

OFFICIAL YOUTH AND TEEN SOCCER LEAGUE RULEBOOK

League Contact Information:

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Sports

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Sports Department Disclaimer:

Any rule not included in this book, but that is passed on to all teams either through email or from meetings between team representatives and league officials will also be followed and is understood that these amendments are for the benefit of the league, the participants, and the league officials.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Soccer Rule Book is simply to help players and spectators become familiar with the rules of soccer and enjoy the game.

The YMCA is dedicated to providing the community the opportunity to participate in team sports while having fun and in a family atmosphere. Our programs are based on keeping winning in perspective but with fair play and good sportsmanship. Our goal is to provide a fun and safe environment for our community.

YOUTH SPORTS GOALS

- To teach the YMCA core values of Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility.
- To teach social skills that will enable each player to effectively communicate with others.
- To take each child and build his/her self-esteem.
- To teach fundamental athletic skills.
- To develop a sense of responsibility and decision making in each player.
- To allow players the opportunity to enhance their leadership skills.
- To help each player develop a sense of teamwork.
- To have a healthy, safe environment to participate in.
- To create a fun experience for all!!!
- To encourage good sportsmanship.
- Everybody plays, everybody wins.

OUR YMCA CORE VALUES

Caring

“A choice to care without conditions or limitations.” Listen and treat all players equally.

Honesty

“Truthfulness and genuineness with yourself and others.” Make the right call, even when the cost is high.

Respect

“Honor toward others; humility.” Treat players, opponents, officials, and parents as you would wish to be treated. Put-downs, name-calling, and yelling set a bad example.

Responsibility

“Trustworthiness; the ability to be depended on.” Know the important principles of sport. Strive to improve your own performance as a player, coach, official, or spectator.

PHILOSOPHIES

The Seven Pillars

Everyone plays.

We do not use tryouts to select the best players, nor do we cut kids from YMCA Youth Sports. Everyone who registers is assigned to a team. During the season everyone receives equal practice time and plays at least half of every game.

Safety First.

Although kids may get hurt playing sports, we do all we can to prevent injuries. We've modified each sport to make it safer and more enjoyable to play. Staff and coaches make sure equipment and facilities are safe, and they teach the sport as we've prescribed so that the skills taught are appropriate for athletes' developmental levels. And coaches constantly supervise their players and stop any unsafe activities.

Fair Play.

Fair play is about playing by the rules – and more. It's about coaches and players showing respect for all those involved in YMCA Youth Sports. It's about coaches being role models of good sporting behavior and guiding their players to do the same.

Positive Competition

We believe competition is a positive process when the pursuit of victory is kept in the right perspective. The right perspective is when adults make decisions that put the best interests of the players before winning the contest. Learning to compete is important for youngsters and learning to cooperate in a competitive world is an essential lesson of life. Through YMCA Youth Sports we want to help kids learn these lessons.

Family Involvement.

YMCA Youth Sports encourages parents to be involved appropriately in their child's sports programs. In addition to parents being helpful as volunteer coaches, officials, and timekeepers, we encourage them to be at practices and games to support their child's participation.

Sports for All.

YMCA Youth Sports is an "inclusive" sports program. We offer programs to all youngsters regardless of their race, gender, religious creed, or ability. We ask our adult leaders to encourage and appreciate the diversity of children in our society and to encourage the kids and their parents to do the same.

Sports for Fun.

Sports are naturally fun for most kids. Sometimes when adults become involved in children's sporting activities they over-organize and dominate the activities to the point that it destroys kids' enjoyment. If we take the fun out of sports for young athletes, we are in danger losing the young athletes.

SOCER ARENA/FIELD POLICIES

- Metal spike/stud cleats are not allowed on the playing field
- Only players, coaches and officials are allowed on the playing field
- No foul language.
- Close-toe shoes and shirts are required at all times.
- Snacks and beverages other than water must be consumed before entering the arena/field.
- Please review the open field schedule for days and times of court availability.
- Violence and/or implied threats of any kind are strictly prohibited and may result in a suspension of your participation and/or cancellation of your YMCA membership.
- All players must abide by the YMCA Code of Conduct.
- Teams are required to clean up their area/benches after their game.

