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BC SOCCER

BCSA SMALL SIDED RULES OF THE GAME

A Component of the BC Soccer Referee Education Framework

(JULY 2026)

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INTRODUCTION

This document supports the BC Soccer Small Sided Development Policy as a guideline for the implementation of rules for small-sided games for Under 13 age group and younger.

This guideline uses the [Canada Soccer Grassroots Standards \(2026\)](#) as the reference point for information relevant to this age and stage range.

The Grassroots Standards are determined by the age and stage of the players.
The stages are: Active Start, FUNdamentals, Learn to Train.

While IFAB's Laws of the Game regulate 11 a side games, BC Soccer's Small Sided Rules regulate and cover the basic rules of play for Small-Sided Games. These Rules are intended to support player, team and referee development; therefore, have been produced in conjunction with the BC Soccer, Small Sided Soccer Development Policy. These Rules are inspired by IFAB's Laws of the Game with adaptation specifically for Small Sided Game age groups of U13 and below.

A note of clarification, the Canada Soccer Grassroots Standards indicates two streams at the U6 age and stage, "Grassroots" and "Grassroots Community".

- Grassroots: environment where U6 players come together to play within their own groups, activity lead by Parents/Guardians, games are internal to the Club and there is little to no training component
- Grassroots Community: environment where U6 and older, players come together to train with a Coach, have training sessions and games, games are often with external Clubs

For more information the [Canada Soccer Coach Education Minimum Standards](#) document can be referenced.

The integrity of the Rules, and the referees who apply them, must always be protected and respected. In the absence of an assigned BC Soccer Referee (who has completed the Small Sided or Entry Level Clinic and registered), a nominated person may officiate the game if both teams agree before the kickoff. All those in authority, especially coaches and team captains, have a clear responsibility to the game to respect the officials and their decisions.

RULE 1: THE FIELD OF PLAY

Field Surface

The field of play must be a wholly natural or a wholly artificial playing surface except where competition rules permit an integrated combination of artificial and natural materials (hybrid system).

Field Markings

The field of play must be rectangular and marked with distinctive lines, and/or cones. These lines or markers belong to the areas of which they are boundaries. Cones must not be rigid or present a danger to players.

The two longer boundary lines are touchlines. The two shorter lines are goal lines.

The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line, which joins the midpoints of the two touchlines.

The radius of the centre circle must meet the following requirements. Where no centre circle is marked, players must remain the specified distance from the centre mark.

Please review the Field Diagram on Page 7 for an example of the field markings on a small sided field.

Age Group	Centre Circle Radius
U6-U11	7 metres
U12-U13	9 metres

Retreat Line

The retreat line is indicated by a line marked across the field and/or by cones placed 1 metre outside each touch line, as illustrated in the Field Diagram on Page 7. The table below specifies the required location of the retreat line for each age group.

Age Group	Retreat Line Application
U6-U7	Yes (halfway line)
U8-U9	Yes (halfway line)
U10-U11	Yes (one third)
U12-U13	No Retreat Line

Field Dimensions

The touchline must be longer than the goal line.

Competitions may determine the length of the goal line and touchline within the dimensions below.

Age Group	Field Dimensions
U6-U7	Width: 18-22m Length: 25-30m
U8-U9	Width: 25-30m Length: 30-36m
U10-U11	Width: 30-36m Length: 40-55m
U12-U13	Width: 45-55m Length: 65-75m

The Goal Area vs. The Penalty Area

Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line at a prescribed distance from the inside of each goalpost. The prescribed distances can be found in the table below (Goal Area or Penalty Area Dimensions).

These lines extend into the field of play and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is either the goal area or the penalty area.

For U6-U7, U8-U9, and U10-U11, there is only a goal area, and there is no penalty area.

For U12-U13 there is only a penalty area.

Within each penalty area, for U12-U13, a penalty mark is made from the midpoint between the goalposts.

The penalty area dimensions and penalty mark distance by age group are listed below.

Age Group	Goal Area or Penalty Area Dimensions	Penalty Mark Distance
U6-U7	7m	N/A
U8-U9	9m	N/A
U10-U11	10m	N/A
U12-U13	11m	9m

Typically, there are no penalty arcs in U12-U13 matches. However, during penalty kicks, players must remain 9 m away from the penalty mark (see Rule 14).

The Corner Area

The corner area is defined by a quarter circle with a radius of 1 m (1 yd) from each corner flagpost, drawn inside the field of play. Where no corner area is marked, the ball must be placed within 1 m (1 yd) of the intersection of the goal line and the touchline. Corner flagposts may be used but are not mandatory. If used, they must be a minimum height of 1.5 m (5 ft).

Technical Areas

Technical Areas are mandatory in U12-U13. Team benches should be placed on the opposite side of the field from the spectator area. Referees should use cones to mark out a technical area 1m on either side of the team bench, and 1 m away from the touchline. Team benches should be placed a reasonable distance away from the halfway line.

For U8-U9 and U10-U11, team benches should be placed on the opposite side of the field from the spectator area, and coaches should remain on their own side of the halfway line.

