

Simplified Laws of Soccer

LAW # 1 - THE FIELD OF PLAY

The soccer field should always be rectangular with a maximum length of 130 yards and a minimum length of 100 yards. The width should be a maximum of 100 yards and a minimum of 50 yards. With the proportions correct, junior fields should be smaller depending on the age level.

LAW # 2 - THE BALL

The ball must be round.

Players up to U-8 use a size 3 ball. The circumference is 23½"-25" and the weight is 10-12 oz.

U-9 to U-12 players use a size 4 ball. The circumference is 25"-26½" and the weight is 12-14 oz.

U-13 and older players use a size 5 ball with a circumference of 27"-28" and the weight should be 14-16 oz.

LAW # 3 - NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Full sized teams are of 11 players with the number of subs to be no more than 7. U-6 is played 4 vs. 4 with no goalkeeper. U-7 & U-8 play 7 vs. 7 and U-9 & U-10 play 8 vs. 8. A complete roster of players and subs must be presented to the referee before the game starts. The referee must be notified before a substitution can occur. Any player ejected from the game may not be replaced.

LAW # 4 - PLAYERS' EQUIPMENT

The usual uniform of the soccer player is a shirt tucked into shorts, socks pulled over shin guards and shoes. Nothing potentially injurious to another player, or self, may be worn. The goalkeeper must wear a different color than the other members of the team.

LAW # 5 - THE REFEREE

The referee is in charge of all game activity and is to make sure each team abides by the rules. His decisions are final. It is the referee's responsibility to keep the game clock, stop for injuries, and remind players of proper game conduct. He can caution (yellow card) players who do not show gentlemanly conduct or send off (red card) those who commit acts of serious foul play, except at U-8 level and younger. The referee should ask the coach to discipline such players.

LAW # 6 - ASSISTANT REFEREES

There are usually two assistant referees - one for each sideline. Their main responsibilities are to assist the referee by calling off-side, the ball out of bounds, fouls, and anything else that the referee requests. Assistant referees can be overruled by the referee.

LAW # 7 - GAME DURATION

Depends on age group

LAW # 8 - START OF PLAY

To start play there is a kick off. This happens at the start of the game, halftime and after a goal has been scored. A forward player standing near the center line kicks the ball forward to a fellow player. After the ball makes one complete revolution the game is officially started. The kicker may not touch the ball until it has been kicked by another player.

LAW # 9 - BALL IN AND OUT PLAY

After the ball has wholly crossed the sidelines or goal lines it is out of play. Any ball striking a referee, goal post or corner post and remaining on the proper field is in play.

LAW # 10 - GOAL SCORING

A goal is scored when the ball wholly crosses the goal line, between the goal posts and under the cross bar. The winner of the game is determined by the margin of goals scored.

LAW # 11 - OFF-SIDE

While going toward an opponent's goal the offensive team may not have a player ahead of the ball unless there are two defending players present. The exception to this statement is when the player is in his own half of the field of play or if the ball was last played by an opponent. The referee has the right to call or not call the offside infraction depending upon whether the offending player, in the opinion of the referee, is actually gaining an unfair advantage. There is no offside for U-8 level and younger.

LAW # 12 - FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

A. There are ten prohibited acts for which a referee can award a direct kick to the offending team.

1. Kicking
2. Tripping
3. Jumping at Opponent
4. Violent charging
5. Striking opponent
6. Holding
7. Pushing
8. Handling the ball, deliberately
9. Charging from behind
10. When tackling, contacts the opponent before the ball

B. An indirect kick shall be awarded when these acts occur:

1. Dangerous playing
2. Charging away from the ball
3. Charging the goal keeper when he doesn't have the ball
4. Opponent obstruction
5. A goalkeeper holds on to the ball for more than six seconds (except U-8 and younger)
6. A goalkeeper handles the ball a second time, after releasing it, before an opponent

7. A goalkeeper handles a ball deliberately kicked by a teammate

LAW # 13 - FREE KICKS

The two basic kicks awarded by the referee are the:

- A. Direct Free Kick (a goal can be scored)
- B. Indirect Free Kick (must touch another player before a goal can be scored)

The kicker may not kick the ball a second time until touched by another player. All kicks are indirect for U-8 and younger.

LAW # 14 - PENALTY KICKS

A penalty kick is awarded after a serious rule infraction (law No. 12, part A) takes place in the penalty area. It is a direct kick taken 12 yards from the goal line. All players except the goalie and kicker must stay outside of the penalty area. The goalie must stand on the goal line and may not move his/her feet until the ball is kicked. There are no penalty kicks for the U-8 level and younger

LAW # 15 - THROW-IN

After the ball has wholly crossed the sidelines, the team that didn't touch the ball last shall be awarded the throw-in. These rules should be remembered as a part of the throw-in regulations.

- A. Both feet must be on or behind the sideline when the throw-in is made.
- B. The ball must be thrown by both hands directly over and behind the head.
- C. Both feet must be touching the ground as the throw-in is made.
- D. On incorrect throw-ins the ball is awarded to the opposite team. At U-10 and younger, the referee allows one retake if the first was incorrect.
- E. A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw-in.
- F. Players cannot be offside on a throw-in.

LAW # 16 - GOAL KICKS

A goal kick is awarded when the ball (after being played or touched by the offense) crosses the goal line, but not within the goal. The ball must travel outside the penalty area before it can be regarded as in play. Players cannot be offside on a goal kick.

LAW # 17 - CORNER KICKS

A corner kick is awarded when the ball crosses the goal line and is last touched by a defensive player, and doesn't result in a goal. One member of the attacking team takes the kick on the quarter circle nearest the corner flag post. A goal may be scored from this kick. Also remember:

- A. The opposing team must remain 10 yards from the ball as it is kicked.
- B. The kicker may not kick the ball a second time until touched by another player.
- C. Players cannot be offside on a corner kick.

