

US Youth Soccer Official Under 6 Playing Recommendations

US Youth Soccer recommended modifications to the FIFA Laws of the Game.

FIFA Laws of the Game can be found at www.ussoccer.com/referees.

Please also note the U6 addendum and appendix.

Law 1 – The Field of Play:

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 20 yards maximum 30 yards

Width: minimum 15 yards maximum 25 yards

Field Markings: Distinctive lines not more than (5) inches wide. The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line. The center mark is indicated at the midpoint of the halfway line. A circle with a radius of four (4) yards is marked around it.

The Goal Area: None.

The Penalty Area: None.

Flagposts: None.

The Corner Arc: Conform to FIFA.

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 eighteen (18) feet and the distance from the lower edge of the crossbar to the ground is six (6) feet. Goals may be smaller in dimension.

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 three players. There are NO goalkeepers.

Substitutions: At any stoppage and unlimited.

Playing time: Each player SHALL play a minimum of 50% of the total playing time. Teams and games may be coed.

Law 4 – The Players Equipment: Conform to FIFA. Non-uniform clothing is allowed based on weather conditions, but uniforms must still distinguish teams.

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Law 5 – The Referee: An OFFICIAL (Game Manager or Coordinator or Parent or Coach or Grade 9 referee) may be used. All infringements shall be briefly explained to the offending player.

Law 6 – The Assistant Referees: None.

Law 7 – The Duration of the Match: The match shall be divided into four (4) equal, six (6) to eight (8) minute quarters. There shall be two (2) minute break between quarters one and two and another two (2) minute break between quarters three and four. There shall be a half-time interval of five (5) minutes.

Law 8 – The Start and Restart of Play: Conform to FIFA, with the exception of the opponents of the team taking the kick-off are at least four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

Law 9 – The Ball In and Out of Play: Conform to FIFA.

Law 10 – The Method of Scoring: Conform to FIFA.

Law 11 – Offside: None.

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct: Conform to FIFA with the exception that all fouls shall result in a direct free kick. The referee/coach/parent must explain ALL infringements to the offending player. No cards shown for misconduct.

Law 13 – Free Kicks: Conform to FIFA with the exceptions that all free kicks are direct and opponents are at least four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

Law 14 – The Penalty Kick: None.

Law 15 – The Kick-In: A kick-in is considered as a direct free kick with the opponents four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

Law 16 – The Goal Kick: The goal kick should be taken within 2-3 yards of the goal line anywhere across the width of the field of play at the nearest point from where the ball was retrieved. Opposing players must be four (4) yards away from the ball until it is in play.

Law 17 – The Corner Kick: Conform to FIFA with the exception that opponents remain at least four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

PLEASE ALSO READ THE U6 ADDENDUM AND APPENDIX.



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ADDENDUM

MODIFIED RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GAME FOR U6

Law 1 The Field of Play: the dimensions are smaller to accommodate the three-versus-three game and are appropriate for the movement capabilities of four- and five-year-old children. These adjusted dimensions provide more practical space allowing players to be successful.

Field Markings: the center circle gives the players a concrete marking on where to be for the kick-off. The corner arc gives the young player a concrete place to put the ball to kick it back onto the field of play. While kids this young will not execute corner kick plays taking a kick from the corner is a reasonable way for them to put the ball into play and provides continuity with all other age groups. However, the center circle and the corner arc for U6 Small Sided Games are not mandatory field markings. Cones may be used in lieu of corner flag posts if desired. Neither cones nor corner flag posts to mark the corners of the field are mandatory for this age group.

Goals: the goal, 6 x 18 feet or smaller, is the same for the U6 to U8 age groups. By using the same size goal for these age groups clubs will have to buy fewer goals and there will be greater flexibility in the use of fields. A big goal without a goalkeeper should mean a few more goals for kids whose shooting technique is primitive along with their eye-foot coordination. Let's give them the broad side of the barn at which to shoot, the more goals the merrier. Finally the shooting odds for the U6 age group are one versus five, so let's give them a chance by having a larger target. However, manufactured goals are not mandatory for U6 Small Sided Games. Clubs are free to use cones, pop-up goals or other items to designate the goal for this age group. Indeed, even the entire goal line could be considered the 'goal' and a ball kicked over the goal line is considered a goal. Any goal must be properly anchored to the ground.

Law 2 The Ball: must be a size three. The smaller ball is lighter and more easily kicked, received, dribbled and passed.

