



**ONTARIO
SOCCER**
EST. 1901

Adapted Match Formats Laws of the Game

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	1
Introduction	3
3v3 Match Format	4
• Law 1: The Field of Play	4
• Law 2: The Ball	5
• Law 3: The Players	5
• Law 4: The Players' Equipment	5
• Law 5: The Referee	6
• Law 6: The Other Match Officials	7
• Law 7: The Duration of the Match	7
• Law 8: The Start and Restart of Play	7
• Law 9: The Ball In and Out of Play	9
• Law 10: Determining the Outcome of a Match	9
• Law 11: Offside	9
• Law 12: Fouls & Misconduct	9
• Law 13: Free Kicks	10
• Law 14: The Penalty Kick	11
• Law 15: The Dribble-In or Pass-In	11
• Law 16: The Goal Kick	12
• The Retreat Line	13
• Law 17: The Corner Kick	14
• Restart & Offences Review	14
• Rules at a Glance	14
4v4 and 5v5 Match Format	15
• Law 1: The Field of Play	15
• Law 2: The Ball	16
• Law 3: The Players	17
• Law 4: The Players' Equipment	17
• Law 5: The Referee	18
• Law 6: The Other Match Officials	18
• Law 7: The Duration of the Match	18
• Law 8: The Start and Restart of Play	19
• Law 9: The Ball In and Out of Play	20
• Law 10: Determining the Outcome of a Match	21
• Law 11: Offside	21
• Law 12: Fouls & Misconduct	21
• Law 13: Free Kicks	22
• Law 14: The Penalty Kick	23
• Law 15: The Dribble-In/Pass-In	23
• Law 16: The Goal Kick	24
• The Retreat Line	25
• Law 17: The Corner Kick	26
• Restart & Offences Review	26



• Rules at a Glance	27
7v7 Match Format	28
• Law 1: The Field of Play	28
• Law 2: The Ball	29
• Law 3: The Players	29
• Law 4: The Players' Equipment	30
• Law 5: The Referee	31
• Law 6: The Other Match Officials	31
• Law 7: The Duration of the Match	31
• Law 8: The Start and Restart of Play	32
• Law 9: The Ball In and Out of Play	33
• Law 10: Determining the Outcome of a Match	34
• Law 11: Offside	34
• Law 12: Fouls & Misconduct	34
• Law 13: Free Kicks	35
• Law 14: The Penalty Kick	36
• Law 15: The Dribble-In or Pass-In	38
• Law 16: The Goal Kick	38
• The Retreat Line	39
• Law 17: The Corner Kick	40
• Restart & Offences Review	41
• Rules at a Glance	41
9v9 Match Format	42
• Law 1: The Field of Play	42
• Law 2: The Ball	43
• Law 3: The Players	44
• Law 4: The Players' Equipment	44
• Law 5: The Referee	45
• Law 6: The Other Match Officials	45
• Law 7: The Duration of the Match	46
• Law 8: The Start and Restart of Play	46
• Law 9: The Ball In and Out of Play	46
• Law 10: Determining the Outcome of a Match	46
• Law 11: Offside	46
• Law 12: Fouls & Misconduct	46
• Law 13: Free Kicks	47
• Law 14: The Penalty Kick	47
• Law 15: The Throw-In	47
• Law 16: The Goal Kick	47
• The Retreat Line	47
• Law 17: The Corner Kick	47
• Restart & Offences Review	47
• Rules at a Glance	48



Introduction

The "Adapted Match Formats Laws of the Game" document is a comprehensive guide designed to support the development and enjoyment of soccer for young players across Ontario. It outlines the specific laws governing the 3v3, 4v4, 5v5, 7v7, and 9v9 match formats, which serve as an introduction to directional soccer with clear targets. These small-sided formats provide players with their first experiences of playing with teammates, fostering collaboration, skill development, and a love for the game.

Purpose of the Document

This resource was created to ensure consistency, clarity, and quality in the implementation of small-sided soccer across Ontario. The laws for each format have been revised with the following key objectives:

- **Alignment with Current Practices:** To reflect the game as it is played in venues, leagues, and competitions throughout Ontario.
- **Simplicity:** To make the game easier to understand for both players and referees.
- **Skill Development:** To enhance the technical quality of play in small-sided formats.
- **Participation and Enjoyment:** To create a safe, inclusive, and controlled environment where players can thrive.

Application of the Laws

The laws specific to each adapted match format are detailed within this document. For any rules or situations not explicitly covered, the IFAB Laws of the Game apply. This ensures that the foundational principles of soccer remain intact while accommodating the unique needs of young and developing players.

This document serves as a key resource for coaches, referees, league organizers, and parents, promoting a unified approach to player development across the province. By aligning practices and principles, we aim to provide an engaging, educational, and enjoyable soccer experience for all participants.



3v3 Match Format

Law 1: The Field of Play

Field Markings

Penalty Area Size: Width 4-6 metres and Depth 3-5 metres.

The diagram on the right, shows a 3v3 soccer field at maximum dimensions, 30 m x 22 m. Pop up goals are recommended.

The field above has been delineated using marker cones. In the absence of lines, cones are perfectly acceptable and suitable to create a small, sided soccer field. Flags have been put in place to show the corners of the field.

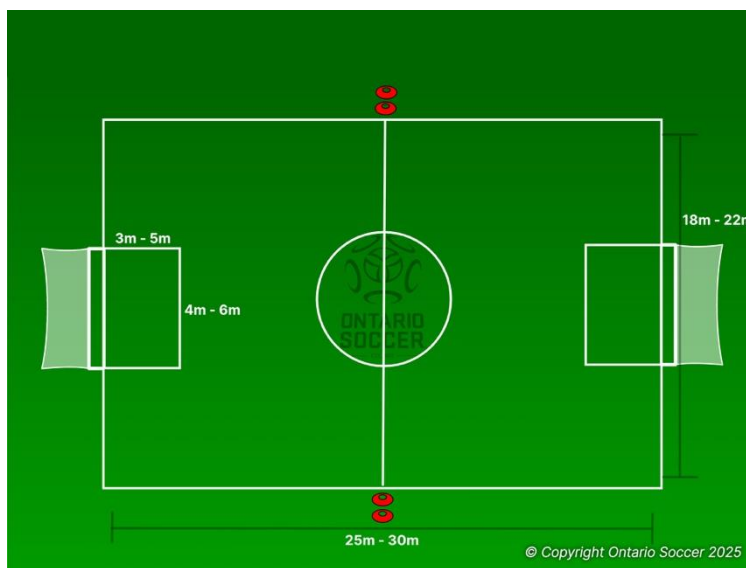


Image above: 3v3 field dimensions with retreat line indicated by cones/markers. For more field orientation examples, please refer to the [Grassroots Field Organization Guide](#).

Dimensions

The field of play must be rectangular. The touchline must be longer than the goal line. Recommended field dimensions are as follows:

Width	Length
18 m – 22 m	25 m – 30 m

The Corner Area

There are no corner kicks in the 3v3 match format. See “Law 16: The Goal Kick” for information on restarting play when the whole ball has passes over the goal line.

The Goal Area

The goal area is the same as the penalty area.

The Penalty Area

Two lines are drawn at right angle of the goal line, at a distance from the inside of each goal post. These lines extend into the field of play between three (3) - five (5) in depth and are joined by a line parallel to the goal line, which measures between four (4) - six (6) metres. The area is then bounded by these lines and the goal line in the penalty area.

Flagposts

Flagposts are not required but recommended.

Goals

A goal must be placed on the centre of each goal line.



A goal consists of two vertical posts, evenly spaced from the corner flags and joined by a horizontal crossbar, or two flat markets place equidistant from the corner flags. This can include pop-up goals.

The size for goals is as follows:

Width	Height
1.52m (5ft)	0.91m (3ft)

Safety: Goals (including portable goals) must be firmly secured to the ground.

Law 2: The Ball

Size 3 ball can be used.

Requirements for size 3 balls:

Category	Specifications
Weight	320 – 340g
Circumference	58.5 – 61cm
Pressure	5.8 lbs/sq. in – 8.7 lbs/sq. in 0.4 – 0.6 atmosphere

If the ball becomes defective during the match, play is stopped until a replacement ball is found. Play is restarted by dropping the replacement ball at the place where the original ball became defective.

Law 3: The Players

A match is played by two teams, there are no goalkeepers in 3v3. The minimum, maximum number of players and roster size are listed below:

Number of Players on Field	Match Day Roster Ideal number of players	Match Day Maximum Roster Size
3 (no GKs)	6	9

Substitutions

Unlimited substitutions on the fly or designated stoppages may be made throughout the game.

Law 4: The Players' Equipment

Players must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous to themselves or other players. Basic compulsory equipment shall consist of:

- A jersey or shirt with sleeves – pinnies are also accepted
- Shorts
- Socks
- Appropriate footwear
- Shin guards

Shin guards must:

- Be covered by the socks.



- Be made of a suitable material.
- Provide a reasonable degree of protection.

Colours:

- The two teams must wear colours that distinguish them from each other and the referee.
- Each goalkeeper must wear colours which are distinguishable from the other players and the referee. Pinnies/bibs are recommended to save jersey switching.

Non-uniform clothing is allowed based on weather conditions, but uniforms must still distinguish teams.

A player who is asked to leave the field of play because of defective or dangerous equipment may not re-enter the field of play until the referee is satisfied that the equipment is permissible. The equipment may only be inspected during a stoppage in play.

Jewelry is not permitted and cannot be taped. Medic Alert bracelets and Medic Alert necklaces are the only exceptions, provided that they are fastened securely, so as not to bring danger to any other player. The referee should be aware of any player that is wearing one of these.

Any hair apparel must be of soft fabric; no plastic or metal items are to be worn. Sports hijabs / headscarves are permitted.

Referees have the final say on the safety of equipment.

Law 5: The Referee

The Authority of the Referee

Each match is controlled by an Ontario Soccer-accredited referee who has full authority to enforce following the Adapted Match Formats and IFAB Laws of the Game. The decisions of the referee regarding facts connected with play, including whether a goal is scored and the result of the match, are final.

