

Laws of the Game – Modified 8 and Under

Law 1 – The Field of Play

MINI FIELD

Dimensions: The field of play must be rectangular. The length of the touchline must be greater than the length of the goal line.

Length: minimum 25 yards maximum 35 yards

Width: minimum 15 yards maximum 25 yards

The Goal Area: None.

The Penalty Area: None.

Flagposts: Corner flags are optional.

The Corner Arc: None.

Goals: Goals must be placed on the center of each goal line. They consist of two upright posts equidistant from the corners and joined at the top by a horizontal crossbar. The recommended distance between the posts is six (6) feet and the distance from the lower edge of the crossbar to the ground is four (4) feet. Goals for this age group may be smaller.

Safety: Goals must be anchored securely to the ground. Portable goals may only be used if they satisfy this requirement.

Law 2 – The Ball

Size three (3).

Law 3 – The Number of Players

A match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than four (4) players. There are NO goalkeepers.

Substitutions: At any stoppage of play and unlimited.

Playing time: Each player SHALL play a minimum of 50% of the total playing time. It is the coach's responsibility to enforce this rule. Teams and matches may be coed.

The recommended team roster size is eight (8).

Law 4 – The Players Equipment

Conform to the FIFA Laws of the Game. Non-uniform clothing is allowed based on weather conditions, but uniforms must distinguish teams. Shin Guards are MANDATORY for both practices and games, and must be covered entirely by socks. If needed, teams can be distinguished by scrimmage vests.

Safety

A player must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous to himself or another player (including any kind of jewelry; with the exception of a medical alert bracelet).

Law 5 – The Referee

There is no need for fully qualified referees to manage 8 and Under games. One or both of the coaches could officiate / manage the game. Basic fouls and boundaries should be respected. All infringements should be briefly explained to the players.

Law 6 – The Other Match Officials

None.

Law 7 – The Duration of the Match

The match shall be divided into four (4) periods of not more than 10 minutes, based on the energy and motivation of the players. The length of the match should be determined before the match starts by both coaches. There shall be a minimum of a two (2) minute break between each period. The four periods do not have to be of equal duration.

Law 8 – The Start and Restart of Play

Conform to the FIFA Laws of the Game, with the exception that the defending team is at least five (5) yards from the ball until it is in play. Remember, let them play and do not interfere for technicalities.

Law 9 – The Ball In and Out of Play

Conform to the FIFA Laws of the Game.

Law 10 – The Method of Scoring

Conform to the FIFA Laws of the Game.

Law 11 – Offside

None.

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

Conform to the FIFA Laws of the Game with the exception that all fouls shall result in an indirect free kick.

The game official should explain ALL infringements to the offending player. No cards shown for misconduct.

Law 13 – Free Kicks

Conform to the FIFA Laws of the Game with the exception that all free kicks are indirect and all opponents are to be at least five (5) yards from the ball until it is kicked. Deliberate heading is not allowed in 4 vs. 4 games.

Law 14 – The Penalty Kick

None.

Law 15 – The Throw-In

The throw-in will be replaced with the pass-in²; otherwise conform to the FIFA Laws of the Game. Opposing players are to be at least two (2) yards from the ball until it is kicked. *This option is strongly recommended by US Youth Soccer.*

²The ball is placed on the ground off of the field of play and is kicked into the field of play.

Law 16 – The Goal Kick

The goal kick shall be taken anywhere along the goal line within five (5) yards of the goal. Opposing players must drop off five (5) yards from the ball until the ball is kicked.

Law 17 – The Corner Kick

Conform to the FIFA Laws of the Game with the exception that opponents remain at least five (5) yards from the ball until it is kicked.

ⁱPer U.S. Soccer's Concussion Initiative, if a player is suspected to have a head injury the referee* is instructed to stop play to allow for treatment/evaluation as needed. If the player leaves the field of play for additional evaluation, a substitution can be made at that moment. The player with the suspected head injury may not return to the game unless a Healthcare Professional (HCP) or Certified Athletic Trainer (ATC) has cleared the player. Any coach or parent insisting on returning the player to game without approved clearance will result in the referee* ending the game.

*Since there is no referee in 4 vs. 4, this responsibility falls to the coaches and parents involved.

ⁱⁱThe Youth Academy philosophy emphasizes player development over team development and focuses on the technical development of each child without the pressures of short-term match outcome. This club based format is in the best interest of both the short-term and long-term development of the children. In most instances, the youth academy format does not have set teams. Instead, the players all register with the club, but not a specific team. US Youth Soccer supports this approach for the 8 and Under age group.