

# GENERAL RULES OF PLAY

## ALL LEVELS AND AGES

### EXCEPTIONS AND ADDITIONS TO FIFA LAWS

Updated 3.10.21 with changes approved at the March 7, 2021 GBM

Except as otherwise noted in these rules, FIFA Laws will govern the play of all games in STX SOCCER Competitions for youth play.

#### 6.0 AGE GROUPS (Changed 8.23.18)

Age groups are determined by the **age of the oldest rostered player's Calendar Birth Year** as shown in Table 6.0 below.

Table 6

The age groups are as follows:	
19 years of age and younger	11 years of age and younger
18 years of age and younger	10 years of age and younger
17 years of age and younger	9 years of age and younger
16 years of age and younger	8 years of age and younger
15 years of age and younger	7 years of age and younger
14 years of age and younger	6 years of age and younger
13 years of age and younger	5 years of age and younger
12 years of age and younger	4 years of age and younger

Note: In the rules, the format age followed by a "U" means that age and younger.

Any coach or assistant coach who is responsible for knowingly playing an ineligible player will be subject to suspension from participation in any STX SOCCER sanctioned program.

Age groups can be combined at the discretion of the association/club as needed (e.g., 11-12U) or include brackets to combine age groups.

#### 6.1 SPECIAL RULES OF PLAY – 4U through 19U Age Groups

##### EXCEPTIONS AND ADDITIONS TO FIFA LAWS (Changed 2.21.16)

##### 6.1.0 Age Group

- (a) A player with his / her parent's and coach's permission, and in compliance with the local association playing rules, may play in an older age group.

- (b) Except as provided herein, no player may play in a younger age group than the age group for which he/she is eligible. For Division III and Division IV players only, if a medical condition exists (substantiated in writing by a licensed physician with no family relationship to player) that will prohibit or severely hinder a player from playing in his/her own age group, the player may seek special approval from his/her Local Association / Club Board and Member Association to allow the player to play down in a younger age group. All requests must be submitted to and approved by the STX SOCCER Executive Committee prior to the player's first game.
- (c) Age groups 12U and younger shall be **required** to play with a number of players fewer than that specified in the FIFA Laws of the Game.  
(Changed 2.21.16)

#### 6.1.1 Number of Players (Changed 8.23.18)

Age	Maximum # of Players on the field per team	Minimum # of players on the field per team to avoid forfeit
13U-19U	11	7
11U/12U	9	6
9U/10U	7	5
6U-8U	4	3
4U/5U	4	3

Table 6.1

For teams participating in a national, state or local competition, the maximum and minimum number of players rostered to a team are to be determined by the national, state and local competitions. For teams participating in state competitions, please refer to the competition rules. Local competition rules shall be set by the local association or club.

If not prohibited by the rules of by the competition, coaches can agree, prior to the game, to adjust the environment as needed so that a forfeit can be avoided or game can be played even if a forfeit does occur. Playing a game pursuant to such an agreement does not alter a forfeiture that otherwise would occur. This can be accomplished by borrowing eligible players from the other team and adjusting both teams to make the teams even.

### 6.1.2 **Playing Time & Substitution Requirements (Changed 3.7.21)**

#### Playing Time Requirements:

Division	Playing time requirements	Exceptions
4U-12U	50%	Due to Illness or Disciplinary reasons*
Division II, Division III and Division IV	50%	Due to Illness or Disciplinary reasons*
Division I, Super II	No minimum playing time for each registered player	

Table 6.1.2(A)

\*In the event that a player is present but will not be playing, the coach must inform the opposing coach and game officials as well as noting on the game card (if one is required) that the player will not be playing. **(Changed 3.7.21)**

#### Substitution Rules:

Substitution rules shall follow IFAB Laws of the Game Law 3, Section 3. **(Changed 3.7.21)**

### 6.1.3 **Field of Play and Exceptions and Additions to FIFA Laws 4U-19U (Changed 8.23.18)**

The association / club / league which controls the fields shall determine the location of the teams, players, coaches, fans and supporters in relation to the field and each other. Field dimensions, goal sizes, and all necessary field markings will follow USSF, USYS, and STX SOCCER rules and recommended guidelines. Field of Play and Technical Areas are also subject to national, state and local competition rules.