Powers and Duties

The referee:

- Enforces the Adapted Match Formats and IFAB Laws of the Game.
- Ensures that any ball used meets the requirements of Law 2.
- Ensures that the players' equipment meets the requirements of Law 4.
- Acts as timekeeper and keeps a record of the match.
- Stops, suspends or abandons the match, at their discretion, for any offences of the Laws.
- Stops, suspends or abandons the match because of outside interference of any kind.
- Stops the match if a player is injured and ensures that they are removed from the field of play. An injured player may only return to the field of play after the match has restarted.
- Ensures that any player bleeding from a wound leaves the field of play. The player may only return on receiving a signal from the referee, who must be satisfied that the bleeding has stopped.
- Takes action against team officials who fail to conduct themselves in a responsible manner and may, at his/her discretion, expel them from the field of play and its immediate surrounds.



- Ensures that no unauthorized persons enter the field of play.
- Indicates the restart of the match after it has been stopped.
- Provides the appropriate authorities with a match report, which includes information on any disciplinary action taken against players and/or team officials and any other incidents that occurred before, during or after the match.

Law 6: The Other Match Officials

There shall be no assistant referees or a 4th official in 3v3 games.

Law 7: The Duration of the Match

Match Duration

The match can consist of two (two) 15-minute halves or four (4) x 7.5 min quarters. The match shall not exceed 30 minutes.

Half-Time Interval

Players are entitled to a half-time interval of 5 minutes.

Law 8: The Start and Restart of Play

A kick-off is a way of starting or restarting play:

- At the start of a match.
- After a goal has been scored.
- At the start of the second half.
- At the start of each period of extra time, where applicable.

A goal may be scored directly from a kick-off, but only against the opponents; if the ball directly enters the kicker's goal, a retake is issued.

Procedure

Before the start of the match:

- A coin toss is held by the referee between a player of each team.
- The team that wins the toss decides which goal it will attack in the first half or to take the kick-off.
- In the second half of the match, the teams change ends and attack the opposite goals.
- The team that did not take the kick-off to start the match takes the kick-off to start the second half.

Kick-Off

- After a team scores a goal, the kick-off is taken by the other team.
- All players, except the player taking the kick-off, must be in their own half of the field.
- The opponents of the team taking the kick-off must be five (5) metres (or six (6) yards) away from the ball until it is in play.
- The ball must be stationary on the centre mark.
- The referee gives a signal.
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves.



Offences and Sanctions

For any offences, including those listed below, the kick-off is retaken:

- Players not in their own half of the field.
- Opponents encroaching within five (5) metres (or six (6) yards) of the ball.
- Players encroaching into opposing half.
- Ball not on centre mark or clearly moves before signal.
- Kick-off taken before signal.
- Kicker touches the ball a second time with their feet.

If the player taking the kick-off touches the ball again with their hands before it has touched another player, an indirect free kick is awarded.

Dropped Ball

A dropped ball is a method of restarting play when, while the ball is still in play, the referee is required to stop play temporarily for any reason not mentioned elsewhere in the Adapted Match Formats Laws of the Game. Some examples of this are an injury or interference by an outside agent or the ball touching the Referee as explained in Law 9.

Procedure

The ball is dropped for the defending team goalkeeper in their penalty area if, when play was stopped:

- The ball was in the penalty area or,
- the last touch of the ball was in the penalty area

In all other cases, the referee drops the ball for one player of the team that last touched the ball at the position where it last touched a player, an outside agent, or the referee. All other players (of both teams) must remain at least 4 metres (4.5 yards) from the ball until it is in play.

Additional Notes:

- The ball is in play when it touches the ground.
- A goal cannot be scored directly from a dropped ball.

Offences and Sanctions

The ball is dropped again if it:

- Touches a player before it touches the ground.
- Leaves the field of play after it touches the ground, without touching a player.

If the ball enters the goal without touching at least two players, play is restarted with:

- A goal kick if it enters the opponents' goal.
- A retake if it enters the team's goal.



Law 9: The Ball In and Out of Play

Ball Out of Play

The ball is out of play when:

- It has wholly passed over the goal line or touchline, on the ground, or in the air
- Play has been stopped by the referee
- It touches the referee, remains on the field of play and:
 - a team starts a promising attack or
 - the ball goes directly into the goal or
 - the team in possession of the ball changes

In all these cases, play is restarted with a Dribble-In or Pass-In from the area on the touchline where the ball went out of play. Where the ball has not gone out of play, play is restarted with a dropped ball.

Ball In Play

The ball is in play at all other times when it touches a match official and when it rebounds off a goalpost, crossbar or corner flagpost and remains on the field of play.

Law 10: Determining the Outcome of a Match

A goal is scored when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, between the goalposts and under the crossbar, provided that no offence of the Small Sided Laws of the Game has been previously committed by the team scoring the goal.

When goalposts are not available and cones are used instead, a goal is scored when, if in the opinion of the referee, the whole of the ball passes over the goal line between or above the cones, below two (2) metres.

Law 11: Offside

There is no offside for 3v3 games.

Law 12: Fouls & Misconduct

The referee shall attempt to explain **ALL** offences to the offending player. No Yellow or Red Cards are given within 3v3 matches.

Fouls

Fouls An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following offences:

- A. Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent.
- B. Trips or attempts to trip an opponent.
- C. Jumps at an opponent.
- D. Charges an opponent.
- E. Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent (including head-butt).
- F. Pushes an opponent.



- G. Tackles or challenges an opponent.
- H. Throws an object at the ball, an opponent or the referee, or makes contact with the ball with a held object.
- I. Holds an opponent.
- J. Impedes an opponent with contact.
- K. Bites or spits at someone on the team lists or the referee.
- L. Handball offence.
- M. Plays in a dangerous manner.
- N. Impedes the progress of an opponent without any contact being made.
- O. Prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from its hands or kicks or attempts to kick the ball when the goalkeeper is in the process of releasing it.
- P. Is guilty of dissent, using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or action(s) or other verbal offences.
- Q. Commits any other offence, not previously mentioned in Law 12.

An indirect free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following offences, regardless of the offence being committed in the penalty area or not:

- R. Plays in a dangerous manner.
- S. Impedes the progress of an opponent without any contact being made.
- T. Prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from its hands or kicks or attempts to kick the ball when the goalkeeper is in the process of releasing it.
- U. Is guilty of dissent, using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or action(s) or other verbal offences.
- V. Commits any other offence, not previously mentioned in Law 12.

Law 13: Free Kicks

All free kicks are indirect.

Procedure

For all free kicks, the ball must be stationary when the kick is taken. The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves. The kicker must not touch the ball again until it has touched another player.

A goal can only be scored from a free kick if the ball is touched by another player before it enters the goal.

- If a free kick is kicked directly into the opponents' goal, without being touched by a second player, a goal kick is awarded.
- If a free kick is kicked directly into the team's own goal, without being touched by a second player, a retake is issued.

Offences and Sanctions

For any infringements, including those listed below, the free kick is retaken:

- Opponents encroaching within 5 metres (or six (6) yards) of the ball.
- Kicker touches the ball a second time with their feet.

If the kicker touches the ball a second time with their hands, an indirect free kick is awarded.



Positions of the Free Kick

Free Kick Outside the Penalty Area

Indirect free kick for either team:

- All opponents must be at least five (5) metres (or six (6) yards) from the ball.
- All opponents must be behind the Retreat line if the free kick is within the team's defending 1/3rd of the field.
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves.
- All free kicks are taken from the place where the offence occurred except for:
 - Offences involving a player entering, re-entering, or leaving the field of play are taken from the position of the ball when play was stopped.
 - If a player commits an offence off the field of play, play is restarted with a free kick taken on the boundary line nearest to where the offence occurred, which for offences A to L in Law 12, results in a penalty kick if the offence is within the offender's penalty area.

Free Kick Inside the Penalty Area

Indirect free kick for the defending team:

- All opponents must be at least five (5) metres (or six (6) yards) from the ball
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves
- A free kick awarded in the penalty area may be taken from any point inside that area

Indirect free kick for the attacking team:

- All opponents must be at least five (5) metres (or six (6) yards) from the ball
- For all offences from Law 12:
 - The indirect free kick shall be taken from the penalty area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the offence occurred.

Law 14: The Penalty Kick

Penalty kicks are not permitted within 3v3 matches. For fouls inside the penalty area, "Free Kick Inside the Penalty Area" rules will be followed.

Law 15: The Dribble-In or Pass-In

A dribble-in or pass-in is a method of restarting play. The player may conduct either a dribble-in or pass-in as a method of restarting play throughout the duration of the match.

A dribble-in or pass-in is awarded to the opponents of the player who last touched the ball when the whole of the ball passes the touchline, on the ground or in the air.

A goal cannot be scored directly from a dribble-in/pass-in. If the ball enters the goal without touching at least two players, play is restarted with:

- A goal kick for the opposite team if the ball enters the opponents' goal or the kicker's own goal.



Procedure

- The ball is kicked from the touchline at the point where the ball left the field of play,
- The ball must be stationary,
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves.

All opponents must stand no less than three (3) metres (or three (3) yards) from the point at which the pass-in or dribble-in is taken.

Offences and Sanctions

For any offences the dribble-in/pass-in is retaken, however, an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if the kicker touches the ball a second time with their hands.

With the opposition retreating to the correct part of the field the goalkeeper can now successfully throw or pass the ball to a teammate. Once the player receiving the ball from the goalkeeper touches the ball, the ball is in play and the opposition players can pressure and attempt to win the ball.

If the goalkeeper chooses not to wait for the opposing players to “retreat” and releases the ball from their hands to their feet or throws/passes the ball down the field, the ball is instantly in play.

Opponents must be behind the retreat line and cannot cross the retreat line until the ball:

- Is touched by a player of the team receiving the GK’s distribution
- Leaves the field of play
- Crosses the retreat line. (If the goalkeeper chooses to play the ball across the retreat line prior to the opposition crossing the retreat line)
- Is released by the GK’s hands to allow distribution with their feet (drops the ball to pass/dribble with their feet)

Law 16: The Goal Kick

A goal kick is the method of restarting play anytime the whole of the ball passes over the goal line no matter which team last touched the ball.

A goal kick is awarded when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, on the ground or in the air, having last touched a player of the attacking team, and a goal is not scored.

A goal may be scored directly from a goal kick, but only against the opposing team; if the ball directly enters the kicker’s goal, a retake is issued.

Procedure

- The ball is kicked from any point within the penalty area by a player of the defending team.
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves.
- All opponents must be behind the retreat line and cannot cross the retreat line until the ball:
 - Is touched by a player of the team taking the goal kick OR,
 - Leaves the field of play OR,
 - Crosses the retreat line. If the kicker chooses not to wait for the opposing players to retreat, and takes the goal kick quickly, the opponents are permitted to challenge for the ball without going back to the retreat line.