LEAGUE FORMAT

- Leagues usually run with 6 guaranteed games. Formats for a league may be changed from season to season, depending on the number of teams in a league.
- **Suspended Games:**
 - Any game which is suspended at or after half time is final.
 - A game suspended before the first half's end due to a rainout or blackout will be rescheduled.
- Shin guards are required for all players, cleats are optional.
- Award: All players will receive an end-of-season award.

LEAGUE DIVISIONS

- Boys/Girls - 7U/8U
- Boys/Girls - 9U/10U
- Boys/Girls - 11U/12U
- Boys/Girls - 13U/14U
- Boys/Girls - 15U/16U
- Will be following NEW U.S Soccer age divisions for 2026.

PLAYING RULES

BALL SIZE:

- The YMCA will furnish soccer balls for league games and warmups.
 - Size 4, Divisions 10U & Below
 - Size 5, Divisions 11U & Above

FIELD GOAL SIZE

- Arena Soccer
 - All Divisions: Goal size 6 ½ ft x 12ft.

PLAYERS / SUBSTITUTIONS

- **Arena Soccer**
 - Each team will consist of 5 players and a goalkeeper (5 players +1 goalie) and no less than 5 players to the start of play.
 - A minimum of 5 players (4 players + 1 goalie) are allowed to start the game.
 - It is the role of the coach to help ensure that every child plays and has a positive experience.
- **Field Soccer**
 - Each team will consist of 6 players and a goalkeeper (6 players +1 goalie) and no less than 6 players to the start of play.
 - A minimum of 6 players (5 players + 1 goalie) are allowed to start the game.
 - It is the role of the coach to help ensure that every child plays and has a positive experience.

GAME LENGTH

- All Divisions: Play two 20-minute running halves.
 - Subbing of players is made “**on the fly**”
 - If the goalkeeper is replaced by another keeper, the change may be made on the fly but the referee must be properly informed prior to the switch.
 - Two minutes between halves (if time permits).

START OF GAME (KICK-OFF)

- The referee must blow the whistle to start play from the center spot (kick-off).
- The ball can be played in any direction on a kick-off.
- Defenders must stay outside the circle and behind the half-field line until the ball has been struck.
- After each goal, the game is restarted with a kickoff by the team just scored upon, except when a goal is scored at the end of the half.
- The teams change defensive goals after the first half.

BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY

- **Arena Soccer**
 - The ball is considered out of play when it touches any of the netting around the perimeter of the arenas.

- A restart of play will be either a goal kick, corner kick, or a spot kick along the wall.
- A signal by whistle is not required, unless it is a corner kick or indicated by the referee.
- The ball must be stationary on every kick and no more than 3 feet from the wall, on the corner spot, or within the goal area as directed by the referee.
- The defending team shall stand at least 10 feet away from the ball on all free kicks – we allow the ref to walk it out if the player isn't backing up to 10 ft.
- Any intentional delay of the game will result in a warning by the referee.
- **The ball is still in play:**
 - When it rebounds from the goalpost or crossbar.
 - When it rebounds off a referee on the field.
 - In the event of a supposed violation, until stoppage is ordered by the referee.
- **Field Soccer**
 - The ball is out of play when it crosses the goal line, sideline, and when the game is stopped by the referee's whistle. A ball out of play is restarted with a kickoff, free kick, or a goal kick.
 - The ball is out of bounds when it goes over the perimeter lines of the field. The restart will be taken at the point where it crosses the perimeter line with a throw in, corner kick or goal kick.

GOALKEEPER

- Goalies may slide within the goal keeper's box area
- After a save, the goalkeeper may take as many steps as he/she likes before releasing the ball inside the crease. However, the keeper must release the ball within 5 seconds, failure to do so will result in a change of possession, and a free kick will be awarded at the top of the goalkeeper's area.
- All games conclude with a handshake, expressing good sportsmanship.

