yards from the midpoint between the goalposts and equidistant to them and that players other than the kicker and defending goalkeeper are at least eight yards from the penalty mark. The distance of eight yards conforms to the radius of the center circle. The distance of eight yards from the center of the goalmouth for the penalty mark fits within the reduced dimensions of the penalty area and is a reasonable distance for the kick.

Law 15 – The Throw-In: Conform to FIFA.

Law 16 – The Goal Kick: Conform to FIFA.

Law 17 – The Corner Kick: Conform to FIFA with the exception that opponents remain at least eight (8) yards from the ball until it is in play.

Law 18: Header: **No headers,** (or conform to Fifa)

#### OFFICIAL FIFA LAWS OF THE GAME (SIMPLIFIED)

***As described below, these are simplified descriptions of the actual FIFA Laws of the Game that have been modified in the previous pages to suit the requirements for U6/U8/U10/U12/U14 play. Any***

***reference in those rules that states 'Conforms to FIFA' means the rule conforms to the official FIFA interpretation of what is written below.***

**Law 1 – Field of Play.** The correct soccer field layout for the field of play is regulated; however there is no universal size, except for international matches. The touch lines (lines running end to end), can be anywhere from 100-130 yards (90-120 metres) and the goal lines (running behind the goal, across the width of the field) can be anywhere from 50-100 yards (45 to 90 metres).

- Goal Area: 6yd x 12yd
- Penalty Area: 18yd x 44yd; Penalty Arc: 10yd radius from penalty spot; Penalty Spot: 12yd from center of goal
- Corner Arc: 1yd radius from corner flag
- Center Circle: 10yd radius

**Law 2 – The Ball.** Rules state however that the ball used must have a circumference of 27-28 inches and weigh 14-16oz.

**Law 3 – The Number of Players.** According to soccer rules, each game should have 6 players plus 1 goal keeper on the field, for a total of 7 players. Furthermore, a match cannot start with fewer than five players. International matches you'll notice, have a limit of 3 substitutions, including goal keepers, but the rules do differ for other leagues. All players who may see action must have their names submitted to the referee before the match. Most leagues use a game sheet for just such a purpose.

**Law 4 – The Players' Equipment.** Basic equipment for each player includes a jersey, shorts, socks, and shin guards. Each team must wear different colors, generally one dark and one light. In addition, the goal keepers must also wear colors that distinguish themselves from their team mates.

**Law 5 – The Referee.** One of the most thankless jobs out there, a referee is required for all soccer matches. The referee's job is to enforce the laws of the game while maintaining order and ensuring fair play.

**Law 6 – The Assistant Referees.** The assistant or "linesman" is positioned on either side of the touchlines and are generally used to determine when the ball is out of play, which team is entitled to the ball for a throw-in, corner, or free-kick, as well as calling offenses when they have a better view of the action than the referee.

**Law 7 – The Duration of the Match.** Most matches consist of two 25 minute halves, with a half time intermission not exceeding 15 minutes. Of course this also varies according to the league you're playing in, with younger players generally playing shorter halves.

**Law 8 – The Start and Restart of Play.** Each match is started by a coin toss with the winner determining which goal they will attack, and the other team taking the kick off. Dropped balls are used to restart play for any reason not outlined in the soccer rules listed in the FIFA Laws of the Game.

**Law 9 – The Ball In and Out of Play.** The two important things to note here is that the ball is considered out of play any time it entirely crosses either the touch or goal lines, or the referee blows the play dead.

At any other time, the ball is in play. Keep in mind, the entire ball must cross over the entirety of the line to be considered out of bounds.

**Law 10 – The Method of Scoring.** For a goal to count, the whole ball needs to cross entirely over the goal line, between the goal posts and under the crossbar. Of course, no soccer rules can be infringed by the scoring team for the goal to stand.

**Law 11 – Offside. There are no offsides in 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Grade.**

**Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct.** There are several things you can do to foul the opposition and most are very obvious. Law 12 outlines the various fouls, disciplinary sanctions, as well as the difference between a direct and indirect free kick. Keep in mind that any direct free kick foul committed within the penalty area will result in a penalty kick.

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|---|--|
| - Fouls resulting in a direct free kick   | - Fouls resulting in an indirect free kick |
| • Kick, or attempt to kick an opponent    | • Playing in a dangerous manner            |
| • Trip or attempt to trip an opponent     | • Impeding progress of an opponent         |
| • Jump at an opponent                     | • Preventing the goalkeeper from           |
| • Charge an opponent                      | releasing the ball from his hands          |
| • Strike or attempt to strike an opponent | • Goalkeeper touches the ball again with   |
| • Push an opponent                        | his hands after he has released it from    |
| • Tackle an opponent                      | possession and before any other player     |
| • Hold an opponent                        | touches it                                 |
| • Spit at an opponent                     | • Goalkeeper touches the ball with his     |
| • Deliberately handles the ball (except   | hands after it is deliberately kicked or   |
| goalie)                                   | thrown-in to him by a teammate (goalie     |
|   | IS allowed to touch a deliberately         |
|   | headed or chested ball from a              |
|   | teammate)                                  |

**Law 13 – Free Kicks.** Law 13 concerns itself with free kick rules. In soccer, there are both direct and indirect free kicks awarded, depending on the offence. A direct kick may be kicked directly into the opponent goal, while an indirect kick must be touched by another player before it can be struck into the goal. Players must also give a minimum of 10 yards of space from the ball until it is touched.

**Law 14 – The Penalty Kick.** Any fouls committed within the penalty area which would otherwise result in a direct free kick are instead awarded a penalty shot which is taken according to penalty kick rules. This kick is taken from the penalty spot, with all other players standing outside of the penalty area at least 10 yards from the penalty mark.

**Law 15 – The Throw-In.** The throw-in is used to restart play when the ball has crossed one of the touch lines. Make sure to keep your feet down, use both hands, and throw the ball from behind and over your

head and not into the ground. According to throw in rules, not properly taking a throw will result in an infraction and the throw being awarded to the opposing team.

**Law 16 – The Goal Kick.** A goal kick is used to restart play whenever the attacking team sends the ball across the goal line (end line) and a goal has not been scored. Goal kick rules state that the ball can be kicked from anywhere inside the goal area by any member of the defending team and is only considered to be in play once it exits the penalty area.

**Law 17 – The Corner Kick.** On the other hand, any time the ball is sent across the goal line (end line) without a goal being scored and the ball was last touched by the defending team, a corner kick is awarded. Corner kick rules state that a corner kick should be taken from the corner arc closest from where the ball was put out of play and the ball is considered in play as soon as it is touched.

For additional reference as well as official interpretation of the laws and guidance for referees, you may view the full version of the FIFA Laws of the Game on the Fifa website.