Offences and Sanctions

For any offences, including those listed below, the goal kick is retaken:

- Opponents cross the retreat line before they are permitted,
- Kicker touches the ball a second time with their feet.
- The goalkeeper takes the goal kick and touches the ball a second time with their hands inside of their penalty area.

An indirect free kick is awarded if the kicker touches the ball a second time with their hands, except for a goalkeeper inside their penalty area.

The indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team from the position where the second touch occurred (see Law 13 – Position of free kick)

The Retreat Line

Retreat Line on a Goal Kick

When the goalkeeper has the ball in their possession for a goal kick, the opposing team must retreat to a predetermined area of the field:

- 3v3 Format – Retreat line is the halfway line. (Note: It is recommended that the goalkeeper does not use a dropkick.)

Once the opposition has retreated:

- The goalkeeper may pass the ball to a teammate.
- The ball is in play once it is touched by a teammate, and the opposition may then pressure and attempt to win the ball.

If the goalkeeper chooses not to wait for the opposition to retreat and releases the ball early:

- The ball is instantly in play, and the opposition may pressure immediately.
- A teammate does not need to touch the ball first.

Opponents must remain behind the retreat line until the ball:

- Is touched by a teammate of the goalkeeper, or
- Leaves the field of play, or
- Crosses the retreat line.

Retreat Line During Active Play

When the goalkeeper gains possession of the ball during live play, they have two options:

1. Release the ball before the opposition has retreated – the ball is instantly in play, or
2. Wait for the opposition to retreat – the goalkeeper may then choose to:
 - a. Dribble the ball, or
 - b. Throw the ball to a teammate, or
 - c. Pass the ball to a teammate.



Once the ball is released after the retreat, the opposition may break the retreat line upon the second touch. The second touch is defined as follows:

- Dribble: The goalkeeper places the ball on the ground, takes one touch, then a second touch. After the second touch, the opposition may pressure.
- Throw: The goalkeeper throws the ball to a teammate. Once the teammate touches the ball, the opposition may pressure.
- Pass: The goalkeeper kicks the ball (either a drop kick or ground pass) to a teammate. Once the teammate touches the ball, the opposition may pressure.

Retreat Line Marking

Can use corner flags or two cones depending on what is available. They need to be off the field so that field players do not trip or slide on them.

Law 17: The Corner Kick

There are no corner kicks in the 3v3 match format. A goal kick is the method of restarting play anytime the whole of the ball passes over the goal line no matter which team last touched the ball.

Restart & Offences Review

This chart outlines when a goal can be scored directly and what the restart is in the event that a second touch occurs with either the hands or feet.

Type	Goal Scored Direct on Opponents?	Offends w/Hands	Offends w/Feet
		Kicker Offence	Kicker Offence
Kick-Off	Yes	IFK	Retake
Kick-In/Dribble-In	No	IFK	Retake
Indirect Free Kick	No	IFK	Retake
Dropped Ball	No	IFK	Retake
Goal Kick	Yes	IFK	Retake

Rules at a Glance

Item	Description
Playing Format	3v3
Substitutions	Unlimited (on the fly or at designated stoppages)
Match Duration	2 x 30 mins. halves or 4 x 7.5 min quarters
Half Time Duration	5 minutes
Throw Ins	Yes (Dribble-In/Pass-In) (see Law 15)
Retreat Line	Yes (Halfway Line)
Offside	No
Ball Size	3



4v4 and 5v5 Match Format

Law 1: The Field of Play

Field Markings

Penalty Area Size: Width 10 – 12 m and Depth 5 – 6 m

The diagram on the right, shows a 4v4 and 5v5 soccer field at dimensions, 30 m x 25 m. Pop up goals are recommended for the 4v4 (with no goalkeepers) format. These 4v4 fields can be placed on existing soccer fields or on any available space. Portable goals that are sturdier are used for games that include goalkeepers in 5v5. Usually requires a designated soccer field, since having a goalkeeper and a slight increase in team size would require a more structured setup than 4v4.

The field above has been delineated using marker cones. In the absence of lines, cones are perfectly acceptable and suitable to create a small-sided soccer field.

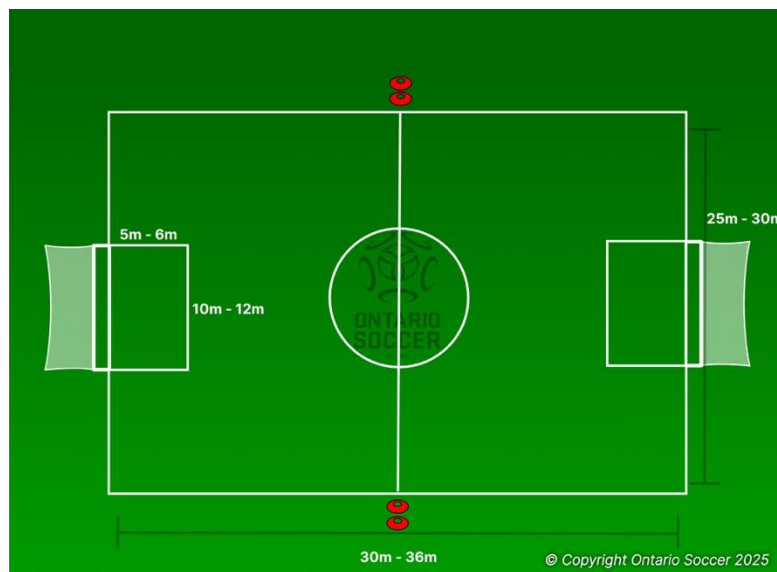


Image above: 4v4 & 5v5 field dimensions with retreat line indicated by cones/markers. For more field orientation examples, please refer to the [Grassroots Field Organization Guide](#).

Dimensions

The field of play must be rectangular. The touchline must be longer than the goal line. Recommended field dimensions are as follows:

Width	Length
25 m – 30 m	30 m – 36 m

The Corner Area

There are no corner kicks in the 4v4/5v5 match format. See “Law 16: The Goal Kick” for information on restarting play when the whole ball has passed over the goal line.

Ontario Soccer is piloting the introduction of corner kicks in the 4v4/5v5 match format.

The Goal Area

The goal area is the same as the penalty area.

The Penalty Area

Two lines are drawn at right angle of the goal line, at a distance from the inside of each goal post. These lines extend into the field of play five (5) - six (6) metres in depth and are joined by a line



parallel to the goal line, which measures between ten (10) - twelve (12) metres. The area is then bounded by these lines and the goal line in the penalty area.

Flagposts

Flagposts are not required but are recommended.

Goals

A goal must be placed on the centre of each goal line.

A goal consists of two vertical posts, evenly spaced from the corner flags and joined by a horizontal crossbar, or two flat markers placed equidistant from the corner flags and include pop-up goals.

The size for goals is as follows:

Width	Height
2.44m (8ft)	1.52m (5ft)

Safety: Goals (including portable goals) must be firmly secured to the ground

Law 2: The Ball

Size 3 or 4 balls can be used under the following guidelines:

Requirements for Size 3 Balls:

Category	Specifications
Weight	320 – 340g
Circumference	58.5 – 61cm
Pressure	5.8 lbs/sq. in – 8.7 lbs/sq. in 0.4 – 0.6 atmosphere

Requirements for Size 4 Ball:

Category	Specifications
Weight	290 – 320g
Circumference	63.5 – 66cm
Pressure	7.3lbs/sq. in – 10.2 lbs/sq. in 0.5 – 0.7 atmosphere



Law 3: The Players

A match is played by two teams, there are no goalkeepers in 4v4 but for 5v5 one player from each must be a goalkeeper. The minimum, maximum number of players and roster size are listed below:

Number of Players on Field	Ideal Roster Size	Maximum Roster Size
4 (no GK) or 5 (with GK)	8-10	12

Substitutions

Unlimited substitutions may be made on the fly or at designated stoppages throughout the game.

Law 4: The Players' Equipment

Players must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous to themselves or other players. Basic compulsory equipment shall consist of:

- A jersey or shirt with sleeves – pinnies are also accepted
- Shorts
- Socks
- Appropriate footwear
- Shin guards

Shin guards must:

- Be covered by the socks.
- Be made of a suitable material.
- Provide a reasonable degree of protection.

Colours:

- The two teams must wear colours that distinguish them from each other and the referee.
- Each goalkeeper must wear colours which are distinguishable from the other players and the referee. Pinnies/bibs are recommended to save jersey switching.

Non-uniform clothing is allowed based on weather conditions, but uniforms must still distinguish teams.

A player who is asked to leave the field of play because of defective or dangerous equipment may not re-enter the field of play until the referee is satisfied that the equipment is permissible. The equipment may only be inspected during a stoppage in play.

Jewelry is not permitted and cannot be taped. Medic Alert bracelets and Medic Alert necklaces are the only exceptions, provided that they are fastened securely, so as not to bring danger to any other player. The referee should be aware of any player that is wearing one of these.

Any hair apparel must be of soft fabric; no plastic or metal items are to be worn. Sports hijabs / headscarves are permitted.

Referees have the final say on the safety of equipment.



Law 5: The Referee

The Authority of the Referee

Each match is controlled by an Ontario Soccer-accredited referee who has full authority to enforce the Adapted Match Formats and IFAB Laws of the Game. The decisions of the referee regarding facts connected with play, including whether or not a goal is scored and the result of the match, are final.

Powers and Duties

The referee:

- Enforces the Adapted Match Formats and IFAB Laws of the Game.
- Ensures that any ball used meets the requirements of Law 2.
- Ensures that the players' equipment meets the requirements of Law 4.
- Acts as timekeeper and keeps a record of the match.
- Stops, suspends or abandons the match, at their discretion, for any offences of the Laws.
- Stops, suspends or abandons the match because of outside interference of any kind.
- Stops the match if a player is injured and ensures that they are removed from the field of play. An injured player may only return to the field of play after the match has restarted.
- Ensures that any player bleeding from a wound leaves the field of play. The player may only return on receiving a signal from the referee, who must be satisfied that the bleeding has stopped.
- Takes action against team officials who fail to conduct themselves in a responsible manner and may, at his/her discretion, expel them from the field of play and its immediate surrounds.
- Ensures that no unauthorized persons enter the field of play.
- Indicates the restart of the match after it has been stopped.
- Provides the appropriate authorities with a match report, which includes information on any disciplinary action taken against players and/or team officials and any other incidents that occurred before, during or after the match.

