



CHALLENGE LEAGUE GAMES

- **THE BASICS**
 - **Objective**
 - Have Fun
 - Learn and Play Soccer
 - **Ball** Size 4 for all age groups
 - **Number of Players**
 - 7 v. 7 for 3rd and 4th grade boys and girls.
 - 6 v. 6 if necessary due to shortage of players.
 - **Equipment**
 - Shin guards are mandatory and must be worn inside socks: **referees must enforce this rule with no exceptions!**
 - Equipment that is dangerous (e.g., jewelry, metal hair pins, watches, etc.) is not permitted. The referee is the sole judge in this matter. Just got ears pierced? Too bad!!
 - Soccer shoes (with or without cleats). Metal or screw-in cleats are not permitted.
 - Reversible red and white jersey, shorts, and team socks
 - **Structure: (see the game day coordinator for questions)**
 - Two 25 minute halves (4 x 12 minute quarters may be used during hot weather, or when a team has no subs).
 - Free and unlimited substitutions are permitted (**substitution only at dead ball situations with referee approval**)
 - **Coaching**
 - The objective of this soccer program is to have players grow to love the game of soccer and improve in their skills and understanding.

- Games are the time for GENTLE guidance from the Coach. No Shouting and No Whining.
- Coaching at games is encouraged. Constant shouting of directions and micromanaging of players on the field is not.

- **PLAYING RULES FOR SYSA CHALLENGE GAMES**

- **The Referee**

- All games will have a USSF registered referee. The decisions of the referee regarding facts connected with play are final. The referee may choose to explain calls to the players so that they can learn the rules of the game. However, this must be done in a way that does not delay the restart or otherwise interfere with the game.

- **Ball In and Out of Play**

- The entire ball must be **completely** over the touch or goal line to be out of play

- **Offside**

- Offside does not apply in ~~2nd-3rd~~^{3rd-4th} grade Challenge games.

- **Free Kicks**

- All free kicks are as per FIFA rules. Opponents must be at least 5 yards from the ball.

- **Start of Play**

- **There will be no coin toss.** The referee shall determine which team will have the kick-off to start the game. At the beginning of the 2nd half the opposing team shall kick off. Players must remain in their own half of the field until the ball is kicked.

- **Corner Kicks**

- Corner kicks are taken in the usual manner. A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick.

- **Goal Kicks**

- The goalkeeper shall restart play with a kick taken from within the goal area (the smaller of the two areas framing the goal). The ball must leave the penalty area before being touched by other players. If the ball does not leave the penalty area, or is played before it leaves the area, the restart will be another goal kick. **If players or teams struggle to successfully kick the ball outside of the penalty area, the goal kick can – at the discretion of the referee - be moved forward as needed to ensure a successful kick.**

- **Goals**
 - Following a goal, the game shall be restarted with a kick-off from the center of the field by the team that was scored upon.
- **Throw-ins**
 - Throw-ins are to be taken as required by FIFA law 15: at the moment of delivering the ball the player shall face the field of play, have part of each foot on the touch line or on the ground behind the touch line, use both hands, and deliver the ball from behind and over his/her head. Due to the age of the players, the referee may, at his or her discretion, choose to be lenient in enforcing the letter of the law on throw-ins.
- **Misconduct**
 - **Yellow** or **red** cards should not be shown to any player or coach at this level. A player who blatantly (tries to) injure(s) an opponent or who continually breaks the rules should be removed from the game. The player may be allowed to re-enter the game after a cooling-off period at the discretion of the referee. The player removed may be substituted.
- **Penalty Kicks**
 - To be taken **8 yards** from the goal.
- **Pass Back Rule**
 - The “pass back rule” is not in effect. The goalkeeper is allowed to pick up the ball when last kicked by a teammate. The same goes for throw-ins to one’s own goalkeeper.
- **No punting or drop-kicking by goalie**
 - If the goalie takes possession during dynamic play i.e., play is not stopped and the ball stays inbounds, he or she must either throw it or dribble it. No punting, no drop-kicking. Penalty: none: re-take. Note: if the GK puts the ball down, it’s a live ball and can be played by anyone.
- **Sliding and Slide Tackling**
 - No slide tackling is allowed, but players can legally slide to play the ball if, in the opinion of the referee, there is no danger of injury to an opponent. Penalty: direct free kick (DFK).
- **FOULS**
 - The Laws of the Game specify ten penal fouls, which ordinarily lead to the awarding of a Direct Free Kick. The SYSA Challenge modifications allow only Indirect Free Kicks (exception: OGSO).

1. Kicking or attempting to kick an opponent
 2. Tripping or attempting to trip an opponent
 3. Jumping at an opponent
 4. Charging an opponent (except shoulder to shoulder with the ball being within playing distance)
 5. Striking or attempting to strike an opponent
 6. Pushing an opponent
 7. Tackling an opponent
 8. Holding an opponent
 9. Spitting at an opponent
 10. Handling the ball deliberately (except for the GK in his/her own penalty area)
- Law 12 further specifies lesser offenses that result in Indirect Free Kicks. No modification for SYSA.
 1. Playing in a dangerous manner
 2. Impeding the progress of an opponent (unless the ball is within playing distance). This used to be referred to as “obstruction.”
 3. Preventing the GK from releasing the ball from his hands
 - The restrictions on the GK specified in Law 12 do not apply in SYSA Challenge play. Specifically, the referee should not punish a GK for holding the ball longer than six seconds, but rather encourage him/her to release the ball successfully.
- **PARENTS**
 - Cheer – Not Jeer. Give positive encouragement and praise good play.
 - Leave the coaching to the coaches, officiating to the referees and the playing to the players – don’t confuse your child with your instructions.
 - Familiarize yourself with the Parent Code of Conduct in the SYSA Member Manual