



YOUTH TEAM



EWYFC Guidance for Volunteer Referees

Dear Parent/Carer,

Many thanks for stepping up and assisting with officiating our matches. The role of the referee is essential in football - but even more so in grassroots. Your key role here is not about enforcing a book of rules; it's about helping the children to better understand them and how they can benefit the game for all involved. You should be prepared to explain your decisions in terms they understand and suggest solutions to prevent further rule breaking. You should be fair but flexible; allowing the game to flow when it can. A level of patience is also required: remember the children are still learning and can also get carried away. The guidance that follows is designed to assist you in the rules of mini-soccer but remember: everyone at the club is learning about their roles so don't be shy when it comes to asking for help. Good luck and thank you again!

The Committee of Eton Wick Youth FC



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Before the Game

What will I need?

- You will need to have signed the Club Code of Conduct for Officials.
- You don't need to wear a referee's kit;
- A whistle is advisable. It helps the players learn to associate it's sound with a decision; also it will help them to distinguish training from matches and (otherwise a loud voice tends to work just as well).
- You will need to be able to time the match and to allow additional time for stoppages. **TIP: consider asking another parent to double up as a time-keeper to help you keep track.**
- A coin for the toss where captain's decide kick off and which half to play in. **TIP: a coin toss is more match realistic but a quick game of rock paper scissors will do the job equally well.**

What will I be provided?

- Before the game, each manager should give you a paper copy of their team sheet containing the players and their numbers. However, in practice this rarely happens and it is not something the league seems to bother about. The idea is that you would need to this to make a note should you wish to caution and/or send off a player. Again, this should be a very rare occurrence in U8/U9 football.
- The managers will also tell you how long the match will last and whether it will be played in halves or quarters (see more on that below).
- It is a mandatory requirement to pay the referee a fee (£6 per team at U8 and £10 per team at U9). Team managers may arrange this between themselves but in all other circumstances you will be handed the fee by the opposition. We encourage our volunteers to return this money to the Club.
- You may be offered a cup of tea at half-time but please don't bank on it!
- **TIP: referees are not there to mediate in any team disputes about player eligibility (again, should be a very rare occurrence in U8/U9 football). Your job is to referee the match only.**

What is the pre-kick off routine?

- Check with team managers that their players know the rules around pass backs to the goalie (see below). If teams jointly insist on not playing this rule then go with it.
- Some team may wish to line up for the 'Respect' handshake pre-match. If so, please help coordinate.
- Coin toss (see above).
- Check everyone is ready (do both teams have everyone on the pitch? Are the goalkeepers ready).

After the Game

What happens after the match?

- Please help to ensure all the players shake hands.