**Technical Areas.** If there is a Technical Area marked for each team, it will include, but not be limited to, that team's "bench area." Coaches, players, and eligible adults permitted to be present with the team must remain within the markings and within their half, except for substitution and warm-up. If both teams are assigned to one side of the field, only coaches, players, and eligible adults permitted to be present with the team may be within the Technical Area.

**Annual Field Inspection.** Each member association is responsible for establishing a system of yearly inspection of goals utilized by its member clubs, leagues and associations. A statement shall be provided to STX SOCCER with the submission of fall registration that the goals have been inspected prior to the

beginning of the fall season and found to be in safe condition. A statement or form and criteria shall be established by STX SOCCER for a standardized procedure of inspection. The statement shall be signed by an officer of the member association. This requirement must be met or the member association shall not be in good standing.

### 13U-19U

Markings on the field	Minimum Dimensions	Maximum Dimensions
Field Size	(W) 50 x (L) 100 yards	100 x 130 yards (W) 75 x (L) 112 yards (USSF suggested)
Goals	24 x 8 feet	
Center Circle	10 yards in radius	
Penalty Area	18 x 44 yards	
Goal Area	6 x 20 yards	
Penalty Spot	12 yards and perpendicular from the midpoint of the goal line	
Penalty Arc	10 yards radius from the penalty spot	
Duration of Match (Law 7 )	See STX SOCCER Rule 6.1.5 Length of Games	
Ball Size (Law 2)	Size 5	
Number of Players (Law 3)	See STX SOCCER Rule 6.1.1 11 players (10 field players and 1 goalkeeper) Game may not start or continue if there are less than 7 players on the field for a team	
Heading	Permitted	
Offside	The FIFA Offside Rule shall Apply	

Table 6.1.3(A)

### 11U-12U

Markings on the field	Minimum Dimensions	Maximum Dimensions
Field Size	(W) 45 x (L) 70 yards	(W) 55 x (L) 80 yards
Goals	Maximum: 21 x 7 feet Recommended size 18.5 x 6.5 feet	
Center circle	8 yards in radius	

Penalty Area	14 x 36 yards
Goal Area	5 x 16 yards
Penalty Spot	10 yards and perpendicular from the midpoint of the goal line
Restarts	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. Substitutions are unlimited and can occur at any stoppage
Penalty Arc	8 yards radius from the penalty spot
Duration of Match (Law 7 )	2 halves 30 minute halves 10 min halftime No added time
Ball Size (Law 2)	Size 4
Number of Players (Law 3)	See STX SOCCER Rule 6.1.1 9v9 (8 field players and 1 goalkeeper) Game may not start or continue if there are less than 6 players on a team
Heading	See STX SOCCER Heading Policy for rules regarding heading in 11U and 12U games. Deliberate heading is not allowed in 11U games. If a player deliberately heads the ball in a game, an indirect free kick should be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense. If a deliberate header occurs within the goal area, the indirect free kick should be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the nearest point to where the infringement occurred. Heading is permitted in 12U games.

Table 6.1.3(B)

### 9U-10U (Changed 3.7.21)

Markings on the field	Minimum Dimensions	Maximum Dimensions
Field Size	(W) 35 x (L) 55 yards	(W) 45 x (L) 65 yards
Goals	Maximum: 18.5 x 6.5 feet 12 x 6.5 feet recommended	
Center circle	8 yards in radius	
Penalty Area	12 x 24 yards	
Goal Area	4 x 8 yards	
Penalty Spot	10 yards and perpendicular from the midpoint of the goal line	
Penalty Arc	8 yards radius from the penalty spot	