Goals

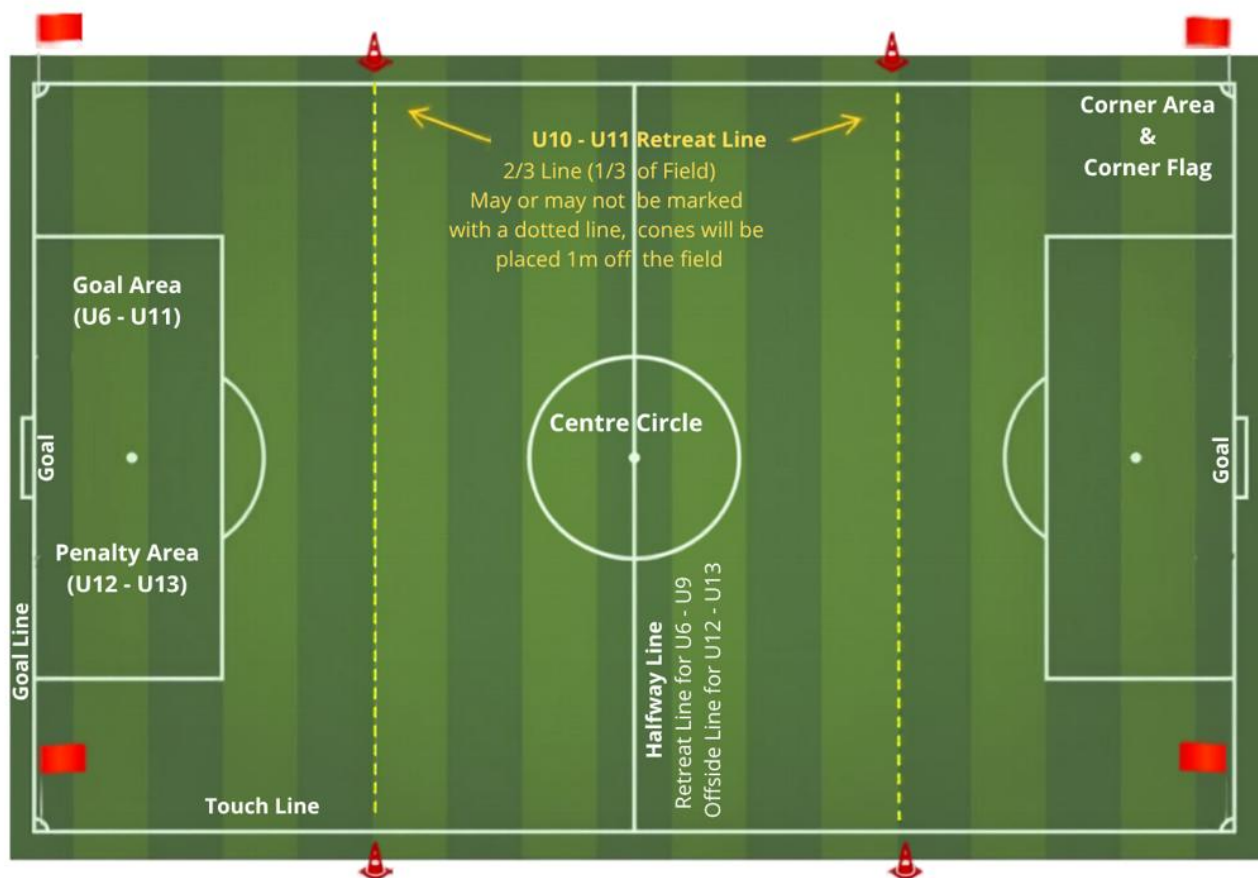
A goal must be placed on the centre of each goal line. A goal consists of two vertical posts equidistant from the corner flagposts and joined at the top by a horizontal crossbar. Nets may be attached to the goals and the ground behind the goal; they must be properly supported and must not interfere with the goalkeeper.

Safety:

Goals (including portable goals) must be firmly secured to the ground.



FIELD DIAGRAM



RULE 2: THE BALL

All balls must be:

- Spherical
- Made of suitable material
- Be the appropriate size by age group
- Be the appropriate weight
- Be the appropriate pressure (9-10 PSI for U6-U7, U8-U9, and 10-11 PSI for U10-U11, U12-U13)

Age Group	Ball Size
U6-U7	3
U8-U9	3 or 4
U10-U11	4
U12	4
U13	5

Replacement of a defective ball

The ball must not be torn, water-logged, or in a condition which could endanger players.

If the ball becomes defective:

- Play is stopped and
- Restarted with a dropped ball

If the ball becomes defective at:

- a kick-off, goal kick, corner kick, free kick, penalty kick or throw-in, the restart is retaken
- a penalty kick or penalties (penalty shoot-out) as it moves forward and before it touches a player, crossbar or goalposts, the penalty kick is retaken

If play was stopped when the ball was inside or last touched inside the penalty area, the referee drops it for the defending team goalkeeper in their penalty area.

The ball may not be changed during the match without the referee's permission.

RULE 3: THE PLAYERS

Number of Players

A match is played by two teams each consisting of an equal number of players.

Age Group	Number of Players
U6-U7	3v3
U8-U9	4v4 or 5v5 (with GK)
U10-U11	7v7
U12-U13	9v9

Substitutions

Age Group	Substitution Procedure
U6-U7	Unlimited, including on the fly
U8-U9	Unlimited, at a designated stoppage
U10-U11	Unlimited, at any stoppage
U12-U13	Unlimited, at any stoppage

Substitution Procedure

- Substitutions at U6-U7 are permitted on the fly, and therefore do not need the referee's permission
- Substitutions at U8-U13 are only allowed at the discretion of the Referee:
 - The Referee shall be advised of all substitutions.
 - Substitutions can be made on any stoppage, but only after the referee has given permission.
 - After the referee has given permission, the player being replaced shall leave the field. Once the player has left the field, the substitute may enter the field.