VIOLATIONS

- **Pass-Back Rule is in Effect**
 - If a player intentionally passes the ball to his/her own goalkeeper or plays the ball with his/her feet and then leaves the penalty area, the goalkeeper is NOT allowed to play the ball with his/her hands.
 - If the goalkeeper dribbles the ball into his/her own penalty area, he/she may NOT play the ball with his/her hands.
 - This is a pass back violation, NOT a penalty kick situation.
 - Any violations of this rule will result in a direct free kick for the opposing team from the top edge of the penalty area.
- **Slide Tackling**
 - **NO** sliding of any kind is allowed – the goalkeeper may slide with in the crease
 - You **CANNOT** play the ball while you are on the ground
- **Headers**
 - Heading is **NOT** allowed for all players in Divisions: 7U, 8U, 9U & 10U.
 - Players in divisions 11U & above are allowed to use headers.
- **Three Lines -Arena Soccer**

When the ball passes over three mid-field lines in the air without touching a player of either team, the play will be restarted with a direct kick from the middle of the first white line passed.

FOULS AND PENALTIES

- A player who commits any of the following offenses shall be penalized by the referee awarding a direct free kick to be taken by the opposing team from the point of infraction:
 - Sliding, tripping, charging, pushing, playing the ball while on the ground and holding are not allowed.
 - Dangerous Play: Playing in such a manner as to be out of control. Kicks where both feet leave the floor at an inappropriate height will not be allowed; this includes bicycle kicks.
 - Hand Ball: Intentionally plays the ball with the hand and gains control or an advantage from the handball. The goalkeeper may not pick up the ball with their hands outside of the box.
- If a team or player commits a foul or infraction repeatedly, or if the foul is deemed to be a serious threat to overall safety, a player will be sent off the field for 2 minutes by the ref.
- **Fighting, spitting, and foul language is an automatic ejection from the game with a possible season suspension.**
- **Teen Division**
 - **Time Penalties** are given as either a yellow card, or red card. Yellow cards are given to warn players against certain offenses like unsportsmanlike conduct, persistent fouling or breaking the rules of fair play, intentionally kicking, or tripping another player, lack of respect, showing dissent by word or action, like arguing with the referee's decision. If player receives 2 yellow cards, that results to an automatic red card and the player is sent off the field and cannot play the rest of the game. A red card is given if a player commits a serious infraction such as intentionally committing violent acts against another player on the field, using offensive, insulting, or abusive language or gestures, committing serious fouls or violent conduct, spitting on a player, coach, referee, or spectator. **Bookings are given by the referee's discretion.**
 - Blue Card: A blue card results in a two-minute penalty. In the event that a goal is scored, the time penalty is over. The referee has the discretion to award a two-minute penalty for any foul.
 - Yellow Card: A yellow card results in a four-minute penalty. In the event that a goal is scored, the time penalty is over. Yellow cards are issued for the following reasons: Receiving a second blue card. Persisting in dissent.
 - Red Card: A red card results in the ejection of the penalized player and a five-minute penalty. The ejected player will miss the rest of that game and the next game. The entire five minutes will be served, even if a goal is scored.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

As a parent or guardian of our leagues we want you to know we appreciate your help and leadership. We suggest you get involved on your child's team to make the experience more enjoyable for them. Whether it is snack, water, fruit, or high fives the kids DO appreciate you being there!

ALL parents must be on site with their children as part of our YMCA policy. Please do not leave your child here at the YMCA too early before their scheduled game or leave them here too late after they have played. We appreciate your help in this matter.

FACILITATORS

- The facilitators oversee the game and their decisions are **FINAL**.
- Please cooperate with the Sports staff in creating and maintaining an environment in which each participant may have fun, learn the game and be a good sport.
- The facilitators may occasionally stop play for instructional purposes when necessary and will subjectively make allowances (as discussed and set up by each league) based on ability, for violations.
- **We encourage parents and coaches to focus on the children and not facilitators.**

SPECTATOR & PLAYER CODE OF CONDUCT

As a spectator, we hope to provide a fun and rewarding experience for you and your child. In order to achieve our goal we ask that you adhere to the following criteria:

1. Applaud good plays by your own team AND the opposing team.
2. Never ridicule or scold a child for making a mistake during a game.
3. Encourage players to always play according to the rules.
4. HAVE FUN! Make it enjoyable for you and your child.
5. **Only players and coaches are allowed in the bench/team area.** If you have a comment for the volunteer coach or referee please wait until after the game is over to speak with the coach. If the coach feels you are being unreasonable then they may direct you and your complaint to the Youth Sports Director