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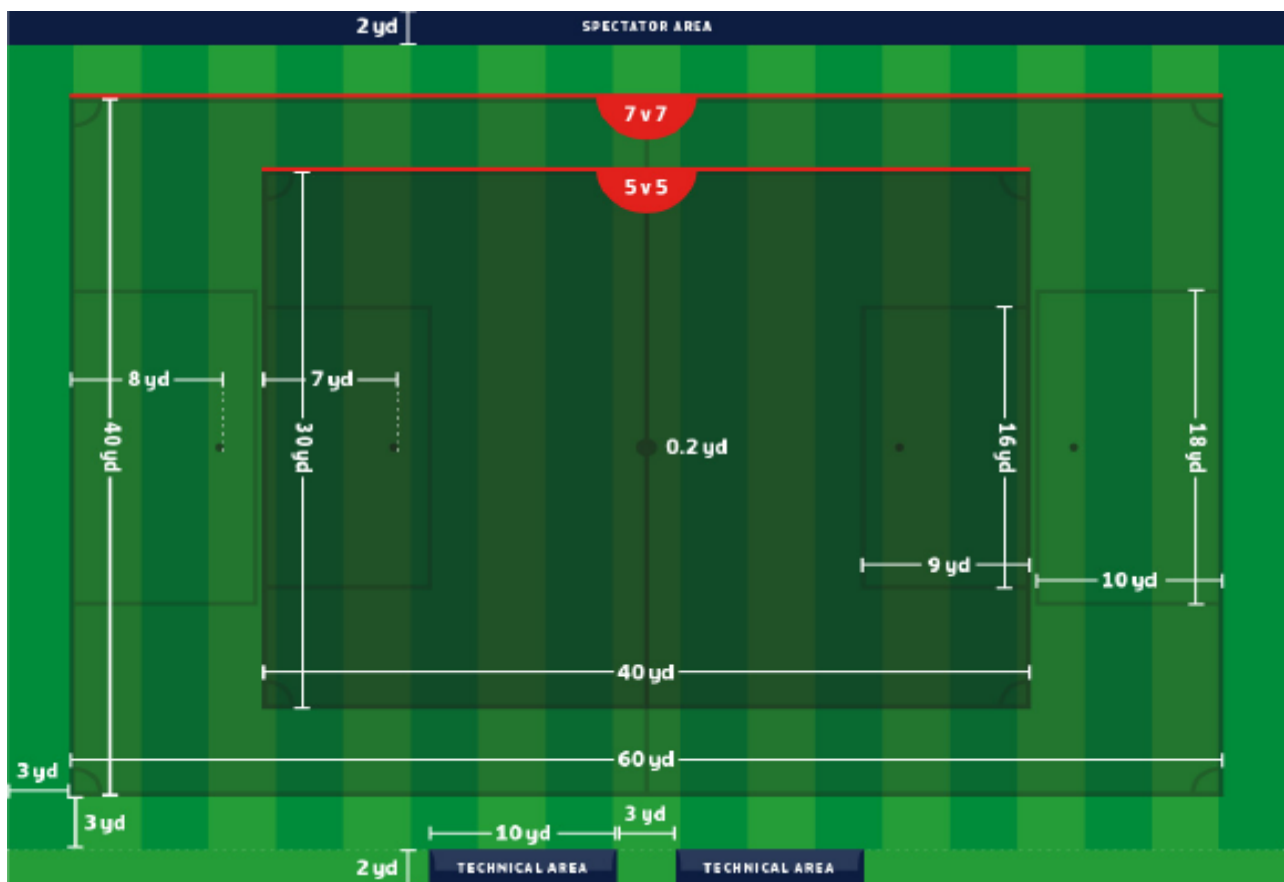
- If you got a team sheet, you can hand the team sheets back to the managers. If you keep them, please dispose of securely.
- Team managers are required to 'score' the referee's performance for their report back to the league. This does not really impact on what you do at this level so don't worry about it!

I'm really into refereeing, where can I learn more?

- The FA has published its rules (which this guidance has reproduced) but also offers free online training. Search 'FA Referee Course' for more details.

The Laws of Mini-Soccer

The Pitch



- Mini-soccer is played on a 30 x 40 yard pitch at U8 and 60 x 40 at U9.
- The halfway line is also called the 'retreat line' because when it is a goal kick, the other team must 'retreat' back to their own half (covered later).



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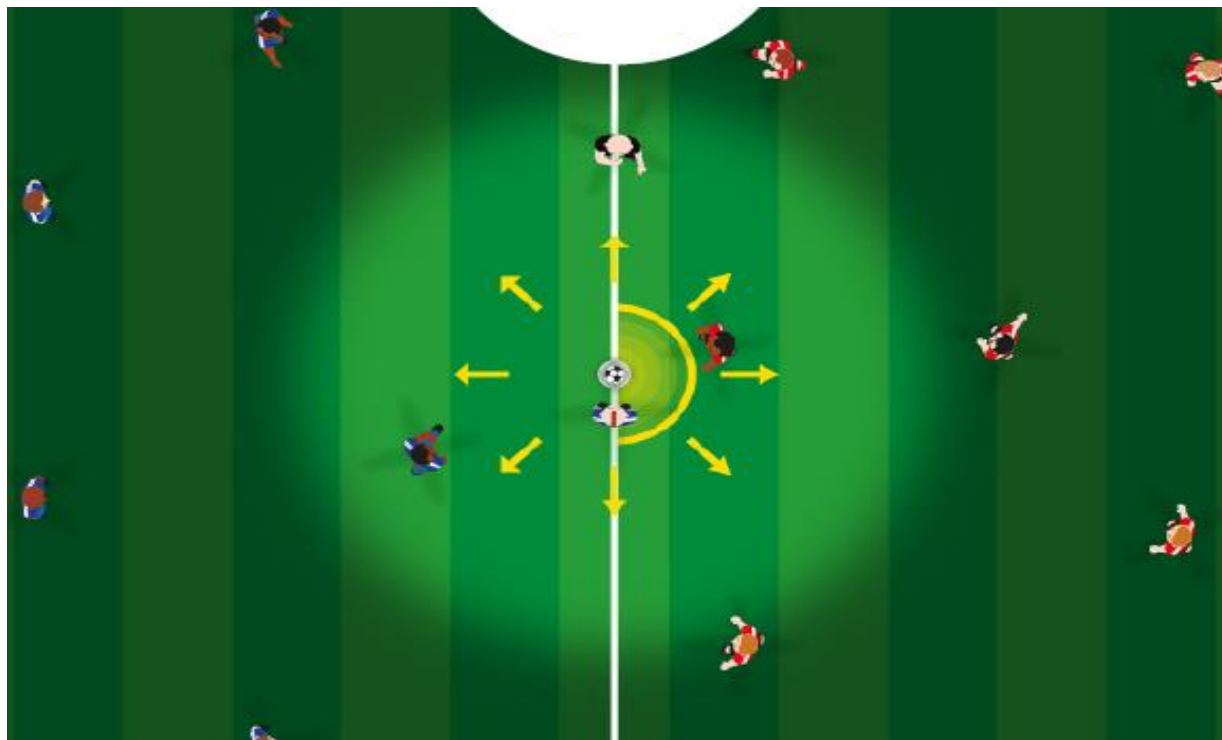
The Players