Changing the Goalkeeper

Any of the players may change places with the goalkeeper if:

- The referee is informed before the change is made
- The change is made during a stoppage in play

Offences and Sanctions

If a player changes places with the goalkeeper without the referee's permission, the referee:

- Allows play to continue
- In U12-U13 only:
 - Cautions both players when the ball is next out of play
 - But not if the change occurred during half-time

Offences and Sanctions - continued

For any other offences:

- In U12-U13 only, the players are cautioned
- Play is restarted with an indirect free kick, from the position of the ball when play was stopped

Players & Substitutes Sent Off (U12-U13 ONLY)

A player who is sent off after the kick-off cannot be replaced

A substitute who is sent off before or after the kick-off may not be replaced.

Extra Persons on The Field of Play

The coach and other officials named on the team list (with the exception of players or substitutes) are team officials. Anyone not named on the team list as a player, substitute or team official is an outside agent. If a team official, substitute, substituted or sent-off player or outside agent enters the field of play, the referee must:

- Only stop play if there is interference with play
- Have the person removed when play stops
- Take appropriate disciplinary action

If play is stopped and the interference was by:

- A team official, substitute, substituted or sent-off player play restarts with:
 - A dropped ball for U6-U7
 - An indirect free kick for U8-U9 and U10-U11
 - A direct free kick or penalty kick for U12-13
- An outside agent, play restarts with a dropped ball

If a ball is going into the goal and the interference does not prevent a defending player playing the ball:

- The goal is awarded if the ball enters the goal (even if contact was made with the ball)
- Unless the interference was by the attacking team in which case a dropped ball or free kick will be awarded subject to the age group references listed above

Player Outside The Field Of Play

If a player who requires the referee's permission to re-enter the field of play re-enters without the referee's permission, the referee must:

- Stop play (not immediately if the player does not interfere with play or a match official or if the advantage can be applied)
- For U12-U13 only, caution the player for entering the field of play without permission

Player Outside The Field Of Play - continued

- If the referee stops play, it must be restarted:
 - With a dropped ball or free kick from the position of the interference subject to the age group references above
 - With a dropped ball or indirect free kick, subject to the age group references above, from the position of the ball when play was stopped if there was no interference
(A player who crosses a boundary line as part of a playing movement does not commit an offence)

Goal Scored with An Extra Person On The Field Of Play

If, after a goal is scored, the referee realizes, before play restarts, that an extra person was on the field of play when the goal was scored:

- The referee must disallow the goal if the extra person was:
 - A player, substitute, substituted player, sent-off player or team official of the team that scored the goal; play is restarted with a direct free kick from the position of the extra person
 - An outside agent who interfered with play unless a goal results as outlined above in 'Extra persons on the field of play'; play is restarted with a dropped ball

The referee must allow the goal if the extra person was:

- A player, substitute, substituted player, sent-off player or team official of the team that conceded the goal
- An outside agent who did not interfere with play

In all cases, the referee must have the extra person removed from the field of play.

If, after a goal is scored and play has restarted, the referee realizes an extra person was on the field of play when the goal was scored, the goal cannot be disallowed. If the extra person is still on the field the referee must:

- Stop play
- Have the extra person removed
- Restart with a dropped ball or free kick as appropriate

RULE 4: THE PLAYER'S EQUIPMENT

Players shall not wear anything which endangers themselves or other players.

Basic Compulsory Equipment - Shall Consist Of:

- A jersey or shirt with sleeves – pinnies may also be used to distinguish colors
- Shorts and Socks
- Shin Guards
- Appropriate footwear (the footwear shall be suitable to the field conditions and player safety)
 - No metal studs are permitted

Shin Guards

- Must be completely covered by the socks
- Are to be made of rubber, plastic or a similar suitable material
- Must provide a reasonable degree of protection

Jewelry

- Jewelry is not permitted - using tape to cover jewelry is not permitted
- Religious items such as head scarves, turbans or hijabs are permitted
- Medic alert bracelets may be worn if they are tight fitting and taped to prevent insertion of a finger
- Non-dangerous protective equipment, for example headgear, facemasks and knee and arm protectors made of soft, lightweight padded material is permitted as are goalkeepers' caps and sports spectacles
- Referees have the final say on the safety of equipment

Colours

- The two teams must wear colours that distinguish them from each other and also the referee
- Each goalkeeper must wear colours which are distinguishable from all outfield players and the referee

Non-uniform clothing, which does not pose a danger (pants, gloves, toques), are allowed based on weather conditions, but jerseys/pinnies must still distinguish teams.