Build out lines	Build out lines should be equidistant between the penalty area line and halfway line (can be marked with painted line, cones, or flags placed on sidelines)
Restarts	<p>Conform to FIFA with the exception of the opponents of the team taking the kick-off are at least six (6) yards from the ball.</p> <p>If the goalkeeper punts or drop kicks the ball, an indirect free kick should be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense. If the punt or kick occurs within the goal area, the indirect free kick should be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the nearest point to where the infringement occurred.</p> <p>Substitutions are unlimited and can occur at any stoppage.</p> <p>Restarts with Build Out Line: When the goalkeeper has the ball in his/her hands during play or a goal kick is being taken, then:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. before the ball is passed, thrown, or rolled into play by the goalkeeper or a goal kick is being taken, players on the team in possession may stand anywhere on the field, including inside the penalty area;</li> <li>2. players on the defending team must move beyond the Build Out Line and may not cross the Build Out Line until the ball is in play;</li> <li>3. the ball is in play as soon as the goalkeeper passes, throws or rolls the ball or any player takes a goal kick; and</li> <li>4. as soon as the ball is in play, other members of the team in possession may play it, even if it is inside the penalty area, and players on the defending team may then cross the Build Out Line.</li> </ol> <p>If the goalkeeper punts or drop kicks the ball, an indirect free kick should be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense. If the punt or kick occurs within the goal area, the indirect free kick should be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the nearest point to where the infringement occurred.</p> <p>Ideally, the goalkeeper will wait to put the ball into play once all opponents are past the Build Out Line. However, the goalkeeper can put the ball into play sooner but he/she does so accepting the positioning of the opponents and the consequences of how play resumes.</p>
Offside	<p>The FIFA Offside Rule shall apply.</p> <p>The build out line will also be used to denote where offside offenses can be called.</p> <p>Players cannot be penalized for an offside offense between the halfway line and the build out line</p> <p>Players can be penalized for an offside offense between the build out line and the goal line.</p>
Duration of Match (Law 7 )	<p>2 halves</p> <p>25 minute halves</p> <p>10 min halftime</p> <p>No added time</p>
Ball Size (Law 2)	Size 4

Number of Players (Law 3)	See STX SOCCER Rule 6.1.1 7v7 (6 field players and 1 goalkeeper) Game may not start or continue if there are less than 5 players on a team
Heading	Heading is not allowed in 7v7 games. If a player deliberately heads the ball in a game, an indirect free kick should be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense. If a deliberate header occurs within the goal area, the indirect free kick should be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the nearest point to where the infringement occurred.

Table 6.1.3(C)

## 7U-8U

Markings on the field	Minimum Dimensions	Maximum Dimensions
Field Size	(W) 15 x (L) 25 yards	(W) 25 x (L) 35 yards
Goals	Maximum: 6 x 4 feet No corner flags needed on field	
Center circle	None	
Penalty Area	None	
Goal Area	None	
Penalty Spot	None	
Penalty Arc	None	
Fouls	All fouls shall be penalized with indirect kicks	
Restarts	<p>Kick offs, free kicks, throw-ins, goal kicks and corner kicks are used to start or restart play. Kick-ins and/or dribble-ins are also accepted if coaches agree prior to match.</p> <p>Substitutions are unlimited and can occur at any stoppage.</p> <p>Goal kicks and corner kicks should be taken in the general vicinity of the respective goal or corner.</p> <p>Opponents should be 10 feet away from the ball on all restarts.</p> <p>No penalty kicks.</p> <p>If there is an infraction of the FIFA throw-in rules, the player throwing the ball in shall receive one additional throw-in after a correcting instruction from referee. If the player violates the FIFA rule on his/her second attempt then the opposing team shall be awarded a throw-in.</p>	
Offside	No offside.	
Duration of Match (Law 7 )	<p>4 quarters</p> <p>10 minute quarters</p> <p>5 minute break between quarters</p> <p>No added time</p>	

Ball Size (Law 2)	Size 3
Number of Players (Law 3)	<p>See STX SOCCER Rule 6.1.1 4v4 (4 field players, no goalkeeper)</p> <p>Game may not start or continue if there are less than 3 players on a team</p>
Heading	<p>Heading is not allowed in 4v4 games.</p> <p>If a player deliberately heads the ball in a game, an indirect free kick should be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense.</p>

Table 6.1.3(D)



