



8U Rules of the Game

Ball:

Size 3. Home team provides game ball.

Number of Players:

There are 4 players on the field. No goalies.

Length of game:

The game shall consist of (4) 10-minute quarters. There will be a 1-minute water break between quarters and a 3-minute break at half time.

Equipment:

Shin guards are **MANDATORY**. Socks must be worn completely over the shin guards. Jerseys should be tucked in. Tennis shoes or soccer cleats should be worn. No baseball or football cleats are permitted. They have a toe cleat that soccer cleats do not have. **NO jewelry or metal** hair clips are permitted (yes this means earrings). Band-aids over earrings is **NOT** acceptable.

Field:

The field size is 25 x 35 yards with small goals. The goals are centered on the goal lines or end lines. The sidelines are often referred to as touch lines.

Sidelines:

All players, coaches and water bottles shall always remain at least 6 feet from the sidelines during the game. There is also a spectator area that spectators must stay within when watching the game. No spectators will be permitted along the goal lines, near the corners or behind the goals.

Coaches:

No coaches are allowed on the playing field. This is not American Football. Only reason for a coach to step on the field is if there is a player injury; however, the coach needs to wait for the referee to wave him/her onto the field.

Referees:

One referee will be assigned to each field. The referees will check each player's equipment as well as coaches for their RMC lanyard. The referees are the sole authority on the field and their decisions are **FINAL**.

Substitution:

The coach must request permission from the referee prior to making a substitution. A team can substitute only – 1) At the beginning of a quarter or half. 2) After either team scores. 3) Before either team's goal kick. 4) Your own pass-in. 5) For an injured player.

You cannot sub on a corner kick!

Kick-off:

Occurs to start the game and after half-time. Quarters 2 and 4 will restart with whatever dead ball situation the referee called time on. Kick is taken from the center of the field and can move in any direction. The kicker may **NOT** touch the ball again until it has touched another player. If they do, and an indirect free kick will be awarded to the opposing team. A goal **CANNOT** be scored directly from a kick-off. Defenders must remain 5 yards back until the ball is played. Players must be on their own side of the field during kick-offs, except for the player kicking off. Coin toss will decide who takes the kick-off to start the game, and the opposing team takes kick-off after half-time.

Pass-ins:

8U is **NOT** doing throw-ins. We are trying to build the skill of passing in this age division. Pass-ins are awarded at the point that the **WHOLE** ball crosses the sideline. The ball is placed on the sideline and the player passes into a teammate from the outside. Opposing players must remain 5 yards away from the spot of the ball. A goal cannot be scored directly from a pass-in unless any player (same or opposite team) touches the ball before it enters the goal.

Goal Kick:

A goal kick is awarded when the ball crosses the goal line and was touched last by the opposing team. A goal kick can also be awarded for Goal Arc Rule violations (see Goal Arc Rule). The kick is taken anywhere on the goal arc. The kicker may **NOT** touch the ball again until it has touched another player first. If they do, an indirect free kick will be awarded to the opposing team. Defenders must be on their side of the field until the ball has been played. A goal **CANNOT** be scored directly from a goal kick.



Out of Bounds:

The ball is out of play when it **COMPLETELY** crossed the goal line or sideline – whether it is on the ground or in the air. The team gaining possession is responsible for getting the ball.

Corner Kick:

A corner kick is awarded when the ball has crossed the goal line and was last touched by a defensive player. A kick is taken from the corner on the side nearest to where the ball went out. The kicker may not touch the ball again unless the ball has touched another player. If they do an indirect free kick will be awarded to the opposing team.

Offside:

There are no offside calls in this age.

Direct Free Kick:

The only direct free kick awarded in this division is a Penalty Kick. The Penalty Kick is awarded for a Goal Arc Rule violation. See Goal Arc Rule for details. All other violations are awarded an indirect free kick. Direct Kicks means that you can score directly from that kick without the need for another player to touch it.

Indirect Free Kick:

All dead ball situations, i.e. kick-off, pass-in, goal kick, fouls etc. are considered indirect free kicks and a goal cannot be scored from them. Indirect Kick means that you **CANNOT** score from that kick unless another player touches it first. The only dead ball that you can score on is a Penalty Kick, which is considered a Direct Kick.

Sidelines:

All players, coaches and water bottles shall always remain at least 6 feet from the sidelines during the game. There is also a spectator area that spectators must stay within when watching the game. No spectators will be permitted along the goal lines, near the corners or behind the goals.

Coaches:

No coaches are allowed on the playing field. This is not American Football. Only reason for a coach to step on the

Fouls:

1. **DELIBERATE** hand ball. A ball hitting a hand is not always a hand ball.
2. Deliberate tripping.
3. Pushing with hands or holding shirt of an opponent.
4. Striking another player.
5. Spitting or making contact with an opponent without the ball.
6. Dangerous play (high kick)
7. Preventing a pass-in (standing within 5 yards of the ball).
8. Obstruction (blocking access to the ball while not actively playing the ball).
9. Dead ball violations (i.e. same player touching the ball after goal kick)

Penalty Kick:

Awarded for a Goal Arc violation by the defensive team. All players except the kicker must back up the midfield line. There are **NO** goalies for penalty kicks in this age group. Players cannot move until the ball is kicked. The penalty kick is taken from 8 yard in front of the goal, which is marked by the penalty spot. The kicker is not permitted to touch the ball a second time until another player has touched the ball.

Goal Arc Rule:

Players cannot touch the ball inside the goal arc. A ball is considered inside the goal arc after it has **COMPLETELY** crossed the goal arc line. If any of the ball is still touching the goal arc it is considered fair. The ball can be passed through the arc, and a player can run through the arc, but both ball and player **CANNOT** touch inside the arc. A defensive player can also **NOT** just stand in the goal arc to impede/make a shot more difficult. Standing in the goal arc will be awarded a penalty kick even if the player did not touch the ball. Goal arc violations result in the following:

1. Defensive player touches the ball inside the goal arc → Opposing team awarded a penalty kick.
2. Offensive player touches the ball inside the goal arc → Goal kick is awarded to the defensive team.
3. Dead ball inside the goal arc → Goal kick awarded to the defensive team.

**Defensive Line:**

Discourage defender withdrawn from the game waiting in the back in front of the goal arc. This does nothing to develop this player. They do not learn to dribble the ball, which is the most fundamental skill needed to play the game. When they move up in age, the goal is much bigger, and it is harder to just stand there and cover an 18 – 24 ft wide goal. Imposed that all players must play in front of an imaginary line. The line should be traced halfway between the top of the goal arc and the midfield line (the defensive 1/3). Players can play in this deeper zone (defensive 1/3) only when actively playing the ball but cannot stay in that zone if the ball is away in the opposite side of the field.

Slide tackling:

No slide tackling is allowed at this age group. It will result in an indirect free kick awarded to the opposing team if it is done.

Playing time:

Each player must play at least 50% of the total playing time. This is a NTSSA rule for Recreational Soccer.

Sportmanship:

Coaches are responsible for the conduct of their assistant coaches, players, and parents/spectators at all times. No coach, player or spectator shall yell at the referee, opposing coach, player, or fans. No coaches or fans shall run up and down the sidelines during the game. The coach shall have all players ready to be equipment checked by the referee before the scheduled game time. The coach shall also ensure that all players not in the game are sitting down on the bench and **NOT** encroaching or running down the sideline or playing around. After the game is finished, players and coaches will line up and shake hands with the opposing team and referees.

The final score is never recorded, and no league standings are kept for this age group. The emphasis is on learning the game and having FUN, not winning and losing.