Defective or Dangerous Equipment

- A player who is asked to leave the field of play because of defective or dangerous equipment may not re-enter the field of play until the referee has checked and is satisfied that the equipment is safe
- A player who enters without permission must be cautioned at U12-13:
 - If play is stopped to issue the caution, an indirect free kick is awarded from the position of the ball when play was stopped,
 - Unless there was interference, in which case a direct free kick (or penalty kick) is awarded from the position of the interference (at U8-U9, and U10-U11, play should be restarted with an indirect free kick when a player enters without permission)

RULE 5: THE REFEREE

The Authority of The Referee

- The referee's role is to enforce the Small Sided Rules, and to help keep players safe
- Team officials shall conduct themselves in a responsible manner and are subject to discipline by the referee
- The decisions of the referee regarding facts connected with play, including whether or not a goal is scored and the result of the game, are final

Powers & Duties

The Referee:

- Enforces the Rules of the Small Sided Game
- Acts as timekeeper, keeps a record of the game and reports in writing, if required, to the Club or appropriate authority, any misconduct by players, team officials, parents, spectators or other persons which takes place on the field of play or its vicinity at any time during the game or when the referee is present at the field
- Stops the game immediately if a player appears to be injured and ensures that any player bleeding from a wound leaves the field of play. The player may only return on receiving a signal from the referee, who must be satisfied that the bleeding has stopped
- In U12-13 only, allows play to continue when an offence occurs and the non-offending team will benefit from the advantage, and penalises the offence if the anticipated advantage does not ensue at that time or within a few seconds
- Controls who may enter or leave the field of play (except for U6-U7, see Rule 3)
- Signals to start the game and to restart it after a stoppage, suspends or abandons the game for any offences i.e. Outside interference
- Decides if the field of play and applicable equipment is safe for play

Disciplinary Action

The Referee:

- For U12-13 only, punishes the more serious offence, in terms of sanction, restart, physical severity and tactical impact, when more than one offence occurs at the same time
- Has the authority to take disciplinary action from entering the field of play for the pre-match inspection until leaving the field of play after the match ends:
 - if, before entering the field of play at the start of the match, a U12-13 player commits a sending-off offence, the referee has the authority to prevent the player taking part in the match; the referee will report any other misconduct

For ALL AGE GROUPS - Referee:

- takes action against team officials who fail to act in a responsible manner including:
 - warns or shows a yellow card for a caution or a red card for a sending-off from the field of play and its immediate surrounds, including the technical area
 - if the offender cannot be identified, the senior coach present in the technical area will receive the sanction

Outside Interference

- Stops, suspends or abandons the match for any offences or because of outside interference:
 - If the floodlights are inadequate
 - If an object is thrown by a spectator hits a match official, a player or team official, the referee may allow the match to continue, or stop, suspend or abandon it depending on the severity of the incident
 - If a spectator blows a whistle which interferes with play - play is stopped and restarted with a dropped ball
- If an extra ball, other object or animal enters the field of play during the match, the referee must:
 - Stop play (and restart with a dropped ball) only if it interferes with play
 - Unless the ball is going into the goal and the interference does not prevent a defending player playing the ball,
 - the goal is awarded if the ball enters the goal (even if contact was made with the ball)
 - the goal is not awarded if the interference was by the attacking team, restart with a dropped ball
 - Allow play to continue if it does not interfere with play and have it removed at the earliest possible opportunity
 - Allows no unauthorised persons to enter the field of play

Referee's Equipment

Basic Compulsory Equipment Shall Consist Of

- Shirt
- Shorts
- Socks
- Whistle
- Watch
- Red and Yellow Cards
- Notebook and Pencil (or other means of keeping a record of the game)
- Coin

A BC Soccer Small Sided Referee badge is to be worn on the left side of the chest.

Referee Signals

Refer to the graphics below for approved IFAB Laws of the Game referee signals.



Throw-in



Penalty kick



Indirect free kick



Direct free kick



Red and yellow card



Advantage



Corner kick



Goal kick

RULE 6: OTHER MATCH OFFICIALS

Assistant Referee

Assistant Referees are not required in small-sided soccer; but if used, Assistant Referees indicate when:

- The whole of the ball leaves the field of play and which team is entitled to a corner kick, goal kick or throw-in/kick-in
- A player in an offside position may be penalized
- A substitution is requested
- The Assistant Referee's assistance also includes monitoring the substitution procedure
- At penalty kicks, if the goalkeeper moves off the goal line before the ball is kicked and if the ball crosses the line

Volunteer Linesperson

A volunteer linesperson (parents or spectators) can be used to determine when the ball leaves the field of play

A volunteer linesperson may not indicate offside decisions and foul decisions.

A head coach may not act as a Volunteer Linesperson.

The referee's decision is final.

RULE 7: DURATION OF GAME

A game consists of two equal halves and a halftime interval not exceeding 5 minutes in duration.

The following table indicates the match durations in minutes by age group:

Age Group	Match Durations (minutes)
U6-U7	2 x 15
U8-U9	2 x 20
U10-U11	2 x 25
U12	2 x 35
U13	2 x 40

Allowance For Time Lost

Allowance is made by the referee in each half for all playing time lost in that half through:

- Substitutions
- Assessment and/or removal of injured players
- Wasting time
- Disciplinary sanctions
- Medical stoppages permitted by competition rules:
 - 'drinks' breaks (which should not exceed one minute)
 - 'cooling' breaks (ninety seconds to three minutes)
- Any other cause, including any significant delay to a restart

Penalty Kick

For U12-U13 only, if a penalty kick has to be taken or retaken, the half is extended until the penalty kick is completed.

