



U8-U12 Soccer Rules – 2025

Please remember this is all about having fun and teaching the kids to grow and learn more about the game of soccer!

- 1. Game Play**
 - a. U8 Games will be 6 versus 6 (5 Field players & a goalie)**
 - b. U10 Games will be 7 versus 7 (6 Field players & a goalie)**
 - c. U12 Games will be 9 versus 9 (8 Field players & a goalie)**
- 2. U8-U12 will use a Size 4 Soccer ball. This can be provided by either team.**
- 3. Games are 25 minute halves with a 5 minute halftime.**
- 4. Substitutions can be made by either team during any stoppage in play. A designated substitution time can also be used if agreed to by both coaches (e.g., every 5 minutes).**
- 5. The referee is in charge of the game, there should be no complaining or arguing ANY calls with the referee.**
- 6. The referee may take time to explain a call to the players to help them better understand the game. This is not mandatory, but we do encourage the referees to explain when they can.**
- 7. The clock does not stop for substitutions or for any other reason (running clock). Each player must play at least half of the game. Equal time should be encouraged on offense and defense to help them learn all facets of the game. Do not force anyone to be goalie and do not hide players in the goal.**
- 8. Sidelines out of bounds is played in by a throw-in. An illegal throw-in should result in a re-throw after instruction by coach/referee. Definition of a legal throw-in, the thrower:**
 - a. Faces the field of play**
 - b. Has part of each foot either on the line or on the ground outside the line**
 - c. Uses both hands**
 - d. Delivers the ball from behind and over the head.**
 - e. The thrower may not touch the ball again until it has touched another player.****** U8 and U10 will be a little more lenient with these rules****
- 9. Corner Kick results when the defensive team kicks the ball out behind their goal. A Corner Kick is played from the field corner that the ball went out.**
- 10. A Goal Kick is when the offensive player kicks the ball out behind the opponent's goal.**



11. **Build out line for Goal Kicks.** This will apply exclusively to U10 (7v7 play) to promote playing the ball out of the back, in an unpressured setting. The build-out line shall be placed across the field equidistant between the top of the penalty area and the halfway line.
 - The opposing team must move back behind the build-out line for a goal kick or when the goalkeeper has possession. At any time, the goalkeeper may pass, throw or roll the ball to a teammate who is behind the build-out line.
 - The goalkeeper or the player taking the goal kick does not have to wait for the opposing players to move behind the build-out line.
 - After the ball moves and is put into play, the opposing team can cross the build-out line and play may resume as normal.
 - The first touch is from the goal kick or the pass from the goalkeeper.
 - The build-out line shall be used as the line to determine offside.
 - Players cannot be penalized for an offside offense between the halfway line and the build-out line regardless of where the last defender is.
 - U12 Will play with 'Normal' Offside rules and not by the buildout line
 - The offside calls will be made by the referees by their judgement
12. **Hand balls** should not be called when the player uses his hands to protect himself from the ball. Other hand balls should be called.
13. All foul kicks and hand balls are to be played as direct kicks from the spot of the foul.
14. There are no penalty kicks, any hand ball or other infraction in the penalty box will be played just outside penalty box as a direct kick.
15. All play starting touches (throw-in, corner kick, goal kick, indirect kick, half field kick off) are one touch. This means that the player who makes the kick or throw cannot touch the ball again until another player has touched it.
16. **THERE IS NO SLIDE TACKLING.** Slide tackling is banned from all age groups and will result in an indirect kick for dangerous play.
17. There will be **NO** heading of the ball at all for U13 and below. It is considered a dangerous play and will result in an indirect kick from the spot of the foul, unless it is within the penalty box. If a head ball occurs within the penalty area, the ball will be played just outside the penalty box as an indirect kick.
18. Players are **NOT** allowed to wear jewelry (earrings, wrist bands, necklaces, etc) or hard casts while on the field. They are **REQUIRED** to wear shin guards and they must be covered by socks. It is recommended that soccer cleats be worn as well.
19. There is to be no overly aggressive play. Any player who is intentionally pushing, checking, or is acting overly aggressive, needs to sit down for five minutes and cool off.
20. There is to be no overly aggressive parenting. If a parent or other fan cannot control themselves during a game they need to remove themselves from the side line. If a parent is unable to do this, the child will need to be removed from the game. This is very rare, especially at this age. If this happens, please notify the age group commissioner ASAP.



21. The soccer program is NOT a day care center. A parent or guardian must be with their child at all times. This may be someone other than the parent but it is NOT the coach. Car pools are fine but those parents who are driving will be responsible for their passengers at games or practices.

22. PARENTS WILL SIT ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE FIELD AWAY FROM THE PLAYERS AND TEAM BENCH DURING ALL SATURDAY GAMES!! This facilitates coaching and substitutions during the game and reduces distractions for the children.

23. The goal of Hickory Rec soccer is to teach the children about soccer and the skills necessary to play the game, to develop an enjoyment of the game, to teach and emphasize teamwork, and to be good role models as coaches and parents. If you have any concerns about another coach regarding his treatment of players or running the score up, please notify the Hickory Soccer Board as soon as possible.

24. To prevent scoring from getting out of control, and in an effort to promote the spirit of sportsmanship, coaches should encourage players to complete 3 passes before scoring again and move stronger players to different positions to limit further scoring. Another method is by adjusting the number of players on the field as follows: Teams with a 2 goal lead needs to reduce the number of players on the field and give their opponents a one player advantage. Teams with a 4 goal lead, need to reduce the number of players on the field and give their opponents a two player advantage. Every attempt must be made to control further scoring without jeopardizing the integrity of what we are trying to teach in terms of soccer skill. Coaches should discuss these options before and during the game, if necessary, and adjusted accordingly.

25. Any games that are considered a blow out or game where the scoring of one team is excessive needs to be reported to the age group commissioner. Please do so in order for the commissioner to intervene with the offending coach/team.