Law 6: The Other Match Officials

There shall be no assistant referees or 4th official on 4v4 games or 5v5 games.

Law 7: The Duration of the Match

Match Duration

The match shall consist of two (2) 20-minute halves or four (4) x 10 min quarters. The match shall not exceed 40 minutes.

Half-Time Interval

Players are entitled to a half-time interval of 5 minutes.



Law 8: The Start and Restart of Play

A kick-off is a way of starting or restarting play:

- At the start of a match.
- After a goal has been scored.
- At the start of the second half.
- At the start of each period of extra time, where applicable.

A goal may be scored directly from a kick-off, but only against the opponents; if the ball directly enters the kicker's goal, a retake is issued.

Procedure

Before the start of the match:

- A coin toss is held by the referee between a player of each team.
- The team that wins the toss decides which goal it will attack in the first half or to take the kick-off.
- In the second half of the match, the teams change ends and attack the opposite goals.
- The team that did not take the kick-off to start the match takes the kick-off to start the second half.

Kick-off

- After a team scores a goal, the kick-off is taken by the other team.
- All players, except the player taking the kick-off, must be in their own half of the field.
- The opponents of the team taking the kick-off must be five (5) metres (or six (6) yards) away from the ball until it is in play.
- The ball must be stationary on the centre mark.
- The referee gives a signal.
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves.

Offences and Sanctions

For any offences, including those listed below, the kick-off is retaken:

- Players not in their own half of the field.
- Opponents encroaching within five (5) metres (or six (6) yards) of the ball.
- Ball not on centre mark or clearly moves before signal.
- Kick-off taken before signal.
- Kicker touches the ball a second time with their feet.

If the player taking the kick-off touches the ball again with their hands before it has touched another player, an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team.

Dropped Ball

A dropped ball is a method of restarting play when, while the ball is still in play, the referee is required to stop play temporarily for any reason not mentioned elsewhere in the Adapted Match Formats Laws of the Game. Some examples of this are an injury or interference by an outside agent or the ball touching the Referee as explained in Law 9.



Procedure

The ball is dropped for the defending team goalkeeper in their penalty area if, when play was stopped:

- The ball was in the penalty area or,
- the last touch of the ball was in the penalty area

In all other cases, the referee drops the ball for one player of the team that last touched the ball at the position where it last touched a player, an outside agent, or the referee. All other players (of both teams) must remain at least 4 metres (4.5 yards) from the ball until it is in play.

Additional Notes:

- The ball is in play when it touches the ground.
- A goal cannot be scored directly from a dropped ball.

Offences and Sanctions

The ball is dropped again if it:

- touches a player before it touches the ground.
- leaves the field of play after it touches the ground, without touching a player.

If the ball enters the goal without touching at least two players, play is restarted with:

- a goal kick if it enters the opponents' goal.
- a retake if it enters the team's goal.

Law 9: The Ball In and Out of Play

Ball Out of play

The ball is out of play when:

- It has wholly passed over the goal line or touchline, on the ground, or in the air.
- Play has been stopped by the referee.
- It touches the referee, remains on the field of play and:
 - a team starts a promising attack or
 - the ball goes directly into the goal or
 - the team in possession of the ball changes.

In all these cases, play is restarted with a Dribble-In or Pass-In from the area on the touchline where the ball went out of play. Where the ball has not gone out of play, play is restarted with a dropped ball.

Ball In Play

The ball is in play at all other times when it touches a match official or rebounds off a goalpost, crossbar or corner flagpost and remains on the field of play.



Law 10: Determining the Outcome of a Match

A goal is scored when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, between the goalposts and under the crossbar, provided that no offence of the Small Sided Laws of the Game has been previously committed by the team scoring the goal.

When goalposts are not available and cones are used instead, a goal is scored when, if in the opinion of the referee, the whole of the ball passes over the goal line between or above the cones, below two (2) metres.

Law 11: Offside

There is no offside for 4v4 and 5v5 games.

Law 12: Fouls & Misconduct

The referee shall attempt to explain **ALL** offences to the offending player. No Yellow or Red Cards are given to players in 4v4 and 5v5 matches.

Fouls

An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following offences:

- A. Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent.
- B. Trips or attempts to trip an opponent.
- C. Jumps at an opponent.
- D. Charges an opponent.
- E. Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent (including head-butt).
- F. Pushes an opponent.
- G. Tackles or challenges an opponent.
- H. Throws an object at the ball, an opponent or the referee, or makes contact with the ball with a held object.
- I. Holds an opponent.
- J. Impedes an opponent with contact.
- K. Bites or spits at someone on the team lists or the referee.
- L. Handball offence.
- M. Plays in a dangerous manner.
- N. Impedes the progress of an opponent without any contact being made.
- O. Prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from its hands or kicks or attempts to kick the ball when the goalkeeper is in the process of releasing it.
- P. Is guilty of dissent, using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or action(s) or other verbal offences.
- Q. Commits any other offence, not previously mentioned in Law 12.

An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a goalkeeper, **inside their own penalty area**, commits any of the following four offences:

- R. Controls the ball with the hand/arm for more than 8 seconds before releasing it after the retreat line has been engaged.



- S. Touches the ball with the hand/arm after it has been deliberately kicked to them by a teammate.
- T. Touches the ball with the hand/arm after receiving it directly from a dribble-in/pass-in taken by a team-mate.
- U. Touches the ball with the hand/arm after releasing it and before it has touched another player.

Disciplinary Action

Small Sided Referees should avoid the use of Yellow & Red Cards towards players.

As needed, the referee may Warn, Caution (YC), or Send-off (RC) a Team Official.

For all Youth Competitions, a coach must be present in Team's technical area. If there is only one coach and they are Sent off, the referee must abandon the game. In this case, the referee must submit a Special Incident Report with the game sheets & discipline reports.

Law 13: Free Kicks

All free kicks are indirect.

Procedure

For all free kicks, the ball must be stationary when the kick is taken. The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves. The kicker must not touch the ball again until it has touched another player.

A goal can only be scored from a free kick if the ball is touched by another player before it enters the goal.

- If a free kick is kicked directly into the opponents' goal, without being touched by a second player, a goal kick is awarded.
- If a free kick is kicked directly into the team's own goal, without being touched by a second player, a retake is issued.

Offences and Sanctions

For any infringements, including those listed below, the free kick is retaken:

- Opponents encroaching within 5 metres (or six (6) yards) of the ball.
- Kicker touches the ball a second time with their feet.

If the kicker touches the ball a second time with their hands, an indirect free kick is awarded.

Positions of the Free Kick

Free Kick Inside the Penalty Area

Indirect free kick for the defending team:

- All opponents must be at least five (5) metres (or six (6) yards) from the ball, and outside the penalty area
- All opponents must be behind the Retreat line if the free kick is within the team's defending half of the field.
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves



- A free kick awarded in the penalty area may be taken from any point inside that area

Indirect free kick for the attacking team:

- All opponents must be at least five (5) metres (or six (6) yards) from the ball
- For all offences from Law 12:
 - The indirect free kick shall be taken from the penalty area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the offence occurred.

Free Kick Outside the Penalty Area

Indirect free kick for either team:

- All opponents must be at least five (5) metres (or six (6) yards) from the ball.
- All opponents must be behind the Retreat line if the free kick is within the team's defending half of the field.
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves.
- All free kicks are taken from the place where the offence occurred except for:
 - Offences involving a player entering, re-entering, or leaving the field of play are taken from the position of the ball when play was stopped.
 - If a player commits an offence off the field of play, play is restarted with a free kick taken on the boundary line nearest to where the offence occurred.

Where three or more defending team players form a 'wall', all attacking team players must remain at least 1 metre (1 yard) from the 'wall' until the ball is in play.

Law 14: The Penalty Kick

Penalty kicks are not permitted within 4v4 and 5v5 matches. For fouls inside the penalty area, "Free Kick Inside the Penalty Area" rules will be followed.

Law 15: The Dribble-In/Pass-In

A dribble-in or pass-in is a method of restarting play. The kicker may conduct either a dribble-in or pass-in as a method of restarting play throughout the duration of the match.

A dribble-in or pass-in is awarded to the opponents of the player who last touched the ball when the whole of the ball passes over the touchline, on the ground or in the air.

A goal cannot be scored directly from a dribble-in/pass-in. If the ball enters the goal without touching at least two players, play is restarted with:

- A goal kick for the opposing team if the ball enters the opponents' goal or the kicker's own goal.

Procedure

- The ball is kicked from the touchline at the point where the ball left the field of play,
- The ball must be stationary,
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves.



All opponents must stand no less than three (3) metres (or three (3) yards) from the point at which the pass-in or dribble-in is taken.

Offences and Sanctions

For any offences the dribble-in/pass-in is retaken, however, an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if the kicker touches the ball a second time with their hands.

Law 16: The Goal Kick

A goal kick is a method of restarting play.

A goal kick is awarded when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, on the ground or in the air, having last touched a player of the attacking team, and a goal is not scored.

A goal may be scored directly from a goal kick, but only against the opposing team; if the ball directly enters the kicker's goal, a retake is issued.

Procedure

- The ball is kicked from any point within the penalty area by a player of the defending team
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves
- All opponents must be behind the retreat line and cannot cross the retreat line until the ball:
 - Is touched by a player of the team taking the goal kick OR,
 - Leaves the field of play OR,
 - Crosses the retreat line.

If the kicker chooses not to wait for the opposing players to retreat, and takes the goal kick quickly, the opponents are permitted to challenge for the ball without going back to the retreat line.

Offences and Sanctions

For any offences, including those listed below, the goal kick is retaken:

- Opponents cross the retreat line before they are permitted,
- Kicker touches the ball a second time with their feet,
- The goalkeeper takes the goal kick and touches the ball a second time with their hands inside of their penalty area.

An indirect free kick is awarded if the kicker touches the ball a second time with their hands, except for a goalkeeper inside their penalty area.

The indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team from the position where the second touch occurred (see Law 13 – Position of free kick).



The Retreat Line

Retreat Line on a Goal Kick

When the goalkeeper has the ball in their possession for a goal kick, the opposing team must retreat to a predetermined area of the field:

- 5v5 Format – Retreat line is the halfway line. (Note: It is recommended that the goalkeeper does not use a dropkick.)