- Teams: U8 will be 5-a-side unless agreed by the managers of each team. Playing 4-a-side is also allowed (or even 3). Games can also be played as a 5 v 4. The exception is 'power play' (see 'power play' section below). At U9 it is 7-a-side.
- Substitutions: unlimited changes. Players can come on, go off and come on again (when the ball is not in play). **TIP: the manager must seek permission from the referee for these changes. Try to make sure they do!**
- Kit: all players must wear shin pads. **TIP: managers should check but if you spot it flag it up to the manager and ask them to replace the player (if possible) until shin pads are obtained.**
- Goalkeepers should wear a different colour top (bib is acceptable). **TIP: there are no dedicated goalkeepers and the players will rotate roles so allow them time to make the change from outfield to goalkeeper and vice versa during a break in play.**

Duration of the Game

At U8, games last 40 mins; and at U9 it is 50 mins. U8 games are played in quarters. U9 games are supposed to be played in halves. Halftime should be no more than 5 mins. **TIP: have a reliable watch and/or seek help from a parent to act as a timekeeper. Remember to add a little time for stoppages.**

Start and Restart of Play



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- After the coin toss, kick off is from the centre spot; play restarts here after a goal.
- The ball can be kicked in any direction BUT YOU CANNOT SCORE DIRECT FROM A KICK OFF!
- The opposition must be 5 yards back in their own half.
- A 'drop ball' is used to restart play in other circumstances, e.g. after an injury. BUT YOU CANNOT SCORE DIRECT FROM A DROP BALL!
- If a drop ball is made in the penalty area it should be moved to the penalty box line nearest the incident.

Ball In and Out of Play

- The ball must be completely over the line for a: (1) goal; (2) goal kick; (3) corner and (4) thrown in.

Offside

- There is no offside in mini-soccer. Players can stand where they like.

Fouls and Misconduct

- Free kicks are awarded for standard fouls as per older age football.
- All free kicks are direct.
- Goalkeeping fouls: similar to older age football:
 1. the goalkeeper touches the ball with his/her hands from a pass back, or;
 2. handles from a throw in from a teammate, or;
 3. the goalkeeper picks up the ball, drops it to kick it but then picks it up again, or;
 4. the 6 second rule applies.
- If any of these happens, the free kick should be taken on the penalty box line closest to where the incident happened. **TIP: in practice, points 3 and 4 are not enforced so be relaxed here. Do confirm pre-match that managers know the rules around points 1 and 2.**
- Opponents must be 5 yards back (see below and note penalty box line).



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Penalties

- Awarded for fouls in the box. All players except the goalkeeper and taker must leave the box.

Throw ins

- As per older age football. **TIP: referees should be lenient and help players who are struggling with the technique by allowing them another go or two, even bowling underarm if needed.**