RULE 8: START AND RESTART OF PLAY

Kick-Off

A kick-off is a way of starting or restarting play:

- At the start of a game or at the start of the second half
- After a goal has been scored

Procedure

Before the kickoff to the start of the game:

- The kick-off shall be decided by the toss of a coin
- The team that wins the toss decides to take the kick-off or decides which goal to attack
- The other team selects the kick-off or goal, whichever was not selected by the team that won the toss
- All players must be in their own half of the field of play except the kicker who may stand in the other half to take the kick-off. The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves
- All players opposing the team taking the kick-off shall be at least the following distances from the ball until it is kicked and clearly moves:
 - U6-U11 = 7 metres
 - U12-U13 = 9 metres
- The ball must be stationary on the centre mark
- The referee signals the kick-off by blowing the whistle
- After a goal has been scored, the game shall be restarted by a kick-off taken by the team against which the goal was scored
- After the first half of play, the teams shall change halves and the kick-off shall be taken by the team that did not take the kick-off to start the game
- For U12-U13, a goal may be scored directly against the opponents from the kick-off:
 - if the ball directly enters the kicker's goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opponents
- For U6-U7, U8-U9, U10-U11, a goal may not be scored directly from a kick-off:
 - if the ball directly enters the opponents' goal, a goal kick is awarded
- For all age groups, if the ball directly enters the kicker's goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opponents

Offences & Sanctions

U6-U7, U8-U9, & U10-U11

Should the player taking the kick-off touch the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player, the team will retake the kick-off.

U12-U13

Should the player taking the kick-off touch the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player, an indirect free kick shall be awarded to the opposing team. If the player's second touch is with

the hands, a direct free kick shall be awarded. In the event of any other kick-off procedure offence, the kick-off is retaken.

Dropped Ball

A dropped ball is a method of restarting play when, while the ball is still in play, the referee is required to stop play temporarily for any reason not mentioned elsewhere in the Rules of the Small Sided Game:

- injury
- if the ball becomes defective
- an interference by an outside agent
(e.g., a dog runs across the field or another ball enters the field of play)

Procedure

- The referee drops the ball at the place where it was located when play was stopped, unless play was stopped inside the penalty area
- The ball will be dropped to one player of the team that last possessed it; except if play was stopped when the ball was in the goal area or penalty area, then the ball is dropped to the goalkeeper - the goalkeeper may pick up the ball after it is dropped
- All players must be 4 metres away from the player to whom the ball is dropped
- Play restarts when the dropped ball touches the ground
- If the ball is touched before hitting the ground the ball is re-dropped
- A goal cannot be scored directly from a dropped ball

RULE 9: BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY

Ball Out of Play

The ball is OUT of play when:

- it has wholly passed over the goal line or touchline on the ground or in the air
- play has been stopped by the referee
- it touches a match official, remains on the field of play and:
 - the team in possession of the ball changes
 - the ball goes directly into the goal

Ball In Play

The ball is IN play when it is:

within the field of play, including when it rebounds into play from a goalpost, a crossbar, or a corner flag post.

The ball is also in play if it hits the referee and the referee does not stop the game.

RULE 10: DETERMINING THE OUTCOME OF A MATCH

A goal is scored when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, between the goalposts and under the crossbar, provided that no offence has been committed by the team scoring the goal. The referee is the sole judge as to whether a goal has been scored.

If the goalkeeper throws the ball directly into the opponents' goal, a goal kick is awarded.

If a referee signals a goal before the ball has passed wholly over the goal line, play is restarted with a dropped ball.

When goalposts are not available and cones are used instead, a goal is scored when, if in the opinion of the referee, the whole of the ball crosses over the goal line between or above the cones, below two (2) meters.

RULE 11: OFFSIDE

U6-U7, U8-U9, U10-U11

Do not play with the offside rules. A player in these age groups cannot be offside.

U12-U13

Play with offside rules. **Reminder:** There is no retreat line for these age groups.

Definition Of Offside Position

A player is in an offside position if:

- Any part of the head, body or feet is in the opponents' half (excluding the halfway line) and
- Any part of the head, body or feet is nearer to the opponents' goal line than both the ball and the second-last opponent

The hands and arms of all players, including the goalkeepers, are not considered.

A player is not in an offside position if level with the:

- Second-last opponent or;
- Last two opponents

Offside Offence

A player in an offside position at the moment the ball is played or touched by a team-mate is only penalised for becoming involved in active play by:

- Interfering with play by playing or touching a ball passed or touched by a teammate or
- Interfering with an opponent by
 - preventing an opponent from playing or being able to play the ball by clearly obstructing the opponent's line of vision or
 - challenging an opponent for the ball or
 - clearly attempting to play a ball which is close when this action impacts on an opponent or
 - making an obvious action which clearly impacts on the ability of an opponent to play the ball
- Gaining an advantage by playing the ball or interfering with an opponent when it has:
 - rebounded or been deflected off the goalpost, crossbar, match official or an opponent
 - been deliberately saved by any opponent

A player in an offside position receiving the ball from an opponent who deliberately played the ball (including by deliberate handball) is not considered to have gained an advantage, unless it was a deliberate save by any opponent.

Offside Offence - Restart

It is not an offence to be in an offside position. When an offside offence occurs, the referee awards an indirect free kick to be taken from the position of the offending player when the ball was last played by one of their teammates.

