

U12 Soccer Rules and Guidelines

Age Group: U12

Ball Size: 4

Number of Players on the field: 8 V 8 (Goalie)

Length of Game: 2- 25 minute halves

EYSC referee will be provided for the game

Guidelines:

A. We will be playing 8-a-side soccer, 7 field players and a goalkeeper. Minimum number of players on the field during a game is 6.

B. Size of field is ranged 55/65 yards L x 35/45 yards W.

C. Games are scheduled in 1 hour blocks of time. So games need to start on time. Coaches must be very firm to the team parents about arriving early to warm up prior to games to prevent injury. Games are played in halves, lasting 25 minutes each, with a 5 minute half time.

D. Unlimited substitutions are allowed whenever the ball goes out of play, but with the acknowledgment of the referee. Just call out "Substitution" or "Ref, Substitutions" until you get the referee's attention and approval. All players shall play at least 50% of each game! Substitution patterns for equal time are difficult to accomplish. Make the effort to try the best you can.

E. During the game, coaches may not go on the field except out of concern for an injured player. All coaches and assistants must stay on the sidelines, near the center of the field, not within 18 yards of the end line. No player, coach, or parent shall stand behind the end lines or near the goals. Coaching shall be understood as giving directions to one's own team on points of strategy and position. The tone of voice must be informative and not a harangue. If what you want to say can't wait and can't be condensed into a few words, you should pull the player off and explain your point on the sidelines. Negative criticism or anger toward a player or the referee is always inappropriate and will not be tolerated in this league. The referees, particularly the young ones, have completed refereeing courses, and may be inexperienced in dealing with the complex responsibilities involved with refereeing. We need them to keep refereeing, and this is where they learn. Show them the proper level of respect, and deal with their errors with clarification at half time or after the game. Coaches must control their team parents and eliminate any derogatory and harassing comments toward the referee. Keep in mind that anyone who chooses to become a referee are by and large conscientious and responsible people who are doing their best.

U-12 Game Rules:

1. 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 numbered jersey and socks, as the rest of the team, except the goalkeeper, who must wear colors significantly different from both teams.
2. The game begins with a kick-off from center field. The choice of ends or kick-off shall be decided by the toss of a coin. The kicking team must start with all its players on its half of the field. The opponents must start with all its players on its half of the field. All free kicks, including the kick-off, required the opponents to be 10 yards (10 big steps) away from the ball. 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.
3. Throw-ins will be taken whenever the ball is played "out of touch" across the sidelines. The ball is out when the whole ball is past the whole "line", it doesn't matter where the players feet are or if the ball is on the ground or in the air. Throw-ins shall be taken by the team who did NOT put the ball out of touch. The player must throw the ball from behind their head, with two hands giving equal effort, and with both feet on the ground, on or outside the touch line. A foul throw-in will result in the opponents receiving a throw-in. A goal can never be scored directly from a throw-in.
4. Goal kicks are taken when an attacking team kicks the ball past the end line, missing the goal. The goal kick is taken by the defending team, from a point within the goal box. The ball is placed on the ground, like any other free kick. The kicking team's players may be anywhere on the field during a goal kick, but the other team must be outside the penalty box. The ball must roll past the penalty box before another player can touch the ball.
5. Goalkeepers may use their hands anywhere inside the penalty area, extending 18 yards out from the end line. It is NOT legal for goalkeepers to use their hands on balls played back to them by their teammates' feet. A ball that is not a pass from the foot may be handled by the keeper. A keeper who uses their hands outside the penalty area will be called for a foul, with the other team awarded a free kick from the spot of the foul. When a keeper has touched the ball, and has at least one hand on it, no player may come near the keeper. There is no reason for aggressive attacking play near the goalkeeper in U-12 rec soccer. The goal keeper may run anywhere in the penalty box with the ball, and either throw or roll the ball into play. Opposing players must be 5 yards away when the goal keeper "distributes" the ball.
6. Corner kicks shall be awarded the attacking team when the defending team kicks the ball over their own end line. The corner kick must be taken within 1 yard from the corner cone marker. Defenders must be 10 yards back from the corner kick. There are no offsides on the direct kick from the corner.

7. Direct free kicks result from flagrant fouls and misconduct. Flagrant fouls are when a player kicks, curses, trips, jumps at, charges violently, charges from behind, strikes, spits at, holds or pushes an opponent (including the goalkeeper), or intentionally handles the ball with hands, forearms, or upper arms. Defenders must be 10 yards back from the free kick. A goal can be scored directly off the free kick, hence its name.

8. Less flagrant fouls result in "indirect" free kicks, where a goal can NOT be made directly from the kick, but must touch another player, from either team, before crossing the goal line between the uprights and below the crossbar. Dangerous play, conduct obstruction, and unsportsmanlike conduct are penalized by an indirect free kick for the opponents. When a player is down on the ground, attempting to play the ball they are making a dangerous play. Play shall be stopped immediately, prior to any contact if possible, and the other team awarded a free kick. The ball doesn't go in the air very often, but it can be dangerous for players to lift their feet high in the air. High kicking will be considered dangerous play, whether an opposing player is kicked or not.

9. Head balls are NOT allowed in U-12 rec soccer.

10. Offsides will be called in U-12 soccer. A player is in an offside position when they are nearer to the opponents goal line than the ball, unless (a) are their own half of the field, or (b) they are not nearer to the opponents goal line than at least 2 of the opponent players, where one can be the goalkeeper. The player shall only be penalized for being in an offside position, if, at the moment the ball is played by a team member, they are, in the opinion of the referee, (1) interfering with the play of with an opponent, or (b) seeking to gain an advantage by being in that offside position. A player shall not be declared offside for simply being in an inconsequential offside position, or if receiving a ball direct from a goal kick, a corner kick, or a throw-in. At the referee's discretion, offsides will be called, and the opposing team will be awarded a free kick from the point of the offside position infraction.

11. A goal is scored when the whole ball goes over the whole goal line, between the goal posts and under the cross bar, provided it has not been thrown, carried or intentionally propelled by hand or arm of the attacking player.

12. All rule infractions shall be briefly explained to the offending player by the referee.

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 and the referee. 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.

14. 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.

Skills to focus on:

-Teaching goal keeper and off sides rules

-How to spread out, pass to each other

-Cross the ball across the field and receive the ball across your body

-Keeping head up for awareness. Players should always be scanning the field while carrying the ball while glancing down at the ball through the bottom of your eyes. Players must be aware of opponents, teammates, and space.

-Ability to hold the ball close. Players should be able to keep close control of the ball in order to quickly change directions, move the ball away from a defender. Balance. It is important for the dribbler to have a low center of gravity with knees bent and chest and head over the ball. This will help players start, stop, accelerate and change direction.

-Change of pace and direction. The player should be able to cut and turn the ball quickly to avoid tackles or to exploit space.

-Feints and moves. Players must be able to sell a move with body movements in order to throw the opponent off balance while moving the ball in an attacking position.