Law 3 The Number of Players: there are no goalkeepers in the U6 age group so that all of the players may chase the ball around the field. The kids want to be where the action is and at this age it is around the ball. This will provide the opportunity for the children to further develop their running, jumping and kicking coordination. These are valuable traits for all soccer players to develop. The smaller number of players takes into account the egocentrism of this age group and therefore allows each child more opportunities for kicking and dribbling the ball. With fewer players on the field each child has an increased number of contacts with the ball and has more actual playing time. Additionally the players will be required to make more decisions and experience repeating

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game situations frequently. The work rate and involvement of players will be more consistent. While learning both offense and defense, players will become well rounded and will understand more readily the roles and importance of teammates.

There should not be a minimum for U8 and U6 and clubs, administrators, coaches and referees should be encouraged to allow players from the team with sufficient numbers to 'loan' a player or two to the team that is short players and then PLAY.

Law 5 The Referee: a referee is not really needed for this age group. Instead a parent or a coach should supervise the game for safety sake. All rule infringements shall be briefly explained to the offending player. 'Do-overs' should be a regular occurrence allowed by the adult(s) supervising the U6 game. It is strongly recommended that the adult officiating the U6 game attend the Grade 9 referee course.

Law 6 The Assistant Referees: none are needed.

Law 7 The Duration of the Match: the game is divided into four quarters. Clubs may make the quarters shorter in duration if necessary. Quarters are played in the U6 age group to accommodate the attention span and physical limitations of the children.

Law 10 Goal Scored: shall conform to FIFA.

Law 11 Offside: there shall be no offside called during these games.

Law 12 Fouls and Misconduct: no caution or send off shall be issued to players. If a child is being too rambunctious then the game official will ask the coach to make a substitution of that player to give the child a chance to calm down before returning to play.

Law 13 Free Kicks: all free kicks shall be direct. This should keep the game flowing and keep the attention of the kids.

Law 14 The Penalty Kick: for this age group there will not be any penalty kicks called.

Law 15 The Kick-In: most U6 players do not yet have the eye-hand coordination to execute a throw-in to the letter of the law. This leads to endless retakes from one team to the other. Additionally with a kick-in the ball is on the ground and stationary so the U6 player has a better chance of striking it correctly. This may lead to some intentional passes. However, this is still unlikely given that whether it is a throw or a kick all of the kids on the field will be yelling for the ball at the same time and the child putting the ball into play will be confused.

Law 16 The Goal Kick: the kick should be allowed to be taken from anywhere along the goal line over which the ball traveled. This is so the ball can be put back into play quickly. The ball should be placed two or three yards into the field of play to make it easier for the child taking the goal kick to get the ball

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well into the field of play once it is kicked. The defending players must stand at least four yards away from the ball until it is in play.

Law 17 The Corner Kick: per FIFA. The defending players must stand at least four yards away from the ball until it is in play.

- ⇒ Roster Size: Under the single field method the recommended minimum roster size is four players and the maximum roster size is six players. Under the dual field method the recommended minimum roster size is eight players and the maximum roster size is ten players. This range of roster sizes allows for a club to use either the single field or dual field set up.
- ⇒ Playing Time: A minimum of at least 50% playing time is required. The goal of the U6 facilitator is to achieve 100% playing time for each child.
- ⇒ Split-Field Model: See appendix for options.
- ⇒ No score or standings should be kept.

ADVANTAGES OF PLAYING SMALL SIDED GAMES

- ❑ More time with the coach/facilitator
- ❑ Energetic workouts due to playing both offense and defense
- ❑ More efficient use of field space
- ❑ Matches can be played simultaneously across a full size field
- ❑ Children are physically more efficient in smaller space
- ❑ Children are actively involved for a longer period of time
- ❑ It takes less time to score a goal or advance to goal
- ❑ Greater success rate for the players

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- ❖ Opposing coaches, players and parents should shake hands after each match.
- ❖ Parent/coaches, non-participating players and spectators should be there to enjoy and encourage the activity of the youngsters.
- ❖ Spectator and team benches should be on opposite sides of the field.
- ❖ No alcoholic beverages or tobacco products will be consumed or allowed near the playing area.
- ❖ No slide tackles to be allowed in this age group.
- ❖ Coaches of U6 teams should attend the U6/U8 Youth Module coaching course and the Grade 9 referee course.

US Youth Soccer Official Under 8 Playing Recommendations

US Youth Soccer recommended modifications to the FIFA Laws of the Game.

FIFA Laws of the Game can be found at www.ussoccer.com/referees.

Please note the U8 addendum and appendix.

