

Soccer Rules and Guidelines for U8

Age Group: U8

Ball Size: 3

Number of Players on the field: 5v5 (no goalie)

Length of Game: 4- 10 minute quarters

Coaches referee the game unless a referee is assigned

LAWS OF THE GAME:

Kick off: one player will kick the ball at the center line, the opposing team must stand outside of the center circle. The ball needs to touch another player before the person who kicked it off can touch it again. Center field kick-offs are also taken after a goal is scored, by the team who was scored against. Teams switch directions at half-time, and the team that did NOT kick-off at the start of the game, gets to kick-off to start the second half.

Out of Bounds:

Side line: When the ball goes out of bounds on the sideline (the ball completely crosses the line), one player from the team that did not kick it out will do a throw-in. The ball must touch another player before the person that kicked the ball in can touch it again. The ball must be thrown in with the player standing behind the line, both feet on the ground, and both hands behind the head. You can not score directly from a throw-in. The ball needs to touch someone else before going in the goal.

End line: When the ball goes out of bounds on the end line, if the attacking team kicks it out, the defending team places the ball in the goal box around the goal and kicks it out to their team (GOAL KICK). All of the players need to stand at least 10 feet back and allow the person kicking to get it into the playing field. The ball must be touched by another player before the person who kicked it in can touch it again. If the ball is kicked out of the end line by the defending team, the attacking team kicks it in from the corner (CORNER KICK). The ball must touch another player before the person who kicked it in can touch it again.

No intentional hand balls: this results in a free kick from the opposite team at the spot where the hand ball occurred.

No intentional pushing or tripping: this results in a free kick from the opposite team at the spot where the incident occurred.

No heading the ball- to avoid concussions, heading the ball is not allowed until U14+

Any infractions are awarded with an indirect kick. The opposing team must stand at least 5 yards from the kicker. The ball must touch another player before going into the goal. There are no direct penalty kicks.

Mercy Rule: EYSC does the best they can to make evenly matched teams, however what a player's abilities are on paper don't always match their actual abilities and a team may end up much stronger or weaker than another team. In the spirit of playing for fun and not demolishing another team, we will implement the mercy rule. Whenever a team is ahead of an opponent by 5 points, the winning team will need to pull a player. Once the losing team scores a goal, the winning team will be able to send their missing player back in.

KEY POINTS AND SKILLS TO TEACH:

1. Make it FUN!!- Whether or not your players will continue to play soccer in the years to come will depend on whether it's fun. Make the games and drills fun while having fun yourself and the kids will fall in love with soccer.
2. A ball for every player- It is of utmost importance that EVERY player have a ball during practice. Also be sure to use a variety of drills and games so that the amount of time each player has with a ball is maximized, as opposed to watching, listening to instructions or standing in a line).
3. Choose good practice games- Avoid games that use "knock-out" or elimination games. This results in kids standing and watching others. The goal is to keep all the kids involved. Practice plans are available on evanstonyouthsoccer.com
4. Teach the following Concepts and Rules:
 - a. Don't use your hands. Encourage players to use feet, legs, chest but not their arms and hands.
 - b. The concept of a "field" that has lines that they must stay within.
 - c. The concept of "our goal", attacking and defending.
5. How to properly kick the ball: Focus on teaching the kids to use the inside of the foot and the instep of the foot (ie. "the laces") and not the toe.
6. Focus on dribbling and kicking and passing- the foundation of the game of soccer is to kick the ball. All kids want to do it. Focus your drills and games on having the kids dribble and kick the ball as often as possible. The more comfortable they are kicking and dribbling the ball, the more inclined they will be to enjoy the game and actively partake in it.
7. Introduce throw-ins from the sidelines- Throw-ins must be done with the player standing behind the side line. Both feet must stay on the ground (no jumping or lifting a foot) and both hands must hold the ball behind the players head and follow straight through over their head. If the player does not do it correctly, teach them and let them try again.
8. All players must wear shin guards with socks covering the shin guards. Only soft cleat soccer boots or sneakers are allowed. Check to see that each player's shoe laces are tied. Players must wear the same style uniform, including a jersey and socks, as the rest of the team.

9. Introduce Goal Kicks and Corner Kicks (as stated above)
10. Introduce basic positions (attackers and defenders)
11. Teach moving to open space and passing the ball to teammates
12. Marking an opponent on throw-ins, goal kicks, and corner kicks.
13. When the game is over, we expect a cheer for the other team and a post game handshaking. This is a fun post-game ritual for the kids and provides a chance to get any snacks ready. Coaches must be careful to ensure the handshaking is not filled with “you lost”, “we beat you” words, or spitting on the hands, which can kill the joy of the game for many players. This kind of youthful thoughtlessness can be controlled simply by the coach reminding the players what to say and why, and by accompanying them through the line. Coaches should also shake hands with each other. Take this opportunity to congratulate your team if they have done well, or provide positive feedback on errors you noticed. Players should be taught that all trash and gear is to be picked up by the team. Yes, even if it was there when the game started. We are always teaching good citizenship and stewardship to the players.