**The Kick Off**  
 A kick-off is the way a soccer game is started or restarted:   
  
• at the start of a game   
• after a goal has been scored   
• at the start of the second half (or each quarter in younger ages)   
• at the start of each period of extra time, if used   
  
The ball is placed in the center of the field. All players must be in their own half of the field and the opponents of the team taking the kick-off must be at least 10 yards from the ball (outside the circle). This distance is indicated by the center circle on the field and will vary some with age. Normally the referee will blow his/her whistle to indicate they are ready for the kickoff. The ball is in play when it is kicked.

**Throw In**

A throw-in is taken when the ball crosses a sideline and leaves the field. The two basic soccer rules for a proper throw-in are to have both feet on the ground and to throw the ball with both hands over the head. To clarify, both feet must be on the ground when the ball is thrown. The player can hop, run, or do cartwheels up to the point where the ball is released but not when the ball is released. Dragging the toes of one foot is considered legal. As long as the motion is over the head and not to the side this is a completely legal throw. For teaching purposes it is common to allow players under the age of 8 to take more than one attempt.

**Corner Kick & Goal Kick**  
A corner kick or goal kick is taken when the ball leaves the field across a goal line - either end of the field with a goal.   
  
If the offensive team kicks it out, play is restarted with a goal kick. If the defensive team kicks it out, play is restarted with a corner kick.   
  
The goal kick is taken from anywhere inside the “goalie box” as it is affectionately called. It can be taken by any player, not just the goalkeeper.

The corner kick is taken from the corner nearest to where the ball left the field.

**Direct & Indirect Free Kicks**

Direct and indirect kicks are two primary ways that play is restarted after the referee stops play for an infraction. For both of these the ball must be stationary before it is kicked and the opposing players should be a minimum of 10 yards away. The 10 yard allowance is often reduced for the smaller age groups and is left up to the discretion of the referee.   
  
The simple difference between the two is this: On a direct kick you can score by kicking the ball directly into the goal.

On an indirect kick you cannot score. An indirect kick must be touched by another player before it can go into the goal – that is the kicker and a second person.

As a coach or parent on the sideline, you can tell whether the kick is direct or   
indirect by looking at the referee. For an indirect kick, the referee will hold one arm straight up in the air until the second person touches the ball. No arm up, it’s a direct kick. There are many soccer rules around what causes a direct or indirect kick. In general, a direct kick comes from a contact foul or hand ball. Everything else is indirect. Also, be aware that some youth leagues will not allow any direct kicks until after U-8.

**Scoring**

A goal is scored **when the whole ball crosses the goal line** under the crossbar and between the goal posts.

**No Hands**

No hands, unless you’re the goalie. A couple of points to clarify. First, the rule for a hand ball includes using any part of the body from the tips of the fingers to the upper arm. Shoulder are legal to use! Second, the proper way to look at this soccer rule is that a player cannot “handle” the ball. A ball that is kicked and hits a player’s hand or arm is not a hand ball. This means that the referee must use his or her own judgment to some extent in determining whether or not a hand ball is accidental contact or a purposeful attempt to gain an advantage.

There is also a situation in which the goalie cannot use his/her hands. This is sometimes called the back-pass rule. Goalkeepers cannot pick up a pass that came directly from one of their teammates. In this case, the goalkeeper must use his feet. Infraction of this soccer rule will result in an indirect kick from the point of the infraction.