Law 1 – The Field of Play

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 20 yards maximum 30 yards

Field Markings: Distinctive lines not more than (5) inches wide. The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line. The center mark is indicated at the midpoint of the halfway line. A circle with a radius of four (4) yards is marked around it.

The Goal Area: A goal area is defined at each end of the field as follows: Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line three (3) yards from the inside each goalpost. These lines extend into the field of play for a distance of three (3) yards and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is the goal area.

The Penalty Area: none.

Flagposts: none.

The Corner Arc: Conform to FIFA.

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 eighteen (18) feet and the distance from the lower edge of the crossbar to the ground is six (6) feet. Goals may be smaller in dimension.

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 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. Teams and matches may be coed.

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Law 4 – The Players’ Equipment: Conform to FIFA. Non-uniform clothing is allowed based on weather conditions, but uniforms must still distinguish teams.

Law 5 – The Referee: An OFFICIAL (Game Manager or Coordinator or Parent or Coach or Grade 9 referee) may be used. All infringements shall be briefly explained to the offending player.

Law 6 – The Assistant Referees: None.

Law 7 – The Duration of the Match: The match shall be divided into four (4) equal, twelve (12) minute quarters. There shall be a two (2) minute break between quarters one and two and another two (2) minute break between quarters three and four. There shall be a half-time interval of five (5) minutes.

Law 8 – The Start and Restart of Play: Conform to FIFA, with the exception of the opponents of the team taking the kick-off are at least four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

Law 9 – The Ball In and Out of Play: Conform to FIFA.

Law 10 – The Method of Scoring: Conform to FIFA.

Law 11 – Offside: None.

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct: Conform to FIFA with the exception that all fouls shall result in a direct free kick. The referee/coach/parent must explain ALL infringements to the offending player. No cards shown for misconduct.

Law 13 – Free Kicks: Conform to FIFA with the exceptions that all kicks are direct and all opponents are at least four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

Law 14 – The Penalty Kick: None.

Law 15 – The Throw-In: Conform to FIFA with the exception that an improperly performed throw-in can be retaken once.

Law 16 – The Goal Kick: Conform to FIFA with the exception that opponents must remain outside the goal area and at least four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

Law 17 – The Corner Kick: Conform to FIFA with the exception that opponents remain at least four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

PLEASE ALSO READ THE U8 ADDENDUM AND APPENDIX.



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ADDENDUM

MODIFIED RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GAME FOR U8

Law 1 The Field of Play: dimensions are smaller to accommodate the four-versus-four game and are appropriate for the movement capabilities of six- and seven-year-old children. These adjusted dimensions provide more practical space allowing players to be successful.

Field Markings: the center circle gives the players a concrete marking on where to be for the kick-off. The corner arc gives the young player a concrete place to put the ball to kick it back onto the field of play. While kids this young will execute corner kick plays to a modest degree taking a kick from the corner is a reasonable way for them to put the ball into play and provides continuity with all other age groups. However, the center circle and the corner arc for U8 Small Sided Games are not mandatory field markings.

Goals: the goal, 6 x 18 feet or smaller, is the same for the U6 to U8 age groups. By using the same size goal for these age groups clubs will have to buy fewer goals and there will be greater flexibility in the use of fields. A big goal without a goalkeeper should mean a few more goals for kids whose shooting technique is primitive along with their eye-foot coordination. Let's give them the broad side of the barn at which to shoot, the more goals the merrier. Finally the shooting odds for the U8 age group are one versus seven, so let's give them a chance by having a larger target. However, manufactured goals are not mandatory for U8 Small Sided Games. Clubs are free to use cones, pop-up goals or other items to designate the goal for this age group. Any goal must be properly anchored to the ground.

Law 2 The Ball: must be a size three. The smaller ball is lighter and more easily kicked, received, dribbled and passed.

Law 3 The Number of Players: there are no goalkeepers in the U8 age group so that all of the players may chase the ball around the field. The kids want to be where the action is and at this age it is around the ball. This will provide the opportunity for the children to further develop their running, jumping and kicking coordination. These are valuable traits for all soccer players to develop. The smaller number of players takes into account the egocentrism of this age group and therefore allows each child more opportunities for shooting, passing and dribbling the ball. With fewer players on the field each child has an increased number of contacts with the ball and has more actual playing time. Additionally the players will be required to make more decisions and experience repeated game situations frequently. The involvement of players will be more consistent. While learning both offense and defense, players will become well rounded and will understand more readily the roles and importance of

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teammates. Children in the U8 age group will intentionally play in pairs. The smaller number of players on the field will make it easier and more likely that passing and receiving will occur.