Once the opposition has retreated:

- The goalkeeper may pass the ball to a teammate.
- The ball is in play once it is touched by a teammate, and the opposition may then pressure and attempt to win the ball.

If the goalkeeper chooses not to wait for the opposition to retreat and releases the ball early:

- The ball is instantly in play, and the opposition may pressure immediately.
- A teammate does not need to touch the ball first.

Opponents must remain behind the retreat line until the ball:

- Is touched by a teammate of the goalkeeper, or
- Leaves the field of play, or
- Crosses the retreat line.

Retreat Line During Active Play

When the goalkeeper gains possession of the ball during live play, they have two options:

1. Release the ball before the opposition has retreated – the ball is instantly in play, or
2. Wait for the opposition to retreat – the goalkeeper may then choose to:
 - a. Dribble the ball, or
 - b. Throw the ball to a teammate, or
 - c. Pass the ball to a teammate.

Once the ball is released after the retreat, the opposition may break the retreat line upon the second touch. The second touch is defined as follows:

- Dribble: The goalkeeper places the ball on the ground, takes one touch, then a second touch. After the second touch, the opposition may pressure.
- Throw: The goalkeeper throws the ball to a teammate. Once the teammate touches the ball, the opposition may pressure.
- Pass: The goalkeeper kicks the ball (either a drop kick or ground pass) to a teammate. Once the teammate touches the ball, the opposition may pressure.



Retreat Line Marking

Can use corner flags or two cones depending on what is available. They need to be off the field so that field players do not trip or slide on them.

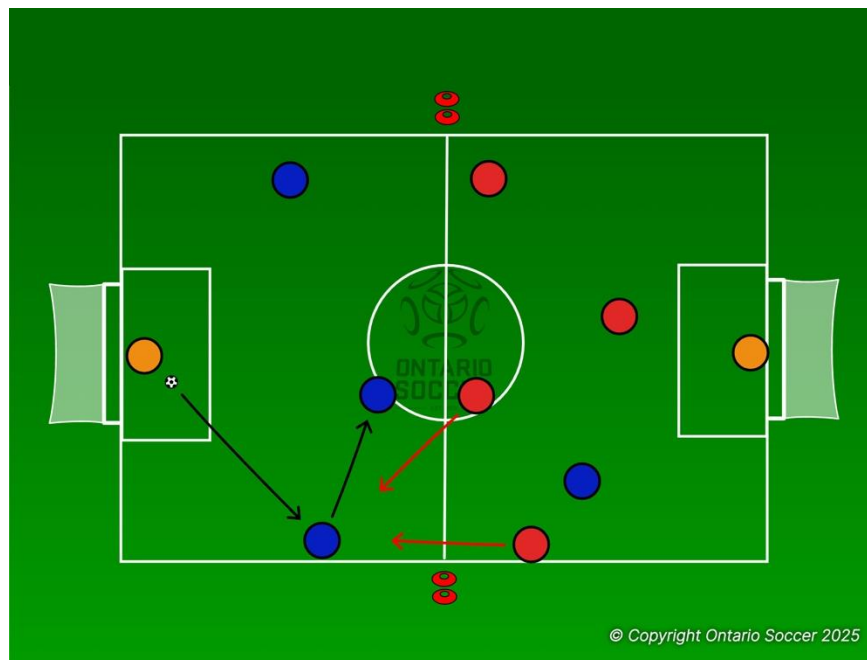


Image above: Retreat line example for the 5v5 format. In the diagram above you can see a retreat line installed using cones at halfway. The red team has retreated behind the halfway line. For more field orientation examples, please refer to the [Grassroots Field Organization Guide](#).

Law 17: The Corner Kick

There are no corner kicks in the 4v4/5v5 match format. A goal kick is the method of restarting play anytime the whole of the ball passes over the goal line no matter which team last touched the ball.

Ontario Soccer is piloting the introduction of corner kicks in the 4v4/5v5 match format.

Restart & Offences Review

This chart outlines when a goal can be scored directly and what the restart is in the event that a second touch occurs with either the hands or feet.

Type	Goal Scored Direct on Opponents?	Offends w/Hands	Offends w/Feet
		Kicker Offence	Kicker Offence
Kick-Off	Yes	IFK	Retake
Kick-In/Dribble-In	No	IFK	Retake
Indirect Free Kick	No	IFK	Retake
Dropped Ball	No	IFK	Retake
Goal Kick	Yes	IFK	Retake



Rules at a Glance

Item	Description
Playing Format	4v4 (no GK) or 5v5 (with GK)
Substitutions	Unlimited (any stoppage or during play)
Match Duration	2 x 20 min. halves or 4 x 10 min. quarters
Half Time Duration	5 minutes
Throw Ins	Yes (Dribble-In/Pass-In) (see Law 15)
Retreat Line	Yes (Halfway Line)
Offside	No
Ball Size	3 or 4



7v7 Match Format

Law 1: The Field of Play

Field Marking

Penalty Area Size: Width 20-24 metres and Depth 10-12 metres.

The diagram on the right, shows a 7v7 soccer field at maximum dimensions, 55 m x 36 m.

In the absence of lines, cones are perfectly acceptable and suitable to create a small, sided soccer field. Flags have been put in place to show the corners of the field.

Dimensions

The field of play must be rectangular. The touchline must be longer than the goal line. as follows:

Width	Length
30 m – 36m (98.42ft - 118.11ft)	40 m – 55 m (131.23ft - 180.44ft)

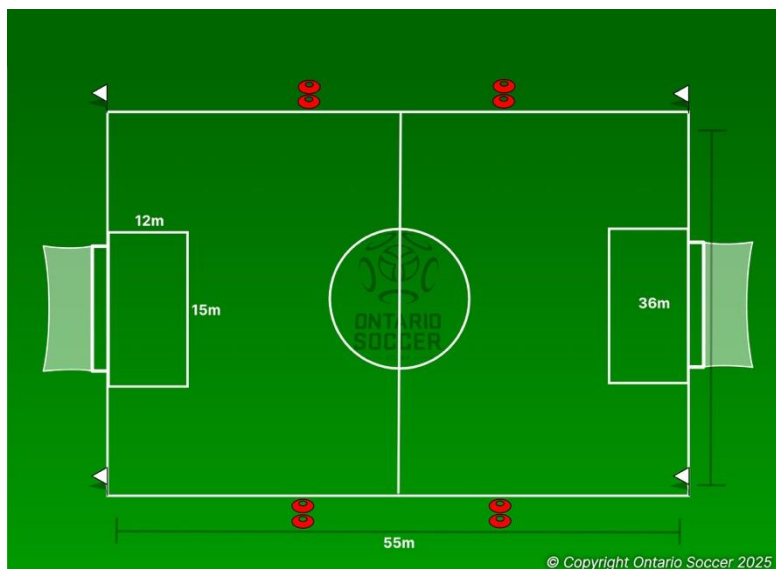


Image above: 7v7 field dimensions with retreat line indicated by cones/markers. For more field orientation examples, please refer to the [Grassroots Field Organization Guide](#).

The Corner Area

The corner area is defined by a quarter circle with a radius of 0.5 m (~0.5 yrd.) from each corner flag post drawn inside the field of play. Corner flags are mandatory.

The Goal Area

The goal area is the same as the penalty area.

The Penalty Area

Two lines are drawn at right angle of the goal line, approximately eight (8) metres from the outside of each goal post. These lines extend into the field of play ten (10) - twelve (12) metres in depth and are joined by a line parallel to the goal line, which measures between twenty (20) and twenty-four (24) metres. The area is then bounded by these lines and the goal line in the penalty area. Within each penalty area, a penalty mark is made eight (8) metres from the midpoint between the goalposts and equidistant to them.

Penalty Arc

An optional penalty arc with a radius of seven (7) metres (or eight (8) yards) radius from the penalty spot each penalty mark is drawn outside the penalty area.



Flagposts

A flagpost, not less than 1.5 m (5 feet) high, with a non-pointed top and, a flag must be placed in each corner.

Goals

A goal must be placed on the centre of each goal line.

A goal consists of two vertical posts equidistant from the corner flagposts and joined at the top by a horizontal crossbar or two pop up goals equidistant from the corner flags.

The size for goals is as follows:

Width	Height
4.8m (16ft)	1.8m (6ft)

Safety: Goals (including portable goals) must be firmly secured to the ground.

Law 2: The Ball

Size 4 balls must be used.

Requirements for Size 4 Balls:

Category	Specifications
Weight	290-320g
Circumference	63.5-66cm
Pressure	7.3lbs/sq. in – 10.2 lbs/sq. in 0.5 – 0.7 atmosphere

If the ball becomes defective during the match, play is stopped until a replacement ball is found. Play is restarted by dropping the replacement ball at the place where the original ball became defective.

If the ball becomes defective at a kick-off, free kick, goal kick, corner kick or kick-in, the restart is retaken.

If the ball becomes defective during a penalty kick as it moves forward and before it touches a player, crossbar or goalposts, the penalty kick is retaken.

Law 3: The Players

A match is played by two teams, and one player from each team must be a goalkeeper. The minimum, maximum number of players and roster size are listed below:

Number of players on field	Ideal roster size	Maximum Roster Size
7	10-12	14



Substitutions

Unlimited substitutions may be made throughout the game. All substitutions are only allowed at the discretion of the referee, who shall be advised of all substitutions.

Substitutions may be made on any stoppage.

Law 4: The Players' Equipment

Players must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous to themselves or other players. Basic compulsory equipment shall consist of:

- A jersey or shirt with sleeves – pinnies are also accepted
- Shorts
- Socks
- Appropriate footwear
- Shin guards

Shin guards must:

- Be covered by the socks,
- Be made of a suitable material,
- Provide a reasonable degree of protection

Colours:

- The two teams must wear colours that distinguish them from each other and the referee.
- Each goalkeeper must wear colours which are distinguishable from the other players and the referee. Pinnies/bibs are recommended to save jersey switching.

Non-uniform clothing is allowed based on weather conditions, but uniforms must still distinguish teams.

A player who is asked to leave the field of play because of defective or dangerous equipment may not re-enter the field of play until the referee is satisfied that the equipment is permissible. The equipment may only be inspected during a stoppage in play.