Fouls Occurring Before or After Offside Offences

In situations where:

- a player moving from, or standing in, an offside position is in the way of an opponent and interferes with the movement of the opponent towards the ball, this is an offside offence if it impacts on the ability of the opponent to play or challenge for the ball; if the player moves into the way of an opponent and impedes the opponent's progress (e.g. blocks the opponent), the offence should be penalized under Law 12
- a player in an offside position is moving towards the ball with the intention of playing the ball and is fouled before playing or attempting to play the ball, or challenging an opponent for the ball, the foul is penalized as it has occurred before the offside offence
- an offence is committed against a player in an offside position who is already playing or attempting to play the ball, or challenging an opponent for the ball, the offside offence is penalized as it has occurred before the foul challenge

No Offence - if a player receives the ball directly from a:

goal kick OR throw-in OR corner kick

RULE 12: FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

Direct Free Kick Offences

U6-U7, U8-U9, & U10-U11

There are no direct free kicks awarded for U6-U11. All of the offences listed below that would result in a direct free kick for ages U12-U13, result in an indirect free kick for U6-U11.

U12 - U13

A direct free kick is awarded if, when the ball is in play, a player commits any of the following offences against an opponent in a careless, reckless, or excessive manner:

- Charges
- Jumps at
- Kicks or attempts to kick
- Pushes
- Strikes or attempts to strike
- Tackles or challenges
- Trips or attempts to trip

A direct free kick is also awarded if a player commits any of the following offences:

- Handles the ball; deliberately touches the ball with their hand/arm, including moving the hand/arm towards the ball (except for the goalkeeper within their own penalty area)
- Holds an opponent OR Impedes an opponent with contact
- Bites or spits at someone
- Throws an object at the ball, an opponent, or referee

For U12-U13, if any of the offences above occur inside the penalty area, a **penalty kick** is awarded.

For U6-U11, if any of the offences above occur inside the goal area, an **indirect free kick** is awarded:

- the free kick is taken from the nearest point on the goal area line which runs parallel to the goal line

Indirect Free Kick Offences

The below offences result in an indirect free kick for all age groups.

An indirect free kick is awarded if, in the opinion of the referee, a player:

- Plays in a dangerous manner (without contacting another player)
- Impedes the progress of an opponent (without contact)
- Uses offensive, insulting, or abusive language or is guilty of dissent
- Prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from the hands
- Challenges the goalkeeper for the ball when the goalkeeper is in control of the ball with the hand(s) (see Goalkeeper Control of the Ball on page 22)

Goalkeeper Offences

Starting at U8-U9, an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a goalkeeper, inside their goal/penalty area commits any of the following offences:

- Handles the ball after it has been deliberately kicked to the goalkeeper by a teammate
- Touches the ball with their hands after having received it directly from a kick-in or throw-in taken by a teammate

Starting at U12-U13, a corner kick is awarded if a goalkeeper, inside their penalty area, controls the ball with their hand(s)/arm(s) for more than eight seconds before releasing it.

- The referee will decide when the goalkeeper has control of the ball and the eight seconds begin and will visually count down the last five seconds with a raised hand.

Goalkeeper Control of the Ball

A goalkeeper is considered to be in control of the ball with their hand(s)/arm(s) when:

- the ball is between their hands/arms or between their hand(s)/arm(s) and any surface (e.g. ground, own body)
- holding the ball in their outstretched open hand(s)
- bouncing it on the ground or throwing it in the air
- A goalkeeper cannot be challenged by an opponent when in control of the ball with their hand(s)/arm(s)

Disciplinary Action

U6-U7, U8-U9, U10-U11

- No cards are shown to players in these age groups.
- It is recommended that coaches should recognize and react appropriately to the following:
 - Unsporting Behaviour (substitute the offending player)
 - Serious Foul Play and Violent Conduct (remove the player for the remainder of the match)
- A team official guilty of misconduct should be cautioned (yellow card) or sent-off (red card)

U12 - U13

- Players may be cautioned (yellow card) or sent-off (red card) in these age groups.
- A team official guilty of misconduct should be cautioned (yellow card) or sent-off (red card)

Cautionable Offences

A player is cautioned if guilty of:

- Delaying the restart of play
- Dissent by word or action
- Entering, re-entering or deliberately leaving the field of play without the referee's permission
- Failing to respect the required distance when play is restarted with a dropped ball, corner kick, free kick or throw-in
- Persistent offences (no specific number or pattern of offences constitutes 'persistent')
- Unsporting behaviour, including the following:
 - Commits in a reckless manner a direct free kick offence
 - Commits an offence (including handball) which interferes with or stops a promising attack
 - Changes places with the goalkeeper during play or without the referee's permission (see Law 3)
 - Handles the ball in an attempt to score a goal (whether or not the attempt is successful) or in an unsuccessful attempt to prevent a goal
 - Makes unauthorised marks on the field of play
 - Plays the ball when leaving the field of play after being given permission to leave
 - Shows a lack of respect for the game
 - Initiates a deliberate trick for the ball to be passed (including from a free kick or goal kick) to the goalkeeper with the head, chest, knee etc. to circumvent the Law, whether or not the goalkeeper touches the ball with the hands; goalkeeper is cautioned if responsible for initiating the deliberate trick
 - Verbally distracts an opponent during play or at a restart

A substitute or substituted player is cautioned if guilty of:

- Unsporting behaviour
- Delaying the restart of play
- Dissent by word or action
- Entering or reentering the field of play without the referee's permission

Sending-Off Offences

Sending-off offences include (but are not limited to):

- Serious foul play
- Violent conduct
- Denying a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity to an opponent whose overall movement is towards the offender's goal by an offence punishable by a free kick (including handball - except a goalkeeper within their penalty area)
- Biting or spitting at someone
- Using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or action(s)
- Receiving a second caution in the same match

