



## **U12 Recreational Soccer Rules**

### **Law 1 – The Field of Play**

The field of play must be rectangular and marked with lines, which are not to exceed 5 inches in width. These lines belong to the areas of which they are boundaries. The two longer boundary lines are called touch lines. The two shorter lines are called goal lines. The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line, which joins the midpoints of the two touch lines. At the center of the halfway line, is the center mark. A circle with a radius of 6 yards is marked around the center mark.

The length of the touch line must be greater than the length of the goal line.

Length:            Minimum: 70 yards            Maximum: 80 yards

Width:            Minimum: 45 yards            Maximum: 55 yards

The goal area is defined at each end of the field as follows: Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line 6 yards from the inside of each goalpost. These lines extend into the field of play for a distance of 6 yards and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The area bounded by these lines is the goal area.

The penalty area is defined at each end of the field as follows: Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line 18 yards from the inside of each goalpost. These lines extend into the field of play for a distance of 18 yards and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The area bounded by these lines is the penalty area. Within the penalty area, a penalty mark is made 10 yards from the midpoint between the goalposts. An arc of a circle with a radius of 8 yards from the center of each penalty mark is drawn outside the penalty area.

A flag post, not less than 5 feet high, with a non-pointed top and a flag must be placed at each corner. A quarter circle with a radius of 1 yard from each corner flagpost is drawn inside the field of play.

Goals must be placed at the center of each goal line. They consist of two upright posts equidistant from the corner and joined at the top by a horizontal crossbar. Goals shall not exceed 8 feet in height or 24 feet in width. Goals must be securely anchored to the ground.

## **Law 2 – The Ball**

A spherical size 4 ball with a pressure of 0.6 – 1.1 atmospheres shall be used.

## **Law 3 – The Number of Players**

A match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than eight players on the field, one of whom is the goalkeeper. A match may not start if either team consists of fewer than six players on the field.

Substitutions are unlimited. Either team can substitute at any goal kick or kick-off. The team in possession may substitute on a throw-in. The referee's permission is required for all substitutions.

## **Law 4 – The Players' Equipment**

A player must not use equipment or wear anything which is dangerous to himself/herself or another player. **No jewelry is permitted.**

The basic equipment includes a jersey or shirt, shorts or pants, socks, shinguards, and footwear.

**Shinguards must be covered entirely by the socks** and provide a reasonable degree of protection.

The two teams must wear colors that distinguish them from each other and whenever possible the referee. The goalkeepers must wear colors to distinguish themselves from their team and the opposing team.

## **Law 5 – The Referee**

A USSF or Club Certified Referee shall be used. The referee has the full authority to enforce the Laws of the Game in the match that he or she has been appointed.

The decisions of the referee regarding facts connected with play, including whether or not a goal is scored, are final. The referee may only change a decision on realizing that it is incorrect or, at his or her discretion, on the advice of an assistant referee, provided that he or she has not restarted play or terminated the match.

## **Law 6 – The Assistant Referee**

Two assistant referees may be appointed to assist the referee to control the match in accordance with the Laws of the Game.

## **Law 7 – The Duration of the Match**

The match lasts two equal halves of 30 minutes each. Players are entitled to intervals of rest between the halves. The interval between the halves shall not exceed five minutes.

No allowance is made for time lost through a period.

Additional time is allowed for a penalty kick to be taken at the end of each half

## **Law 8 – The Start and Restart of Play**

A kick-off is a way of starting or restarting play at the start of each period and after a goal has been scored.

Before the start of the game it will be decided which team is kicking off. In the second half, the teams change ends and attack the opposite goals and the team which did not kick off to start the match will kickoff. Teams will either kickoff in both the first and second quarters, or the third and fourth quarters.

After a goal is scored, the kick-off is taken by the other team. All players must be in their own half of the field of play. The opponents of the team taking the kick-off must be outside of the center circle. The ball must be stationary at the center mark. The referee gives a signal, and the ball is in play when the ball is kicked and moves forward.

A goal may be scored directly from a kick-off, but only against the opposing team.

