



TSSA Release: August 16, 2017

2017-18 Player Development Initiative (PDI) Update

The US Soccer Federation proposed and implemented standardization with Player Development Initiatives (referred to as PDI's) in August 2016. The goal is to improve the long-term development of players in the United States by creating the optimal training and playing environment especially for youth players.

These changes were **recommended in 2016/2017** but will be **MANDATED in 2017/2018**. The mandates apply to **every** team and club under the governance of US Soccer, including US Youth Soccer Association (USYSA), of which the Tennessee State Soccer Association (TSSA) is a member.

The latest complete version of the PDI document can be found at: [USSF PDI's](#)

The TN State Soccer Association adopted and successfully implemented Birth Year Registration changes and Concussion Initiatives in 2016/2017. **In 2017/2018 all clubs will be required to implement Small-Sided Games playing standards for players 12U and younger.**

*** Please note that small sided games standards are **mandated**, but Player Development Philosophy information is **recommended**. TN State Soccer Association understands that the implementation of best practices by clubs in relation to player development philosophy from US Soccer may not always be practical. ***

This document aims to provide an overview of the major changes and practical implications of the PDI mandates. The Small Sided Games Chart (on page 2) will aid in comprehension relating to field size ranges, *maximum* goal sizes, game time, ball size, offside and format to be played within each age group.

How will this affect our club?

All recreational (D4) and select/travel (D1-D3) clubs **must** adopt the mandates.

The TN State Soccer Association and its member clubs will follow U.S. Soccer Small-Sided Games Rules, which are included in greater detail in modified laws of the game provided by USYSA. These new modified Laws of the Game meet the Best Practices date from U.S. Soccer of August 2016 for their Player Development Initiative.

[6 and Under, 4 vs 4](#)

[8 and Under, 4 vs 4](#)

[10 and Under, 7 vs 7](#)

[12 and Under, 9 vs 9](#)

Small-Sided Games Chart

	U6 6 years old and younger	U7 7 years old and younger	U8 8 years old and younger	U9 9 years old and younger	U10 10 years old and younger	U11 11 years old and younger	U12 12 years old and younger
Field Size Ranges (yards)	Length 25-35 Width 15-25	Length 25-35 Width 15-25	Length 25-35 Width 15-25	Length 55-65 Width 35-45	Length 55-65 Width 35-45	Length 70-80 Width 45-55	Length 70-80 Width 45-55
Maximum Goal Size (feet)	Height 4 Width 6	Height 4 Width 6	Height 4 Width 6	Height 6.5 Width 18.5	Height 6.5 Width 18.5	Height 7 Width 21	Height 7 Width 21
Ball Size	3	3	3	4	4	4	4
Players	4v4 No GK	4v4 No GK	4v4 No GK	7v7 GK	7v7 GK	9v9 GK	9v9 GK
Game Time (minutes)	4x10	4x10	4x10	2x25	2x25	2x30	2x30
Offside	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Frequently Asked Questions

These answers to **FAQ's** will assist each club as they apply the standards and mandates for Small-Sided Games formats.

Goals and Field Sizes

Are the goal and field sizes the exact sizes required?

- The goal sizes listed are the maximum sizes for each age group. As clubs' purchase additional or replacement goals, the standards chart provides a guideline for the recommended goal size for each format. Field sizes are listed with required ranges for length and width for each age group.

Punting the ball

At what age are players allowed to punt a ball in a game?

- **Players on Teams 11U and younger may not** punt a ball in a game in the 4 vs 4 or 7 vs 7 or 9 vs 9 format.
- **Players on Teams 12U and older may** punt a ball in a game in the 9 vs 9 format.
- *** Please note a goalkeeper "drop kicking" a ball is considered punting ***

What occurs if the goalkeeper punts or drop kicks the ball?

- If the goalkeeper punts or drop kicks the ball the referee will stop the game and award an indirect free kick to the opposition at the spot of the infringement.

- If the punt or drop 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.

*** Please note changes to the original PDI policy on punting (drop kicking). Previous PDI guidelines allowed punting but not heading a ball at 11U. After consultation at US Federation meetings in late July a decision was made in the interests of player safety to reduce the risk of players attempting to head a ball at 11U, which is banned, by eliminating punting from the 11U format at ALL competition levels of TSSA soccer

Player Numbers Related to Small Sided

Is the goalkeeper included in the number of players for 4v4, 7v7 and 9v9?

- The 4v4 game model does not include goalkeepers. The 7v7 model is 6 field players and 1 goalkeeper per team and the 9v9 model is 8 field players and 1 goalkeeper per team. No specific team formation is required currently by US Soccer.

Game Structure

What is the purpose of including quarters at certain age groups instead of halves?

- The transition from 4 periods (quarters) to 2 halves provides a gradual evolution to the full game from the physical and cognitive development perspectives of the player. The multiple intervals also provide increased opportunities for a coach to manage substitutions and explain changes to the players in a more controlled environment during the break in play. This should also reduce over-coaching during the periods of play.

11 versus 11 Structure

Are there mandates or standards at age groups 13U and older?

- Not yet. U.S. Soccer is examining 11 vs 11 playing format and many of these potential changes would reflect the standards already established by the Development Academy. More information on these changes will be communicated with members when available.

The offside law

When does offside come into effect?

- There is no offside in the 4 vs 4 format
- Playing with offside begins at the 9U age group, along with the 7v7 game model.

Where can a player be “offside”?