Team Officials

Warning

The following offences should usually result in a warning; repeated or blatant offences should result in a caution or sending-off:

- Entering the field of play in a respectful/non-confrontational manner
- Failing to cooperate with a match official
- Minor/low-level disagreement (by word or action) with a decision
- Occasionally leaving the confines of the technical area without committing another offence

Caution

Caution offences include (but are not limited to):

- Clearly/persistently not respecting the confines of their team's half (U8-U9, U10-U11) or technical area (U12-U13)
- Delaying the restart of play by their team
- Deliberately entering the half or technical area of the opposing team (non-confrontational)
- Dissent by word or action including:
 - throwing/kicking drinks bottles or other objects
 - action(s) which show(s) a clear lack of respect for the match official(s) e.g. sarcastic clapping
- Acting in a provocative or inflammatory manner (including excessively/persistently gesturing for a red or yellow card)
- Persistent unacceptable behaviour (including repeated warning offences)
- Showing a lack of respect for the game

Sending off

Sending-off offences include (but are not limited to)

- Delaying the restart of play by the opposing team e.g. holding onto the ball, kicking the ball away, obstructing the movement of a player
- Deliberately leaving their half or technical area to:
 - Show dissent towards, or remonstrate with, a match official
 - Act in a provocative or inflammatory manner
- Entering the opposing half or technical area in an aggressive or confrontational manner
- Deliberately throwing/kicking an object onto the field of play
- Entering the field of play to:
 - Confront a match official (including at half-time and full-time)
 - Interfere with play, an opposing player or a match official
- Physical or aggressive behaviour (including spitting or biting) towards an opposing player, substitute, team official, match official, spectator or any other person
- Receiving a second caution in the same match
- Using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or action(s)
- Violent conduct

RULE 13: THE FREE KICK

Direct and indirect free kicks are awarded to the opposing team of a player, substitute, substituted or sent-off player, or team official guilty of an offence.

REMINDER: There are no direct free kicks awarded for U6-U11.

All of the offences that would result in a direct free kick for ages U12-U13, result in an indirect free kick for U6-U11.

Indirect free kick signal

The referee indicates an indirect free kick by raising the arm above the head; this signal is maintained until the kick has been taken and the ball touches another player, goes out of play or it is clear that a goal cannot be scored directly.

An indirect free kick must be retaken if the referee fails to signal that the kick is indirect and the ball is kicked directly into the goal.

Free Kick Procedure

For all free kicks, the ball must be stationary when the kick is taken, and the kicker must not touch the ball again until it has touched another player.

The ball is in play when the ball is kicked and clearly moves.

Free Kick Procedure - Continued

All opponents shall be not less than the following distances from the ball until it has been kicked and clearly moves:

- U6-U11 = 7 metres
- U12-U13 = 9 metres

For any infringement of this rule, the free kick shall be retaken.

The ball is in play when it has been kicked and clearly moves.

A player taking a free kick shall not touch the ball a second time until it has been touched by another player:

- The restart for this offence is an indirect free kick to the opposing team
- If the kicker commits a handball offence as their second touch:
 - an indirect free kick is awarded in U6-U11
 - a direct free kick (outside penalty area) or penalty kick (inside penalty area) is awarded in U12-U13 (if the kicker was the goalkeeper and they pick up the ball inside their own penalty area an indirect free kick is awarded)

For a free kick taken by the defending team inside their goal area (U6-U11) or penalty area (U12-U13), the ball may be placed anywhere inside the penalty area. All opponents must be outside the penalty area.

Direct Free Kicks

- If a direct free kick is kicked directly into the opponent's goal, a goal is awarded
- If a direct free kick is kicked directly into a team's own goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opposing team

Indirect Free Kicks

- A goal cannot be scored directly from an indirect free kick
- If an indirect free kick is kicked directly into the opponent's goal, no goal is scored and play restarts with a goal kick
- If an indirect free kick is kicked directly into the team's own goal, a corner kick is awarded

An indirect free kick shall be taken from the place where the offence occurred.

If an indirect free kick offence occurs inside the goal area (U6-U11) or inside the penalty area (U12-U13), the indirect free kick is taken from the nearest point on the goal area or penalty area Proline which runs parallel to the goal line.

RULE 14: THE PENALTY KICK

A penalty kick is awarded when a player from the defending team commits a direct free kick offence within their own penalty area.

U6 - U11

There are NO penalty kicks awarded.

U12 - U13

Penalty kicks are awarded.

Procedure

- The ball must be placed on the penalty mark
- Players taking the kick must be properly identified
- Defending goalkeeper must have at least one foot on, or in line with, their goal line, facing the kicker, and between the goalposts until the ball has been kicked

The players other than the kicker must be located:

- Inside the field of play
- Outside the penalty area
- Behind the penalty mark and at least 9 metres from the penalty mark
- After the players have taken positions, the referee signals for the penalty kick to be taken by blowing the whistle
- The player taking the penalty kick must kick the ball forward
- The kicker must not play the ball again until it has touched another player
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves
- If, after the penalty kick has been taken, the kicker touches the ball again before it has touched another player, an indirect free kick is awarded (subject to Rule 13 for restart after a handball by the kicker)