There should not be a minimum number of players for U8 and U6 and clubs, administrators, coaches and referees should be encouraged to allow players from the team with sufficient numbers to 'loan' a player or two to the team that is short players and then PLAY.

Law 5 The Referee: a referee is not really needed for this age group. Instead a parent or a coach should officiate the game. All rule infringements shall be briefly explained to the offending player. It is strongly recommended that the adult officiating the U8 game attend the Grade 9 referee course.

Law 6 The Assistant Referees: none are needed.

Law 7 The Duration of the Match: the game is divided into four quarters. Clubs may make the quarters shorter in duration if necessary. Quarters are played in the U8 age group to accommodate the attention span and physical limitations of the children.

Law 10 Goal Scored: shall conform to FIFA.

Law 11 Offside: there shall be no offside called during these games.

Law 12 Fouls and Misconduct: no caution or send off shall be issued to players. If a child is being too rambunctious then the game official will ask the coach to make a substitution of that player to give the child a chance to calm down before returning to play.

Law 13 Free Kicks: all free kicks shall be direct. This will keep the game flowing and keep the attention of the kids.

Law 14 The Penalty Kick: there will not be any penalty kicks called.

Law 15 The Throw-In: some U8 players do not yet have the eye-hand coordination to execute a throw-in to the letter of the law. However, some U8 players have sufficient eye-hand coordination to attempt the throw-in. One 'do-over' per thrower should be the normal response if the throw-in is incorrect. The adult officiating the match should explain to the child how to execute the throw-in correctly.

Law 16 The Goal Kick: per FIFA. The defending players must stand at least four yards away from the ball until it is in play. The ball is in play once it has left the goal area.

Law 17 The Corner Kick: per FIFA. The defending players must stand at least four yards away from the ball until it is in play.

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- ⇒ Roster Size: Under the single field method the recommended minimum roster size is six players and the maximum roster size is eight players. Under the dual field method the recommended minimum roster size is ten players and the maximum roster size is twelve players. This range of roster sizes allows for a club to use either the single field or dual field set up.
- ⇒ Playing Time: A minimum of at least 50% playing time is required.
- ⇒ Split-Field Model: See appendix for options.
- ⇒ No score or standings should be kept.

ADVANTAGES OF PLAYING SMALL SIDED GAMES

- More time with the coach
- Energetic workouts due to playing both offense and defense
- More efficient use of field space
- Matches can be played simultaneously across a full size field
- Children are physically more efficient in smaller space
- Children are actively involved for a longer period of time
- It takes less time to score a goal or advance to goal
- Greater success rate for the players

US Youth Soccer Recommendations

- ❖ Opposing coaches, players and parents should shake hands after each match.
- ❖ Parent/coaches, non-participating players and spectators should be there to enjoy and encourage the activity of the youngsters.
- ❖ Spectator and team benches should be on opposite sides of the field.
- ❖ No alcoholic beverages or tobacco products will be consumed or allowed near the playing area.
- ❖ No slide tackles to be allowed in this age group.
- ❖ Coaches of U8 teams should attend the U6/U8 Youth Module coaching course and the Grade 9 referee course.

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US Youth Soccer Official Under 10 Playing Recommendations

US Youth Soccer recommended modifications to the FIFA Laws of the Game.

FIFA Laws of the Game can be found at www.ussoccer.com/referees.

Please also note the U10 addendum and appendix.

Law 1 – The Field of Play

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 45 yards maximum 60 yards

Width: minimum 35 yards maximum 45 yards

Field Markings: Distinctive lines not more than five (5) inches wide. The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line. The center mark is indicated at the midpoint of the halfway line. A circle with a radius of eight (8) yards is marked around it.

The Goal Area: Conform to FIFA.

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

Flag posts: Conform to FIFA.

The Corner Arc: Conform to FIFA.

Goals: Goals must be placed on the center of each goal line. They consist of two upright posts equidistant from the corner flag posts and joined at the top by a horizontal crossbar. The maximum distance between the posts is eighteen (18) feet and the maximum distance from the lower edge of the crossbar to the ground is six (6) feet.

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 four (4).

Law 3 – The Number of Players: A match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than six players, one of whom is the goalkeeper. A match may not start if either team consists of fewer than five players.

Substitutions: At any stoppage and unlimited.

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Playing time: Each player SHALL play a minimum of 50% of the total playing time. Teams and matches may be coed.