Jewelry is not permitted and cannot be taped. Medic Alert bracelets and Medic Alert necklaces are the only exceptions, provided that they are fastened securely, so as not to bring danger to any other player. The referee should be aware of any player that is wearing one of these.

Any hair apparel must be of soft fabric; no plastic or metal items are to be worn. Sports hijabs / headscarves are permitted.

Referees have the final say on the safety of equipment.



Law 5: The Referee

The Authority of the Referee

Each match is controlled by an Ontario Soccer-accredited referee who has full authority to enforce the Adapted Match Formats and IFAB Laws of the Game. The decisions of the referee regarding facts connected with play, including whether or not a goal is scored and the result of the match, are final.

Powers and Duties

The referee:

- Enforces the Adapted Match Formats and IFAB Laws of the Game.
- Ensures that any ball used meets the requirements of Law 2.
- Ensures that the players' equipment meets the requirements of Law 4.
- Acts as timekeeper and keeps a record of the match.
- Stops, suspends or abandons the match, at their discretion, for any offences of the Laws.
- Stops, suspends or abandons the match because of outside interference of any kind.
- Stops the match if a player is injured and ensures that they are removed from the field of play. An injured player may only return to the field of play after the match has restarted.
- Ensures that any player bleeding from a wound leaves the field of play. The player may only return on receiving a signal from the referee, who must be satisfied that the bleeding has stopped.
- Takes action against team officials who fail to conduct themselves in a responsible manner and may, at his/her discretion, expel them from the field of play and its immediate surrounds.
- Ensures that no unauthorized persons enter the field of play.
- Indicates the restart of the match after it has been stopped.
- Provides the appropriate authorities with a match report, which includes information on any disciplinary action taken against players and/or team officials and any other incidents that occurred before, during or after the match.

Law 6: The Other Match Officials

There shall be no assistant referees or 4th official on 7v7 games.

Law 7: The Duration of the Match

Match Duration

The match shall consist of two (2) 25-minute halves or four (4) x 12.5 min. quarters. The match shall not exceed 50 minutes.

Half-Time Interval

Players are entitled to a half-time interval of 5 minutes.



Law 8: The Start and Restart of Play

A kick-off is a way of starting or restarting play:

- At the start of a match.
- After a goal has been scored.
- At the start of the second half.
- At the start of each period of extra time, where applicable.

A goal may be scored directly from a kick-off, but only against the opponents; if the ball directly enters the kicker's goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opponents.

Procedure

Before the start of the match:

- A coin toss is held by the referee between a player of each team.
- The team that wins the toss decides which goal it will attack in the first half or to take the kick-off.
- In the second half of the match, the teams change ends and attack the opposite goals.
- The team that did not take the kick-off to start the match takes the kick-off to start the second half.

Kick-Off

- After a team scores a goal, the kick-off is taken by the other team.
- All players, except the player taking the kick-off, must be in their own half of the field.
- The opponents of the team taking the kick-off must be five (5) metres (or six (6) yards) away from the ball until it is in play.
- The ball must be stationary on the centre mark.
- The referee gives a signal.
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves.

Offences and Sanctions

For any offences, including those listed below, the kick-off is retaken:

- Players not in their own half of the field.
- Opponents encroaching within five (5) metres (or six (6) yards) of the ball.
- Players encroaching into opposing half.
- Ball not on centre mark or clearly moves before signal.
- Kick-off taken before signal.
- Kicker touches the ball a second time with their feet.

If the player taking the kick-off touches the ball again with their hands before it has touched another player, an indirect free kick is awarded.

Dropped Ball

A dropped ball is a method of restarting play when, while the ball is still in play, the referee is required to stop play temporarily for any reason not mentioned elsewhere in the Adapted Match Formats Laws of the Game. Some examples of this are an injury or interference by an outside agent or the ball touching the Referee as explained in Law 9.



Procedure

The ball is dropped for the defending team goalkeeper in their penalty area if, when play was stopped:

- The ball was in the penalty area or,
- the last touch of the ball was in the penalty area

In all other cases, the referee drops the ball for one player of the team that last touched the ball at the position where it last touched a player, an outside agent, or the referee. All other players (of both teams) must remain at least 4 metres (4.5 yards) from the ball until it is in play.

Additional Notes:

- The ball is in play when it touches the ground.
- A goal cannot be scored directly from a dropped ball.

Offences and Sanctions

The ball is dropped again if it:

- touches a player before it touches the ground
- leaves the field of play after it touches the ground, without touching a player

If the ball enters the goal without touching at least two players, play is restarted with:

- a goal kick if it enters the opponents' goal
- a corner kick if it enters the team's goal

Law 9: The Ball In and Out of Play

Ball Out of Play

The ball is out of play when:

- It has wholly passed over the goal line or touchline, on the ground, or in the air
- Play has been stopped by the referee
- It touches the referee, remains on the field of play, and:
 - a team starts a promising attack or
 - the ball goes directly into the goal or
 - the team in possession of the ball changes

In all these cases, play is restarted with a Dribble-In or Pass-In from the area on the touchline where the ball went out of play. Where the ball has not gone out of play, play is restarted with a dropped ball.

Ball In Play

The ball is in play at all other times when it touches a match official and when it rebounds off a goalpost, crossbar or corner flagpost and remains on the field of play.



Law 10: Determining the Outcome of a Match

A goal is scored when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, between the goalposts and under the crossbar, provided that no offence of the Small Sided Laws of the Game has been previously committed by the team scoring the goal.

When goalposts are not available and cones are used instead, a goal is scored when, if in the opinion of the referee, the whole of the ball passes over the goal line between or above the cones, below two (2) metres.

Law 11: Offside

There is no offside for 7v7 games.

Law 12: Fouls & Misconduct

The referee shall attempt to explain **ALL** offences to the offending player.

Fouls

An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following offences:

- A. Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent.
- B. Trips or attempts to trip an opponent.
- C. Jumps at an opponent.
- D. Charges an opponent.
- E. Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent (including head-butt).
- F. Pushes an opponent.
- G. Tackles or challenges an opponent.
- H. Throws an object at the ball, an opponent or the referee, or makes contact with the ball with a held object.
- I. Holds an opponent.
- J. Impedes an opponent with contact.
- K. Bites or spits at someone on the team lists or the referee.
- L. Handball offence.

If any of the offences above occur inside the penalty area, a penalty kick is awarded.

An indirect free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following offences, regardless of if the offence is committed in the penalty area or not:

- M. Plays in a dangerous manner.
- N. Impedes the progress of an opponent without any contact being made.
- O. Prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from its hands or kicks or attempts to kick the ball when the goalkeeper is in the process of releasing it.
- P. Is guilty of dissent, using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or action(s) or other verbal offences.
- Q. Commits any other offence, not previously mentioned in Law 12.



An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a goalkeeper, **inside their own penalty area**, commits any of the following four offences:

- R. Controls the ball with the hand/arm for more than 8 seconds before releasing it after the retreat line has been engaged.
- S. Touches the ball with the hand/arm after it has been deliberately kicked to them by a teammate.
- T. Touches the ball with the hand/arm after receiving it directly from a dribble-in/pass-in taken by a team-mate.
- U. Touches the ball with the hand/arm after releasing it and before it has touched another player.

Disciplinary Action

Small Sided Referees should avoid the use of Yellow & Red Cards towards players.

As needed, the referee may Warn, Caution (YC), or Send-off (RC) a Team Official.

For all Youth Competitions, a coach must be present in Team's technical area. If there is only one coach and they are Sent off, the referee must abandon the game. In this case, the referee must submit a Special Incident Report with the game sheets & discipline reports.

Law 13: Free Kicks

All free kicks are indirect, with the exception of penalty kicks.

Procedure

For all free kicks, the ball must be stationary when the kick is taken. The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves. The kicker must not touch the ball again until it has touched another player.

A goal can only be scored from a free kick if the ball is touched by another player before it enters the goal.

- If a free kick is kicked directly into the opponents' goal, without being touched by a second player, a goal kick is awarded.
- If a free kick is kicked directly into the team's own goal, without being touched by a second player, a corner kick is awarded.

Positions of the Free Kick

Free Kick inside the Penalty Area

Indirect free kick for the defending team:

- All opponents must be at least five (5) metres (or six (6) yards) from the ball.
- All opponents must be behind the Retreat line if the free kick is within the team's defending 1/3rd of the field.
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves.
- A free kick awarded in the penalty area may be taken from any point inside that area.



Indirect free kick for the attacking team

- All opponents must be at least five (5) metres (or six (6) yards) from the ball
- For offences A to L from Law 12:
 - A penalty kick is awarded.
- For offences M to U from Law 12:
 - If a goal area is present and the offence happens within said goal area; the indirect free kick shall be taken from the nearest point on the goal area line which runs parallel to the goal line.
 - If a goal area is not present and the offence happens within the penalty area; the indirect free kick shall be taken from the nearest point on the penalty area line which runs parallel to the goal line.

Free Kick Outside the Penalty Area

Indirect free kick for either team:

- All opponents must be at least five (5) metres (or six (6) yards) from the ball.
- All opponents must be behind the Retreat line if the free kick is within the team's defending 1/3rd of the field.
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves.
- All free kicks are taken from the place where the offence occurred except for:
 - Offences involving a player entering, re-entering, or leaving the field of play are taken from the position of the ball when play was stopped.
 - If a player commits an offence off the field of play, play is restarted with a free kick taken on the boundary line nearest to where the offence occurred; which for offences A to L in Law 12, results in a penalty kick if the offence is within the offender's penalty area.

Where three or more defending team players form a 'wall', all attacking team players must remain at least 1 metre (1 yard) from the 'wall' until the ball is in play.

Offences and Sanctions

For any infringements, including those listed below, the free kick is retaken:

- Opponents encroaching within 5 metres (or six (6) yards) of the ball
- Kicker touches the ball a second time with their feet

If the kicker touches the ball a second time with their hands, an indirect free kick is awarded. If the offence occurred inside the kicker's penalty area and the kicker was not the goalkeeper, a penalty kick is awarded.

Law 14: The Penalty Kick

Penalty kicks are included in the 7v7 match format. The reasons for awarding a penalty kick are outlined in Law 12 (offences A through L). A goal may be scored directly from a penalty kick.

Position of the Ball and Players

The ball:

- Must be stationary on the penalty mark and the goalposts, crossbar and goal net must not be moving



Player taking the penalty kick:

- Must be clearly identified

Defending goalkeeper:

- Must be on their goal line, facing the kicker, between the goalposts, without touching the goalposts, crossbar or goal net, until the ball has been kicked
- When the ball is kicked, the goalkeeper must have at least part of one foot touching, or in line with, the goal line.

