



## CHALLENGE LEAGUE GAMES

- **THE BASICS**
  - **Objective**
    - Have Fun
    - Learn and Play Soccer
  - **Ball** Size 4 for all age groups
  - **Number of Players**
    - 9 v. 9 for 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade boys and girls.
    - 8 v. 8 if necessary due to shortage of players. **Note: there should be at least one sub per team!**
  - **Equipment**
    - Shin guards are mandatory and must be worn inside socks: **refs 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. **Do not allow a player to play with ear rings, ever!**
    - 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)**
    - Each team plays two 30 minute halves (2 x 25 minute halves may be used during hot weather.)
    - Free and unlimited substitutions are permitted in accordance with TRAVEL soccer rules (i.e., US Youth Soccer rules).

- **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.
  - 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 apply in 9v9 Challenge games. Since there are no neutral ARs, the referee is the sole judge of offside calls. Club linesmen are **NOT** authorized to make offside calls.
  
  - **Free Kicks**
    - All free kicks are to be taken in accordance with FIFA rules. Opponents must be **10 yards** from the ball.
  
  - **Start of Play**
    - A “call for captains” and a coin toss will be performed as per FIFA rules.
  
  - **Corner Kicks**
    - Corner kicks are taken in the usual manner. A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick.
  
  - **Goal Kicks**
    - Standard rules.
  
  - **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. Referees should exercise some discretion in applying the letter of the law.
- **Misconduct**
  - Referees should exercise discretion in showing yellow or red cards. Players can be cautioned or sent off in particularly severe cases. In general it should not be necessary at this level.
- **Penalty Kicks**
  - **10 yards from goal.**
- **Pass Back Rule**
  - The “pass back rule” is in effect. The goalkeeper is NOT allowed to pick up the ball when last kicked by a teammate. The same goes for throw-ins to one’s own goalkeeper. Indirect Free-Kick from point of handling will be the restart. The referee is advised to exercise discretion in applying this rule.
- **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.
- **FOULS**
  - The Laws of the Game specify ten penal fouls, which ordinarily lead to the awarding of a Direct Free Kick
    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)

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- 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
- While the restrictions on the GK specified in Law 12 do apply in SYSA grades 4-6 games, the referee should exercise some discretion in enforcing this rule. In particular, 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