If the player taking the kick-off touches the ball again before it has touched another player, a free kick is awarded to the opposing team where the infringement occurred. In the event of any other infringement of kickoff procedure the kick-off is retaken.

A dropped ball is a method of restarting play when the referee is required to stop play temporarily for any reason not mentioned elsewhere in the Laws of the Game.

The referee drops the ball at the place where it was located when play was stopped, unless play was stopped inside the goal area, in which case the referee drops the ball on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the ball was located when play was stopped.

The ball is in play when it touches the ground. The ball is dropped again if it is touched by a player before touching the ground, or if the ball leaves the field of play after making contact with the ground without a player touching it.

### **Law 9 – The Ball In and Out of Play**

The ball is out of play when it has wholly crossed the goal line or touch line whether on the ground or in the air, or when play has been stopped by the referee.

The ball is in play at all other times including when it rebounds from a goalpost or crossbar and remains in the field of play, or rebounds from the referee when he or she is on the field of play.

### **Law 10 – The Method of Scoring**

A goal is scored when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, between the goalposts and under the crossbar, provided that no infringement of the Laws of the Game has been committed previously by the team scoring the goal.

### **Law 11 – Offside**

It is not an offense to be in an offside position.

A player is in an offside position if he or she is nearer to the opponents' goal line than both the ball and the second to last opponent.

A player is not in an offside position if he or she is in his or her own half of the field of play, is level with the second to last opponent, or is level with the last two opponents.

A player in an offside position is only penalized if, at the moment the ball touches or is played by one of his or her team, he or she is, in the opinion of the referee, involved in active play by interfering with play, interfering with an opponent, or gaining an advantage by being in that position.

There is no offside offense if a player receives the ball directly from a goal kick, throw-in, or a corner kick.

In the event of an offside offense, the referee awards an indirect free kick to the opposing team to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred.

## **Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct**

A direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following offenses in a manner considered by the referee to be careless, reckless, or using excessive force:

- Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent
- Trips or attempts to trip an opponent
- Jumps at an opponent
- Charges at an opponent
- Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent
- Pushes an opponent
- Tackles an opponent
- Holds an opponent
- Spits at an opponent
- Handles the ball deliberately

The direct free kick is taken from the place where the offense occurred.

A penalty kick is awarded if any of the above offenses is committed by a player inside his own penalty area, irrespective of the position of the ball, provided it is in play.

An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a goalkeeper, inside his own penalty area, commits any of the following offenses:

- Controls the ball with his or her hands for more than six seconds before releasing it from his possession
- Touches the ball again with his or her hands after releasing it and before it has touched another player
- Touches the ball with his or her hands after it has been deliberately kicked to him or her by a teammate
- Touches the ball with his or her hands after he or she has received it directly from a throw-in taken by a teammate

An indirect free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if, in the opinion of the referee, a player:

- Plays in a dangerous manner
- Impedes the progress of an opponent
- Prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his or her hands

- Commits any other offense, not previously mentioned, for which play is stopped to caution or send off a player

The yellow card is used to communicate that a player or substitute has been cautioned. A player is cautioned and shown the yellow card if he or she commits any of the following offenses:

- Unsporting behavior
- Dissent by word or action
- Persistent infringement of the Laws of the Game
- Delaying the restart of play
- Failure to respect the required distance when play is restarted
- Entering or re-entering the field of play without the referee's permission
- Deliberately leaving the field of play without the referee's permission

The red card is used to communicate that a player or substitute has been sent off. A player is sent off and shown the red card if he or she commits any of the following offenses:

- Serious foul play
- Violent conduct
- Spitting at an opponent or any other person
- Denying the opposing team a goal or obvious goal scoring opportunity by deliberately handling the ball
- Denying the opposing team a goal or obvious goal scoring opportunity by an offense punishable by a free kick
- Using offensive, insulting, or abusive language and/or gestures
- Receiving a second caution in the same match

A player or substitute who has been sent off must leave the vicinity of the field of play and technical area. The team of the player sent off must play a player down for the remainder of the match. The player who was sent off may not take part in his or her team's next match.

