

Laws of Soccer - Condensed Rules

This is an overview of the laws of soccer, intended to give parents an overview of the laws of the game.

It is NOT intended to be a complete listing of all laws.

- Rule 1 - The Field
- Rule 2 - The Ball Regulation: In youth soccer, ball size is adapted by age group (size 3 for U8, size 4 for U9-12, and size 5 for U13 and up).
- Rule 3 - Number of Players Normally 11, but may be as few as 7 including the goalkeeper. RYSL Youth Adaptations allow for a minimum of 6 players at ages U8 & under. RYSL plays under the "Fair Play" rule. For example: if a team playing 11 vs 11, only has 10 players to start - the opposing team must also play with the same number of players.
- Rule 4 - Player Equipment Shin guards, shirt, shorts, socks and shoes. Shin guards are required. Shoes may not contain metal spikes/cleats. Goalkeeper must wear a different color shirt.
- Rule 5 - Referees One per game. Controls the game. All referee decisions are final.
- Rule 7 - Duration of Game : 4-5-6-7 age groups play 2 x 16 minute halves, 8-9-10-11 age groups play 2 x 25 minute halves, and middle school age groups play 2 x 35 minute halves.
- Rule 8 - Start of Play A flip of a coin decides which team will choose which goal to attack. The team that loses the coin flip kicks off. Each team must be in its own half of the field during kickoff and defending players must be at least ten yards from ball (outside of center circle) until it is kicked. After a goal, the team scored upon kicks off. After halftime, teams change ends and the kickoff is taken by the team that did not kick off at the start of the game. A goal can be scored directly from a kickoff, i.e., kickoffs are direct kicks.
- Rule 9 - Ball In and Out of Play The ball is only out of play when: a) it has wholly crossed the goal line or touchline on the ground or in the air; b) when the game is stopped by the referee.
- Rule 10 - Method of Scoring A goal is scored when the whole ball has completely crossed the goal line between the goal posts and under the cross bar.
- Rule 11 - Offsides A player is offside when they are nearer the opponent's goal line than the ball unless: a) the player is in their own half of the field, or b) there are at least two opponents (including the goalkeeper) between them and the opposing team's goal. If a player is declared offside, the referee will award an indirect free kick (see Rule 13) to the opposing team at the point where the infraction occurred.
- Rule 12 - Fouls and Misconduct A player who intentionally attempts to, or actually: a) kicks, b) trips, c) jumps at, d) charges violently, e) charges from behind, f) strikes, g) holds, h) pushes, or i) intentionally touches the ball with

their hands or arms shall be penalized by the awarding of a direct free kick (see Rule 13) to the opposing team. Any one of these nine offenses committed in the penalty area will result in a penalty kick (see Rule 14) being awarded. Less flagrant offenses, such as offsides, dangerous play, obstruction, or unsportsmanlike conduct, will result in an indirect free kick.

- Rule 13 - Free Kicks Free kicks are awarded for violations cited in rule 12. They are classified in two categories: a) Direct Free Kicks, from which a goal can be scored directly against the offending team, and b) Indirect Free Kicks, from which the ball must touch another player other than the kicker before entering the goal. The offending team must be at least 10 yards from the ball on all free kicks.
- Rule 14 - Penalty Kicks A direct free kick is taken at the penalty mark in front of the goal. It is a one-on-one situation with the kick against the goalkeeper. Everyone else must stay outside the penalty area and at least 10 yards from the ball (the reason for the arc at the top of the penalty area) until it is kicked. The goalkeeper must remain on the goal line facing the kicker until the ball is touched, although the goalkeeper may move sideways along the goal line prior to the kick.
- Rule 15 - Throw-Ins When the ball has wholly crossed the touchline, it is put back into play at the spot it crossed by a player from the opposite team that last touched the ball. The player throws the ball over their head, with equal force from both hands. The player must have both feet touching the ground, and be on or behind the touchline. When throwing the ball in, the thrower must loft the ball in the air (not spike it). A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw-in. There is no offsides on a throw-in.
- Rule 16 - Goal Kicks When the ball has wholly crossed the goal line after last being touched by a player from the attacking team, it is put back into play by a kick from the goal area of the defending team. The attacking team must stay outside of the penalty area before the kick. The ball may not be touched by another player until it has exited the penalty area, or it will be re-kicked.
- Rule 17 - Corner Kicks When the ball has wholly crossed the goal line after last being touched by a player from the defending team, it is put back into play by a kick by the attacking team from the corner on the side that the ball went out. The ball is placed on the ground anywhere over or within the corner-arc, and the kick is taken by a member of the attacking team. The defending team must be at least 10 yards from the ball until it is kicked. There is no offsides on a corner kick.
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