Outcome of the Penalty Kick

ACTION	GOAL	NO GOAL
Encroachment only by attacking player(s)	Impact: penalty is retaken No impact: goal	Impact: indirect free kick No impact: no retake
Encroachment only by defending player(s)	Impact: goal No impact: goal	Impact: penalty is retaken No impact: no retake
Encroachment by defending and attacking player(s)	Impact by both defending and attacking player(s): penalty is retaken Impact by defending player(s) only: goal Impact by attacking player(s) only: penalty is retaken No impact: goal	Impact by both defending and attacking player(s): penalty is retaken Impact by defending player(s) only: penalty is retaken Impact by attacking player(s) only: no retake No impact: no retake
Offence only by goalkeeper	Goal	Not saved: penalty is not retaken (unless kicker clearly impacted) Saved: penalty is retaken and warning for goalkeeper; caution for any further offence(s)
Goalkeeper and kicker offend at the same time	Penalty is retaken unless kicker commits one of the offences below	Penalty is retaken unless kicker commits one of the offences below
Double touch by kicker	Accidental: penalty is retaken Deliberate: indirect free kick	Accidental: indirect free kick; penalty is retaken if goalkeeper also offends Deliberate: indirect free kick
Ball kicked backwards	Indirect free kick	Indirect free kick
'Illegal' feinting	Indirect free kick and caution for kicker	Indirect free kick and caution for kicker
Wrong kicker	Indirect free kick and caution for wrong kicker	Indirect free kick and caution for wrong kicker
Unsporting behaviour by kicker	Indirect free kick and caution for kicker	Indirect free kick and caution for kicker

RULE 15: DRIBBLE IN / PASS IN AND THROW-IN

A dribble-in, pass-in, and throw-in are methods of restarting play. A dribble-in, pass-in, and throw-in is awarded when the whole of the ball has crossed the touch line either on the ground or in the air.

These restarts are given to the opponents of the team who last touched the ball before it went out of play.

A goal cannot be scored directly from a dribble-in, pass-in, and throw-in.

If the ball enters the goal without touching at least two players, play is restarted with:

- A goal kick for the opposing team if the ball enters the opponents' goal
- corner kick if the ball enters the kicker's own goal

U6 - U11 Dribble In or Pass In

A kicker may conduct either a dribble-in or pass-in as a method of restarting play.

A dribble-in or pass-in is awarded to the opponents of the player who last touched the ball when the whole of the ball passes over the touchline, on the ground or in the air.

Procedure

- The ball is kicked from the touchline at the point where the ball left the field of play
- The ball must be stationary
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves
- At the taking of a kick-in, all opponents must be at least 2 metres from the ball

U12 - U13 Throw-In

The player taking the throw-in shall:

- Face the field of play
- Have part of each foot on the touch line or on the ground outside the touch line
- Throw the ball using both hands
- Deliver the ball from behind and over their head
- The ball is in play immediately after it enters the field of play
- If the player taking the throw-in touches the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player, an indirect free kick shall be awarded to the opposing team (subject to Rule 13)
- At the taking of a throw-in, all opponents must be at least 2 metres from the location of the throw-in

Failing To Complete the Throw In

If a U12 player fails to complete the throw-in correctly, their team shall be permitted a second attempt.

If the second attempt is unsuccessful, the throw-in shall be awarded to the opposing team.

If a U13 player fails to complete the throw-in correctly, the throw-in shall be awarded to the opposing team.

RULE 16: THE GOAL KICK

A goal kick is a method of restarting play, and is awarded when the whole of the ball has crossed the goal line either on the ground or in the air, was last touched by the attacking team, and a goal has not been scored.

Procedure

The ball is kicked from any point within the goal area (U6-U11) or penalty area (U12-13) by a player of the defending team:

- The ball is in play once it has been kicked and clearly moves
- If the player taking the goal-kick touches the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player, an indirect free kick shall be awarded to the opposing team (subject to Rule 13)

Retreat Line (U6-U7, U8-U9, U10-U11)

- At the taking of a goal kick, all opposing players must be on their side of the retreat line and cannot pursue the ball until:
 - The ball is touched by a teammate of the kicker
 - The ball travels over the retreat line
 - The ball leaves the field of play

If the opposing team encroaches across the retreat line before one of the above conditions:

- the referee shall stop play and allow a retake of the goal kick

If the opposing team repeatedly commits offences of the retreat line:

- an indirect free kick shall be awarded at the place where the offence occurred

Scoring a Goal from a Goal Kick

U6-U11

- A goal cannot be scored directly from a goal kick
- If the ball enters the opponents' goal directly from the goal kick, a goal kick is awarded to the opponents

U12-U13

- A goal may be scored directly from a goal kick, but only against the opposing team

If the ball enters the goal of the team taking the goal kick, a corner kick is awarded to the opponents

RULE 17: THE CORNER KICK

A corner kick is awarded when the whole of the ball has crossed the goal line, either on the ground or in the air, having last been touched by a defending player, and a goal has not been scored.

U6-U11

A goal cannot be scored directly from a corner kick.

U12 - U13

A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick.

Procedure

- The corner kick shall be taken from inside the corner arc (within 1 metre of the corner flag on the field of play) nearest to where the ball crossed the goal line
- All opponents shall be no less than the following from the ball until it has been kicked:
 - U6-U11 = 7 metres
 - U12-U13 = 9 metres
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves
- If the player taking the corner kick touches the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player, an indirect free kick shall be awarded to the opposing team (subject to Rule 13)