## **Law 13 – Free Kicks**

Free kicks are either direct or indirect.

If a direct free kick is kicked directly into the opponents' goal, a goal is awarded. If a direct free kick is kicked directly into a team's own goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opposing team.

The referee indicates an indirect free kick by raising his or her arm above his head. He or she maintains his or her arm in that position until the kick has been taken and the ball has touched another player or goes out of play.

A goal can only be scored if the ball touches another player before it enters into the goal. If an indirect free kick is kicked directly into the opponents' goal, a goal kick is awarded. If an indirect free kick is kicked directly into the team's own goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opposing team.

For both direct and indirect free kicks, the ball must be stationary when the kick is taken. All opponents must remain 10 yards from the ball until it is in play. The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves. The free kick is taken from the place where the infringement occurred.

A free kick awarded in the goal area may be taken from any point inside that area. An indirect free kick awarded inside the goal area must be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred.

A free kick awarded in the penalty area may be taken from any point inside that area. The ball is in play when it is kicked directly outside the penalty area.

If, when a free kick is taken, an opponent is closer to the ball than the required distance the kick is retaken.

If, after the ball is in play, the kicker touches the ball again before it has touched another player an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team where the infringement occurred.

## **Law 14 – The Penalty Kick**

A penalty kick is awarded against a team which commits one of the offenses for which a direct free kick is awarded, inside its own penalty area, while the ball is in play.

A goal may be scored directly from a penalty kick.

Additional time is allowed for a penalty kick to be taken at the end of each half.

The ball must be placed on the penalty mark. The player taking the penalty kick must be identified. The defending goalkeeper must remain on his goal line, facing the kicker, between the goalposts until the ball has been kicked.

The players other than the kicker and goalkeeper must be located inside the field of play, outside the penalty area, behind the penalty mark, and outside the penalty arc.

After the players have taken positions in accordance with this Law, the referee signals for the penalty kick to be taken. The player taking the penalty kick must kick the ball forward. He or she must not touch it again until it touches another player. The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves forward.

## **Law 15 – The Throw-In**

A throw-in is a method of restarting play. A throw-in is awarded to the opponents of the player who last touched the ball when the whole of the ball crosses the touch line, either on the ground or in the air.

A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw-in.

At the moment of delivering the ball, the thrower must face the field of play, have part of each foot on either the touch line or the ground outside the touch line, hold the ball with both hands, deliver the ball from behind and over his head, and deliver the ball from the point where it left the field of play.

All opponents must stand no less than 2 yards from the point at which the throw-in is taken.

The ball is in play when it enters the field of play. After delivering the ball, the thrower must not touch the ball again until it has touched another player. If, after the ball is in play, the thrower touches the ball again before it has touched another player an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team at the place where the infringement occurred.



## **Law 16 – The Goal Kick**

A goal kick is a method of restarting play. A goal kick is awarded when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, either on the ground or in the air, having last touched a player of the attacking team, and a goal is not scored in accordance with Law 10.

A goal may be scored directly from a goal kick, but only against the opposing team.

The ball is kicked from any point within the goal area by a player of the defending team. Opponents must remain outside the penalty area until the ball is in play. The kicker must not play the ball again until it has touched another player. The ball is in play when it leaves the penalty area.

If, after the ball is in play, the kicker touches the ball again before it has touched another player an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team at the place where the infringement occurred.

## **Law 17 – The Corner Kick**

A corner kick is a method of restarting play. A corner kick is awarded when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, either on the ground or in the air, having last touched a player of the defending team, and a goal is not scored in accordance with Law 10.

A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick, but only against the opposing team.

The ball must be placed within one yard of the corner nearest to where the ball crossed the goal line. Opponents must remain at least 10 yards from the ball until it is in play. The ball must be kicked by a player of the attacking team. The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves. The kicker must not play the ball again until it has touched another player.

If, after the ball is in play, the kicker touches the ball again before it has touched another player an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team at the place where the infringement occurred.