The players other than the kicker and goalkeeper must be located:

- Inside the field of play
- Behind the penalty mark
- At least five (5) metres (or six (6) yards) from the penalty mark
- Outside the penalty area (and/or penalty arc if it is marked on the field of play)

Procedure

- After the players have taken their positions in accordance with this Law, the referee signals for the penalty kick to be taken
- The player taking the penalty kick must kick the ball forward; backheeling is permitted provided the ball moves forward
- The kicker must not play the ball again until it has touched another player
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves.

The penalty kick is completed when the ball stops moving, goes out of play, or the referee stops play for any offence.

Penalty Kick Summary Table

	Outcome of the penalty kick	
	Goal	No goal
Encroachment by attacking player	Impact: penalty is retaken No impact: goal	Impact: indirect free kick No impact: no retake
Encroachment by defending player	Impact: goal No impact: goal	Impact: penalty is retaken No impact: no retake
Encroachment by defending and attacking player	Impact: penalty is retaken No impact: goal	Impact: penalty is retaken No impact: no retake
Offence by goalkeeper	Goal	Not saved: penalty is not retaken (unless kicker is clearly impacted) Saved: penalty is retaken
Goalkeeper and kicker offend at the same time	IFK	IFK
Ball kicked backwards	IFK	IFK
'Illegal' feinting	IFK	IFK
Wrong kicker	IFK	IFK



Law 15: The Dribble-In or Pass-In

A dribble-in or pass-in is a method of restarting play. The kicker may conduct either a pass-in or dribble-in as a method of restarting play throughout the duration of the match.

A dribble-in or pass-in is awarded to the opponents of the player who last touched the ball when the whole of the ball passes the touchline, on the ground or in the air.

A goal cannot be scored directly from a dribble-in or pass-in. If the ball enters the goal without touching at least two players, play is restarted with:

- A goal kick if the ball enters the opponents' goal,
- A corner kick if the ball enters the team's goal.

Procedure

- The ball is kicked from the touchline at the point where the ball left the field of play,
- The ball must be stationary,
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves.

All opponents must stand at least three (3) metres (or three (3) yards) from the point at which the pass-in or dribble-in is taken.

Offences and Sanctions

For any offences the dribble-in/pass-in is retaken, however, an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if the kicker touches the ball a second time with their hands.

Law 16: The Goal Kick

A goal kick is a method of restarting play.

A goal kick is awarded when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, on the ground or in the air, having last touched a player of the attacking team, and a goal is not scored.

A goal may be scored directly from a goal kick, but only against the opposing team; if the ball directly enters the kicker's goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opponents.

Procedure

The ball is kicked from any point within the penalty area by a player of the defending team

The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves

- All opponents must be behind the retreat line and cannot cross the retreat line until the ball:
 - Is touched by a player of the team taking the goal kick OR,
 - Leaves the field of play OR,
 - Crosses the retreat line.

If the kicker chooses not to wait for the opposing players to retreat, and takes the goal kick quickly, the opponents are permitted to challenge for the ball without going back to the retreat line.

Offences and Sanctions

For any offences, including those listed below, the goal kick is retaken:



- Opponents cross the retreat line before they are permitted,
- Kicker touches the ball a second time with their feet.
- The goalkeeper takes the goal kick and touches the ball a second time with their hands inside of their penalty area.

An indirect free kick is awarded if the kicker touches the ball a second time with their hands, except for a goalkeeper inside their penalty area.

The indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team from the position where the second touch occurred (see Law 13 – Position of free kick)

The Retreat Line

Retreat Line on a Goal Kick

When the goalkeeper has the ball in their possession for a goal kick, the opposing team must retreat to a predetermined area of the field:

- 7v7 Format – Retreat line is 1/3rds line. (Note: It is recommended that the goalkeeper does not use a dropkick.)

Once the opposition has retreated:

- The goalkeeper may pass the ball to a teammate.
- The ball is in play once it is touched by a teammate, and the opposition may then pressure and attempt to win the ball.

If the goalkeeper chooses not to wait for the opposition to retreat and releases the ball early:

- The ball is instantly in play, and the opposition may pressure immediately.
- A teammate does not need to touch the ball first.

Opponents must remain behind the retreat line until the ball:

- Is touched by a teammate of the goalkeeper, or
- Leaves the field of play, or
- Crosses the retreat line.

Retreat Line During Active Play

When the goalkeeper gains possession of the ball during live play, they have two options:

1. Release the ball before the opposition has retreated – the ball is instantly in play, or
2. Wait for the opposition to retreat – the goalkeeper may then choose to:
 - a. Dribble the ball, or
 - b. Throw the ball to a teammate, or
 - c. Pass the ball to a teammate.

Once the ball is released after the retreat, the opposition may break the retreat line upon the second touch. The second touch is defined as follows:



- Dribble: The goalkeeper places the ball on the ground, takes one touch, then a second touch. After the second touch, the opposition may pressure.
- Throw: The goalkeeper throws the ball to a teammate. Once the teammate touches the ball, the opposition may pressure.
- Pass: The goalkeeper kicks the ball (either a drop kick or ground pass) to a teammate. Once the teammate touches the ball, the opposition may pressure.

Retreat Line Marking

Can use corner flags or two cones depending on what is available. They need to be off the field so that field players do not trip or slide on them.

Retreat Line Location – 7v7 (1/3 Field)

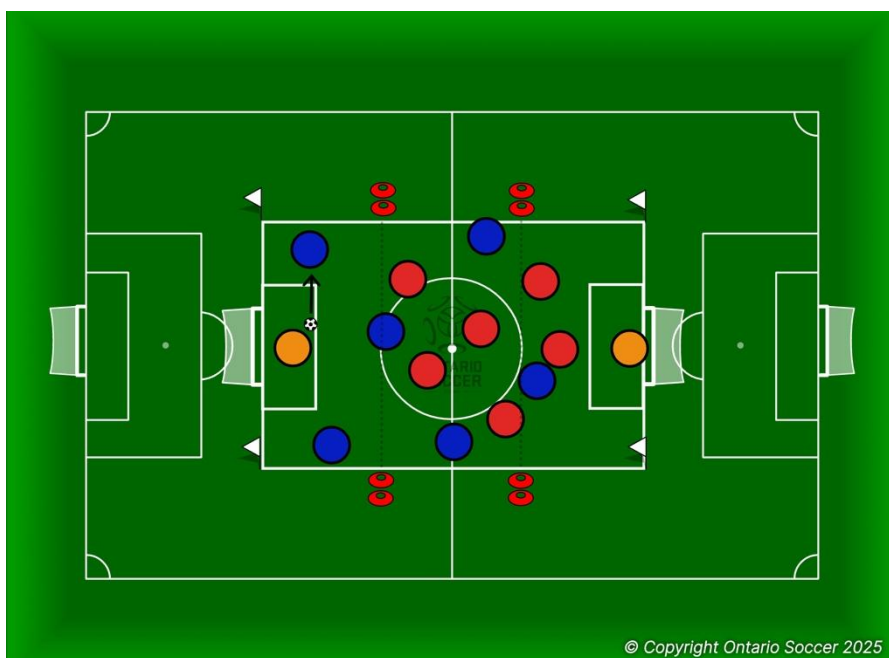


Image above: Retreat line example for the 7v7 format. In the diagram above you can see a retreat line installed using cones at halfway. The red team has retreated behind the halfway line. For more field orientation examples, please refer to the [Grassroots Field Organization Guide](#).

Law 17: The Corner Kick

A corner kick is a method of restarting play.

A corner kick is awarded when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, on the ground or in the air, having last touched a player of the defending team, and a goal is not scored.

A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick, but only against the opposing team; if the ball directly enters the kicker's goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opponents.

Procedure

- The ball must be placed within the corner area nearest to where the ball passed over the goal line,



- The corner flagpost must not be moved,
- Opponents must remain five (5) metres (or six (6) yards) from the corner area until the ball is in play,
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves; it does not need to leave the corner area.

Offences and Sanctions

For any offences, including those listed below, the corner kick is retaken:

- Opponents encroaching within five (5) metres (or six (6) yards) of the ball.
- Kicker touches the ball a second time with their feet.

An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if the kicker touches the ball a second time with their hands.

Restart & Offences Review

This chart outlines when a goal can be scored directly and what the restart is in the event that a second touch occurs with either the hands or feet.

Type	Goal Scored Direct on Opponents?	Offends w/Hands	Offends w/Feet
		Kicker Offence	Kicker Offence
Kick-Off	Yes	IFK	Retake
Kick-In/Dribble-In	No	IFK	Retake
Corner Kick	Yes	IFK	Retake
Indirect Free Kick	No	IFK	Retake
Dropped Ball	No	IFK	Retake
Goal Kick	Yes	IFK	Retake
Penalty	Yes	Varies – See Table in Law 14	

Rules at a Glance

Item	Description
Playing Format	7v7 (including GK)
Substitutions	Unlimited (at any stoppage of play)
Match Duration	2 x 25 min. halves or 4 x 12.5 min. quarters
Half Time Duration	5 minutes
Throw Ins	No (Dribble-in/pass-in) (see Law 15)
Retreat Line	Yes – 1/3 rd of Field
Offside	No
Ball Size	4



9v9 Match Format

Law 1: The Field of Play

Field Markings

Penalty Area Size: Width 32 metres and Depth 13 metres.

The diagram on the right, shows a 9v9 soccer field at maximum dimensions, 75 m x 55 m.

9v9 fields have been designed to be used by U12 and U13 players. These players are in the Learn to Train stage of development.

The field above has been delineated using lines. In the absence of lines, cones are acceptable. Flags have been put in place to show the corners of the field.

The field and goal dimensions outlined below shall be considered as desirable guidelines. Failure to conform to the recommended field and goal dimensions shall not be the subject of protest. It is understood and agreed that clubs/teams may be unable to provide the desired fields, equipment, etc. Flexibility is understood and allowed.

Dimensions

The field of play must be rectangular. The touchline must be longer than the goal line. Recommended field dimensions are as follows:

Width	Length
44 m – 55 m	65 m – 75 m

The Corner Area

The corner area is defined by a quarter circle with a radius of 1 m (1 yrd.) from each corner flag post drawn inside the field of play. Corner flags are mandatory.