Marking on the field	Minimum Dimensions	Maximum Dimensions
Field Size	(W) 15 x (L) 25 yards	(W) 25 x (L) 35 yards
Goals	Maximum: 6 x 4 feet No corner flags needed on field Hockey goals may be used. Cones spaced 6 feet apart may be used.	
Center circle	None	
Penalty Area	None	
Goal Area	None	
Penalty Spot	None	
Penalty Arc	None	
Fouls	All fouls shall be penalized with indirect kicks	
Restarts	Kick offs, free kicks, throw-ins, goal kicks and corner kicks are used to start or restart play. Kick-ins and/or dribble-ins are also acceptable if coaches agree prior to match. Substitutions are unlimited and can occur at any stoppage Goal kicks and corner kicks should be taken in the general vicinity of the respective goal or corner. Opponents should be 10 feet away from the ball on all restarts. No penalty kicks If there is an infraction of the FIFA throw-in rules, the player throwing the ball in shall receive one additional throw-in after a correcting instruction from referee. If the player violates the FIFA rule on his/her second attempt then the opposing team shall be awarded a throw-in.	
Offside	No offside	
Duration of Match (Law 7 )	4 quarters 10 minute quarters 5 minute break between quarters No added time *Games can be less than 10 minutes when managed by coaches and parents	
Ball Size (Law 2)	Size 3	
Number of Players (Law 3)	See STX SOCCER Rule 6.1.1 4v4 (4 field players, no goalkeeper) Game may not start or continue if there are less than 3 players on a team	
Heading	Heading is not allowed in 4v4 games. If a player deliberately heads the ball in a game, an indirect free kick should be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense.	

Table 6.1.3(E)

#### 6.1.4 Length of Games (Changed 8.23.18)

Length of Games	
Age	Time
19U	Two Forty Five (45) minute halves/ <b>15</b> min half
17U-18U	Two Forty Five (45) minute halves/ <b>15</b> min half
15U-16U	Two Forty (40) minute halves/ <b>15</b> min half
13U-14U	Two Thirty Five (35) minute halves/ <b>15</b> min half

Table 6.1.4

For length of games for 4U-12U playing formats refer to the respective age group tables in section 6.1.3

If deemed necessary, competition officials, coaches and/or referees may adjust the length of games due to weather conditions (i.e. water breaks) or may adjust based on the nature of the competition.

#### 6.1.5 Player Equipment

- (a) All players will wear shin guards which are commercially produced and specifically designed to provide protection to the shins.
- (b) No player will be allowed to play with a hard cast (padded or otherwise)
- (c) No player will be allowed to play with any brace (knee or otherwise) that contains exposed metal or hard plastics, unless it is wrapped with a minimum of ½ inch high-density foam wrapping or the manufacturer's recommended protective coating.
- (d) Bandannas of any style may not be worn during any game. Players may not wear a bandanna either on their heads, legs or arms. Exceptions may be made at the local level for medical reasons.
- (e) The Players' Equipment: Conform to FIFA. Non-uniform clothing is allowed based on weather conditions, but uniforms must still distinguish teams.

#### 6.1.6 Referees (Changed 7.19.15)

The referee's judgment decisions shall be final in all matters concerning the rules governing the playing of the game, the playability of the field and the appropriateness of the uniforms. At the completion of the match, the referee shall have each coach sign the game report and submit the game report to the competition representative.

Rules pertaining to the number of players on the field to avoid forfeit will be determined by the national, state and local competition. Also see Rule. 6.1.1.

A game card will be completed by the referee for all play within STX SOCCER. This card will, at a minimum, contain the following:

- (a) Association, age group, division, game location, date, game time

- (b) Team names and final score
- (c) Cautions (yellow cards) or ejections (red cards) issued, by team with player / name
- (d) Any protest noted and brief basis for those protests
- (e) Prior to each STX SOCCER sanctioned match, each team shall present to the referee the Adult Participation Pass for each Coach and other Eligible Adult who is present. The referee shall record as part of the game card each Adult Participation Pass that is so presented, by marking on the roster next to the name of each Coach (over age 17) or other Eligible Adult who is listed on the roster and is identified on an Adult Participation Pass and by recording on the game card the name of each Coach (over age 17) or other Eligible Adult for whom an Adult Participation Pass is presented but is not on the roster.

These game cards are to be retained through the end of the District or STX SOCCER Tournaments.

Disputes must be noted on the referee's game report and a complete description of the incident shall be submitted to the appropriate Disciplinary and Protest Representative.

#### **6.1.7 Fouls and Misconduct**

The FIFA Law with respect to the charging of the goalkeeper shall not apply in youth play. There shall be no charging of the goalkeeper, fairly or unfairly, in STX SOCCER sanctioned competition. Any such act will be considered as "dangerous play" at the least and punished accordingly.