Law 4 – The Players’ Equipment: Conform to FIFA. Non-uniform clothing is allowed based on weather conditions, but uniforms must still distinguish teams.

Law 5 – The Referee: Registered referee, especially Grade 9 or parent/coach or assistant coach. All rule infringements shall be briefly explained to the offending player.

Law 6 –The Assistant Referees: Not required. May use club linesmen/women if desired.

Law 7 – The Duration of the Match: Conform to FIFA with the exception of the match being divided into two (2) equal halves of twenty-five (25) minutes each. There shall be a half-time interval of five (5) minutes.

Law 8 – The Start and Restart of Play: Conform to FIFA with the exception of the opponents of the team taking the kick-off are at least eight (8) yards from the ball until it is in play.

Law 9 – The Ball In and Out of Play: Conform to FIFA.

Law 10 – The Method of Scoring: Conform to FIFA.

Law 11 – Offside: None.

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct: Conform to FIFA with the exception that an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team at the center spot on the halfway line if a goalkeeper punts or drop-kicks the ball in the air from his/her penalty area into the opponents penalty area.

Law 13 – Free Kicks: Conform to FIFA with the exception that all opponents are at least eight (8) yards from the ball.

Law 14 – The Penalty Kick: Conform to FIFA with the exception that the penalty mark is made eight (8) yards from the midpoint between the goalposts and equidistant to them.

Law 15 – The Throw-In: Conform to FIFA.

Law 16 – The Goal Kick: Conform to FIFA.

Law 17 – The Corner Kick: Conform to FIFA with the exception that opponents remain at least eight (8) yards from the ball until it is in play.

PLEASE ALSO READ THE U10 ADDENDUM AND APPENDIX.



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ADDENDUM

MODIFIED RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GAME FOR U10

Law 1 The Field of Play: dimensions are smaller to accommodate the six-versus-six game and are appropriate for the movement capabilities of eight- and nine-year-old children. These adjusted dimensions provide more practical space allowing players to be successful.

Field Markings: the penalty area is marked, but is smaller than the adult field size penalty area and within the penalty area is the penalty mark which is four yards shorter than the adult size field marking. The center circle is two yards smaller in radius than the adult size field marking. All other markings are per FIFA.

Goals: the goal, 6 x 18 feet, is the same for the U10 and U12 age groups. By using the same size goal for both age groups clubs will have to buy fewer goals.

Law 2 The Ball: must be a size four. The smaller ball is lighter and more easily kicked, received, dribbled and passed.

Law 3 The Number of Players: the six-a-side game now includes the goalkeeper. The smaller number of field players will provide the opportunity for the children to further develop their physical and technical abilities. These are valuable traits for all soccer players to develop. With fewer players on the field each child has an increased number of contacts with the ball and has more actual playing time. Additionally the players will be required to make more decisions and experience repeating game situations more frequently. The work rate and involvement of players will be more consistent. While learning both offense and defense, players will become well rounded and will understand more readily the roles and importance of teammates. The need for the players to make the mental and physical transition from offense to defense and vice-versa will be enhanced in this playing environment.

The minimum number of players to begin a match for preteen players in SSG should be one (1) less than the number required on the field. That is for U12 the minimum will be seven (7) and for U10 the minimum will be five (5). There should not be a minimum for U8 and U6 and clubs, administrators, coaches and referees should be encouraged to allow players from the team with sufficient numbers to 'loan' a player or two to the team that is short players and then PLAY.

Law 5 The Referee: per FIFA. Clubs are urged to use this age group as a field training opportunity for Grade 9 Recreational Referees. All rule infringements shall be briefly explained to the offending player.

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Law 6 The Assistant Referees: use club linesmen/women. Implement here the referee-in-training program.

Law 7 The Duration of the Match: per FIFA with the exception of the halves being 25 minutes each.

Law 8 The Start and Restart of Play: per FIFA. The distance the defending players must be away from the ball until it is kicked is the same as the radius of the center circle.

Law 10 Goal Scored: shall conform to FIFA and the sections concerning Winning Team and Competition Rules shall conform to US Youth Soccer guidelines.

Law 11 Offside: there shall be no offside called during these games.

Law 12 The rule on the goalkeeper's distribution still allows for the ball to be punted the entire length of the field, it just can not go directly into the opponents' penalty area

Law 13 Free Kicks: per FIFA. The distance the defending players must be away from the ball until it is kicked is the same as the radius of the center circle.