The Goal Area

Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line, five and half (5.5) metres from the inside of each goal post. Those lines extend into the field of play and are joined by a line parallel with the goal line a distance of four (4) metres long. The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is the goal area.

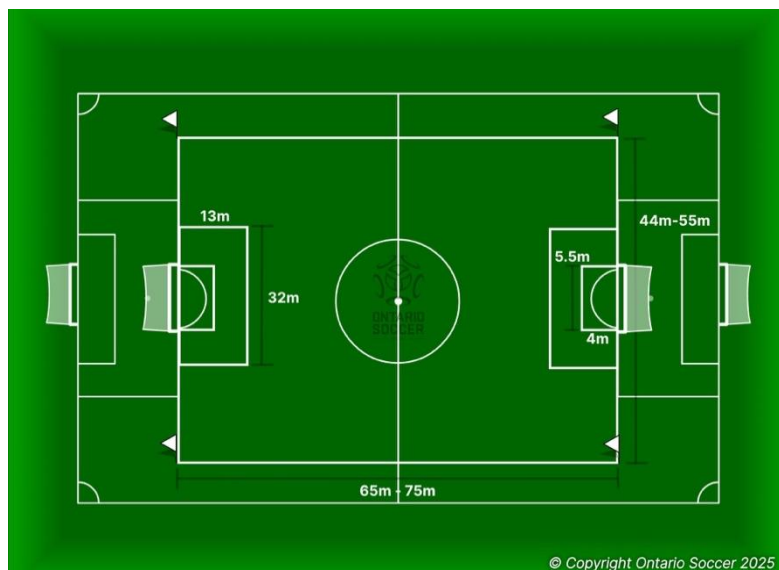


Image above: 9v9 field dimensions. For more field orientation examples, please refer to the [Grassroots Field Organization Guide](#).



The Penalty Area

Two lines are drawn at right angle of the goal line, 13 metres from the inside of each goal post. Those lines extend into the field of play and are joined by a line parallel to the goal line 32 metres long. The area bounded by these lines and the goal line. Within each penalty area, a penalty mark is made nine (9) metres (or 10 yards) from the midpoint between the goalposts and equidistant to them.

Penalty Arc

An **optional** arc of a circle with a radius of 9.15 metres (or ten (10) yards) from each penalty mark is drawn outside the penalty area.

Flagposts

A flagpost, not less than 1.5 m (5 feet) high, with a non-pointed top and, a flag must be placed in each corner.

Goals

A goal must be placed on the centre of each goal line. A goal consists of two vertical posts equidistant from the corner flagposts and joined at the top by a horizontal crossbar or two Pop Up goals equidistant from the corner flags.

The size for goals is as follows:

Width	Height
5.49m (18ft)	1.83m (6ft)

Safety: Goals (including portable goals) must be firmly secured to the ground.

Law 2: The Ball

Size

U12 size 4

U13 size 5

Requirements for size 4 balls:

Category	Size 4 Specifications	Size 5 Specifications
Weight	290-320g	410-450g
Circumference	63.5-66cm	68-70cm
Pressure	7.3lbs/sq. in – 10.2 lbs/sq. in 0.5 – 0.7 atmosphere	8.5 lbs/sq – 15.6 ls/sq in 0.6 – 1.1 atmosphere

If the ball becomes defective during the match, play is stopped until a replacement ball is found. Play is restarted by dropping the replacement ball at the place where the original ball became defective.



If the ball becomes defective at a kick-off, free kick, goal kick, corner kick or kick-in, the restart is retaken.

If the ball becomes defective during a penalty kick as it moves forward and before it touches a player, crossbar or goalposts, the penalty kick is retaken.

Law 3: The Players

The ideal and maximum number of players and roster size for a 9v9 game shall be.

Number of players on the field	Ideal Roster Size	Maximum Roster Size
9	14	18

Substitutions

Unlimited substitutions may be made throughout the game. All substitutions are only allowed at the discretion of the referee, who shall be advised of all substitutions.

The rules of the competition must state at which stoppages (e.g., goal kick, corner kick, throw-in) substitutions are allowed.

Law 4: The Players' Equipment

Players must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous to themselves or other players. Basic compulsory equipment shall consist of:

- A jersey or shirt with sleeves – pinnies are also accepted
- Shorts
- Socks
- Appropriate footwear
- Shin guards

Shin guards must:

- Be covered by the socks
- Be made of a suitable material
- Provide a reasonable degree of protection

Colours:

- The two teams must wear colours that distinguish them from each other and the referee.
- Each goalkeeper must wear colours which are distinguishable from the other players and the referee. Pinnies/bibs are recommended to save jersey switching.

Non-uniform clothing is allowed based on weather conditions, but uniforms must still distinguish teams.



A player who is asked to leave the field of play because of defective or dangerous equipment may not re-enter the field of play until the referee is satisfied that the equipment is permissible. The equipment may only be inspected during a stoppage in play.

Jewelry is not permitted and cannot be taped. Medic Alert bracelets and Medic Alert necklaces are the only exceptions, provided that they are fastened securely, so as not to bring danger to any other player. The referee should be aware of any player that is wearing one of these.

Any hair apparel must be of soft fabric; no plastic or metal items are to be worn. Sports hijabs / headscarves are permitted.

Referees have the final say on the safety of equipment.

Law 5: The Referee

The Authority of the Referee

Each match is controlled by an Ontario Soccer-accredited referee who has full authority to enforce the Adapted Match Formats and IFAB Laws of the Game. The decisions of the referee regarding facts connected with play, including whether a goal is scored and the result of the match, are final.

Powers and Duties

The referee:

- Enforces the Adapted Match Formats and IFAB Laws of the Game.
- Ensures that any ball used meets the requirements of Law 2.
- Ensures that the players' equipment meets the requirements of Law 4.
- Acts as timekeeper and keeps a record of the match.
- Stops, suspends or abandons the match, at their discretion, for any offences of the Laws.
- Stops, suspends or abandons the match because of outside interference of any kind.
- Stops the match if a player is injured and ensures that they are removed from the field of play. An injured player may only return to the field of play after the match has restarted.
- Ensures that any player bleeding from a wound leaves the field of play. The player may only return on receiving a signal from the referee, who must be satisfied that the bleeding has stopped.
- Takes action against team officials who fail to conduct themselves in a responsible manner and may, at his/her discretion, expel them from the field of play and its immediate surrounds.
- Ensures that no unauthorized persons enter the field of play.
- Indicates the restart of the match after it has been stopped.
- Provides the appropriate authorities with a match report, which includes information on any disciplinary action taken against players and/or team officials and any other incidents that occurred before, during or after the match.

Law 6: The Other Match Officials

Assistant referees are highly recommended but not required. 4th officials are not required for 9v9 games.



Law 7: The Duration of the Match

Match Duration

U12: The match shall consist of 2 x 35-minutes halves or 4 x 17.5 min quarters. The match shall not exceed 70 minutes.

U13: The match shall consist of 2 x 40-minutes halves or 4 x 20 min quarters. The match shall not exceed 80 minutes.

Half-time Interval

Must not exceed 10 minutes.

Law 8: The Start and Restart of Play

Please refer to the IFAB Laws of the Game for details regarding Law 8 The Start and Restart of Play.

Law 9: The Ball In and Out of Play

Please refer to the IFAB Laws of the Game for details regarding Law 9 The Ball in and out of Play.

Law 10: Determining the Outcome of a Match

Please refer to the IFAB Laws of the Game for details regarding Law 10 Determining the Outcome of a Match.

Law 11: Offside

Offsides are implemented in the 9v9 match format.

Please refer to the IFAB Laws of the Game for details regarding Law 11 Offside.

Law 12: Fouls & Misconduct

The referee shall attempt to explain **ALL** offences to the offending player.

Please refer to the IFAB Laws of the Games for details regarding Law 12 Fouls and Misconduct.

Disciplinary Action

9v9 Referees may use Yellow & Red Cards towards players.

As needed, the referee may Warn, Caution (YC), or Send-off (RC) a Team Official.

For all Youth Competitions, a coach must be present in Team's technical area. If there is only one coach and they are Sent off, the referee must abandon the game. In this case, the referee must submit a Special Incident Report with the game sheets & discipline reports.



Goalkeeper 8 Seconds

The IFAB Laws of the Game applies with the following adjustment for the 9v9 game:

When the goalkeeper commits this offence, the referee will blow their whistle, stop the game, and issue a warning to the goalkeeper for their first offence. Play is then restarted with a drop ball to the goalkeeper.

Should the same goalkeeper commit the offence a second time, the opposing team will be awarded a corner kick. A corner kick is awarded for all subsequent offences.

Law 13: Free Kicks

Please refer to the IFAB Laws of the Game for details regarding Law 13 Free Kicks.

Law 14: The Penalty Kick

Please refer to the IFAB Laws of the Game for details regarding Law 14 The Penalty Kick.

Law 15: The Throw-In

Please refer to the IFAB Laws of the Game for details regarding Law 15 The Throw-In.

Law 16: The Goal Kick

Please refer to the IFAB Laws of the Game for details regarding Law 16 The Goal Kick.

The Retreat Line

There is no retreat line in the 9v9 match format.

Law 17: The Corner Kick

Please refer to the IFAB Laws of the Game for details regarding Law 17 The Corner Kick.

Restart & Offences Review

This chart outlines when a goal can be scored directly and what the restart is in the event that a second touch occurs with either the hands or feet.

Type	Goal Scored Direct on Opponents?	Offends w/Hands	Offends w/Feet
		Kicker Offence	Kicker Offence
Kick-Off	Yes	DFK/Penalty	IFK
Throw-in	No	DFK/Penalty	IFK
Corner Kick	Yes	DFK/Penalty	IFK
Indirect Free Kick	No	DFK/Penalty	IFK
Dropped Ball	No	DFK/Penalty	IFK
Goal Kick	Yes	DFK/Penalty	IFK
Penalty	Yes	Varies – Review IFAB Law 14	




Rules at a Glance

Item	Description
Playing Format	9v9 (including GK)
Substitutions	Unlimited (at any stoppage of play)
Match Duration	U12-2 x 35 min. Halves or 4 x 17.5 min quarters U13-2 x 40 min. Halves or 4 x 20 min quarters
Half Time Duration	Maximum 10 minutes
Throw Ins	Throw-In
Retreat Line	No
Offside	Yes



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