- ***Please note that with the addition of the build out lines in the 7 vs 7 format, a player can only be offside between the oppositions build out line and end line. A player cannot be offside between the halfway line and the oppositions build out line. ***
- In the 9 vs 9 format, offside can **ONLY** occur between the half way line and the opposition team’s end line.

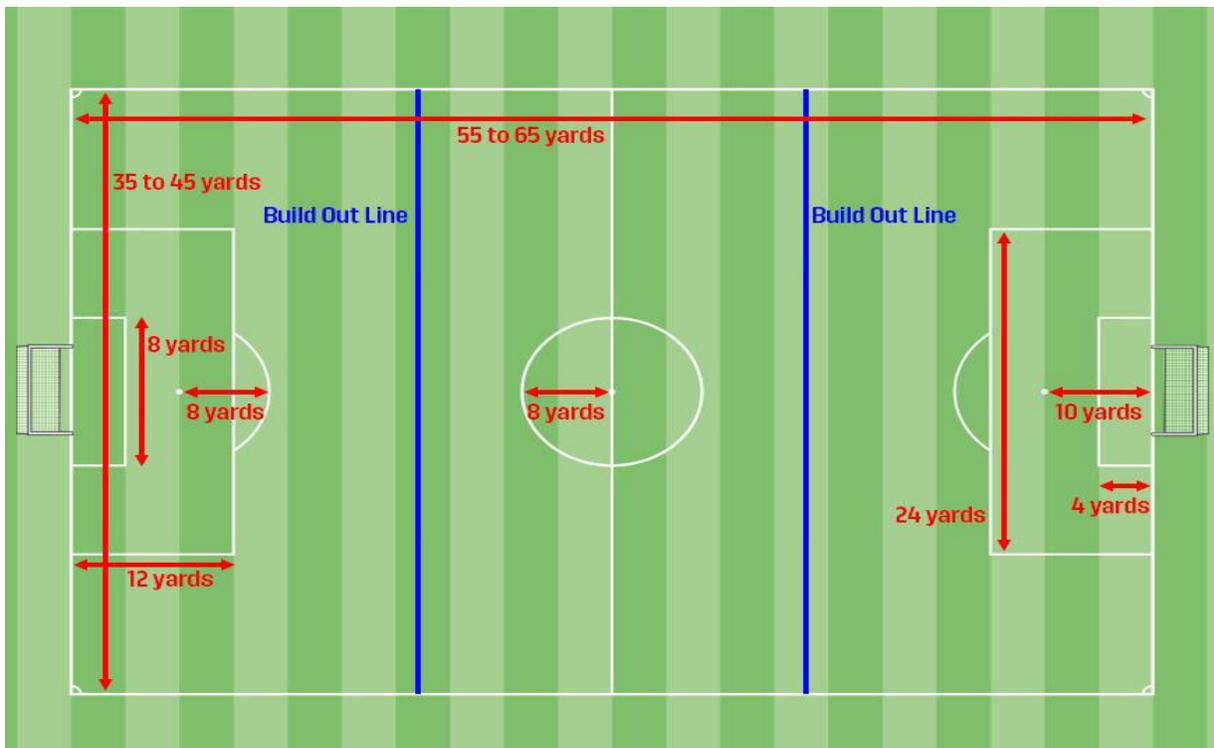
Build Out Lines

Are the build out lines mandatory for 7v7 play?

- Yes. The build out lines are required for 7v7 play at the 9U and 10U age groups. The build out line is used to promote a possession style of play by playing the ball out of the back in an unpressured setting. The build out lines will be painted on a field from sideline to sideline equidistant from the halfway line and the top of the penalty box on each half of the field (see image below).

What color is the build out line?

- The build out line for the 7 vs 7 format should be a solid line painted in white.
- Pages 29-33 of the PDI document addresses the standards and most practical application principles of the buildout line in the 7 vs 7 format.



What should the referee do if a player on the defending team having retreated, then encroaches over the build out line before the opposing goalkeeper has released the ball from his/her hands?

- The referee will educate the player about the build out line rule. The referee may issue a verbal warning to the player without a stoppage of play. If in the opinion of the referee a

player encroaches over the build-out line, the referee may whistle play to stop and award an Indirect Free Kick (IFK) to the goal keeper at the spot of possession.

Heading the Soccer Ball

At what age are players allowed to head a ball in a game?

- **Players on Teams 10U and younger may not** deliberately head a ball in a game in the 4 vs 4 or 7 vs 7 format.
- **Players on Teams 11U may not** deliberately head a ball in a game in the 9 vs 9 format.
- **Players on Teams 12U may** head a ball in a game in the 9 vs 9 format.

What about deliberately heading the ball where it is not allowed?

- There will be no deliberate heading of the ball allowed in 3U – 11U age groups.
- The referee will stop play and award an indirect free kick for all deliberate infringements at the spot of the infringement unless the infringement occurs within the goal area in which case 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.

Use of “advantage call” in Small Sided Games”?

- **Please note:** We have received a recent clarification and update from the Referee department at the USSF. **Advantage must never be called in a SSG in regard to heading a soccer ball. This applies only to heading and not situations where advantage is and can be applied.**

US Soccer has also provided an additional document; [USSF FAQ's for PDI](#) which answers other frequently asked questions (FAQ's) that relate to the PDI document.

If you have any questions about this document or the PDI that is not addressed in this document please call TSSA at 615-590-2200.