Goal Kicks

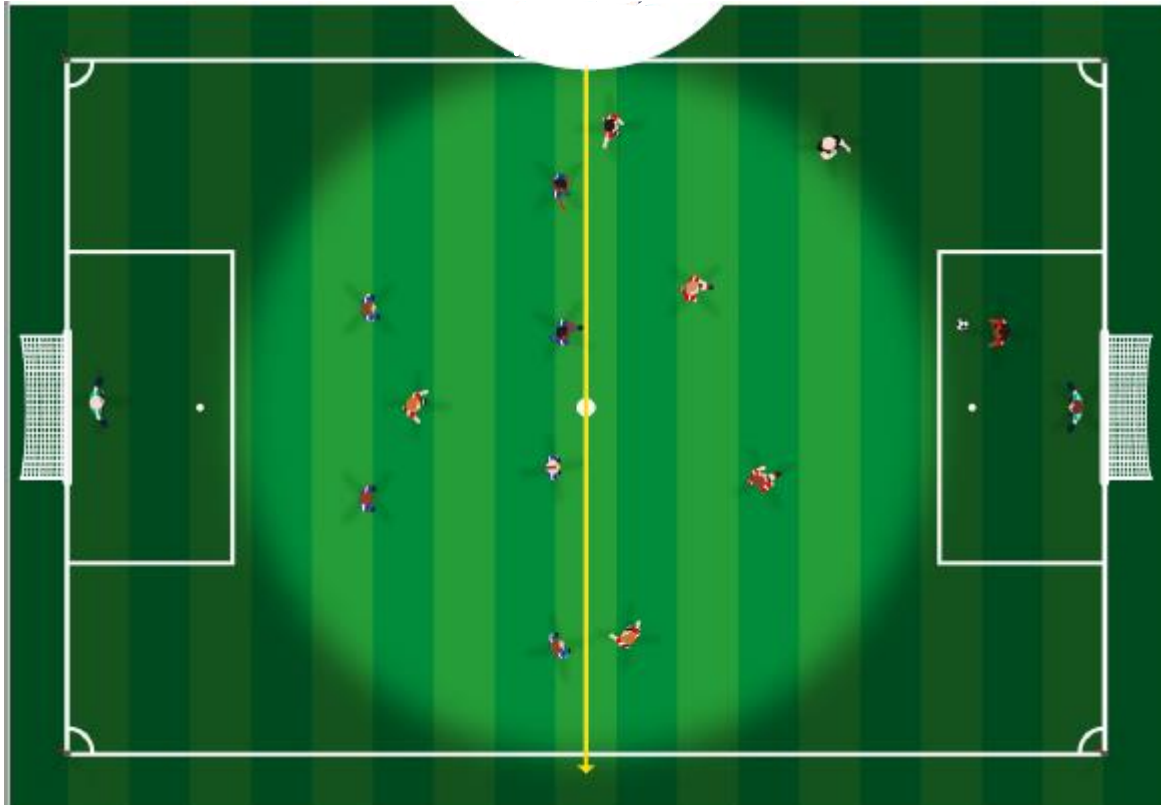
- The team without the ball must ‘retreat’ to their own half (however, the goal kicking team do not need to wait for that to happen if they want to play a quick kick out). **TIP: when it’s a goal kick remind the other team to “retreat” back**
- Any player can take the goal kick from any part of the penalty area. The goal kick must leave the penalty area. If it does not, allow the team to retake it.



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Goal Kicks (halfway line is the retreat line (in yellow)). Can be taken anywhere in the box



Power Play

The Power Play rule allows managers of sides losing by 4 or more goals to field an extra player (or two) in certain circumstances. Like substitutions, this must be done with the permission of the referee.

Losing by 4 goals:

- A team losing by four goals, e.g. 4-0, 5-1, 6-2, etc, can elect to field an extra player, e.g. 5 v 5 becomes 5 v 6. If the margin then comes down again to less than 4, the extra player must go off (it doesn't need to be the same player who came on).

Losing by 6 goals:

- A team losing by six goals can bring on two extra players. If the margin is then reduced to five goals, one player must exit, e.g. 7 v 5 becomes 6 v 5.

Discipline

- **TIP: consider warning the player verbally and perhaps raising the issue with the team manager, who may replace the player involved.**
- Technically, players can be sent to the 'sin bin' for dissent offences – where a player must sit out 8 mins of play before they can return. I have never seen it happen. Don't be the first!



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- Remember: no one should enter the pitch without the referee's permission, including managers. You are in charge!

VAR

- There is none! Believe it or not, there was an instance in Berks & Bucks last season where a referee overturned a goal decision after consulting video captured on a spectator's phone!!

Closing thoughts

- As a volunteer, you are there to help facilitate a key part of matchday. That does not mean you need to tolerate any form of abuse, or aggressive, undermining behaviour. If you are unhappy with a situation, let the team managers know. In most cases, this can be resolved by them having a word with the parents/spectators on the sidelines. If the matter relates to a manager, then you are within your rights to remind him/her what could happen if this persists, e.g. you will stop the game. Your home manager should be able to mediate in such circumstances.

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