Law 14 The Penalty Kick: conform to FIFA with the exceptions that the penalty mark is eight yards from the center of the goal line and that players other than the kicker and defending goalkeeper are at least eight yards from the penalty mark. The distance of eight yards conforms to the radius of the center circle. The distance of eight yards from the center of the goalmouth for the penalty mark fits within the reduced dimensions of the penalty area and is a reasonable distance for the kick.

Law 17 The Corner Kick: per FIFA. The distance the defending players must be away from the ball until it is kicked is the same as the radius of the center circle.

- ⇒ Roster Size: Under the single field method the recommended minimum roster size is nine players and the maximum roster size is eleven players. Under the dual field method the recommended minimum roster size is fourteen players and the maximum roster size is sixteen players. This range of roster sizes allows for a club to use either the single field or dual field set up.
- ⇒ Split-Field Model: See appendix for options.
- ⇒ Playing Time: A minimum of at least 50% playing time is required.
- ⇒ No score or standings should be kept.

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ADVANTAGES OF PLAYING SMALL SIDED GAMES

- ❑ More time with the coach
- ❑ Energetic workouts due to playing both offense and defense
- ❑ More efficient use of field space
- ❑ Matches can be played simultaneously across a full size field
- ❑ Children are physically more efficient in smaller space
- ❑ Children are actively involved for a longer period of time
- ❑ It takes less time to score a goal or advance to goal
- ❑ Greater success rate for the players

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- ❖ Opposing coaches, players and parents should shake hands after each match.
- ❖ Parent/coaches, non-participating players and spectators should be there to enjoy and encourage the activity of the youngsters.
- ❖ Spectator and team benches should be on opposite sides of the field.
- ❖ No alcoholic beverages or tobacco products will be consumed or allowed near the playing area. Opposing parent/coaches and players should shake hands after each match.
- ❖ No slide tackles to be allowed in this age group.
- ❖ Coaches of U10 teams should attend the U10/U12 Youth Module coaching course and the Grade 9 referee course.

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US Youth Soccer Official Under 12 Playing Recommendations

US Youth Soccer recommended modifications to the FIFA Laws of the Game.

FIFA Laws of the Game can be found at www.ussoccer.com/referees.

Please note the U12 addendum and appendix.

Law 1 – The Field of Play

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 70 yards maximum 80 yards

Width: minimum 45 yards maximum 55 yards

Field Markings: Distinctive lines not more than (5) inches wide. The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line. The center mark is indicated at the midpoint of the halfway line. A circle with a radius of eight (8) yards is marked around it.

The Goal area: Conform to FIFA.

The Penalty Area: A penalty area is defined at each end of the field as follows: Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line, fourteen (14) yards from the inside of each goalpost. These lines extend into the field of play for a distance of fourteen (14) yards and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is the penalty area. Within each penalty area a penalty mark is made ten (10) yards from the midpoint between the goalposts and equidistant to them. An arc of a circle with a radius of eight (8) yards from each penalty mark is drawn outside the penalty area.

Flagposts: Conform to FIFA.

The Corner Arc: Conform to FIFA.

Goals: Conform to FIFA with exception that the maximum distance between the posts is eighteen (18) feet and the maximum distance from the lower edge of the crossbar to the ground is six (6) feet.

Law 2 – The Ball: Size four (4).

Law 3 – The Number of Players: A match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than eight players, one of whom is the goalkeeper. A match may not start if either team consists of fewer than seven players.

Substitutions: At any stoppage and unlimited.

Law 4 – The Players Equipment: Conform to FIFA. Non-uniform clothing is allowed based on weather conditions, but uniforms must still distinguish teams.

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Law 5 – The Referee: Registered referee.

Law 6 – The Assistant Referee: Use U.S.S.F. registered referees or club linesmen/women.

Law 7 – The Duration of the Match: Conform to FIFA with the exception of the match being divided into two (2) halves of thirty (30) minutes each. There shall be a half-time interval of five (5) minutes.

Law 8 – The Start and Restart of Play: Conform to FIFA with the exception that opponents of the team taking the kick-off are at least eight (8) yards from the ball until it is in play.

Law 9 – The Ball In and Out of Play: Conform to FIFA.

Law 10 – The Method of Scoring: Conform to FIFA.

Law 11 – Offside: Conform to FIFA.

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct: Conform to FIFA with the exception that an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team at the center spot on the halfway line if a goalkeeper punts or drop-kicks the ball in the air from his/her penalty area into the opponents penalty area.

Law 13 – Free Kicks: Conform to FIFA with the exception that opponents are at least eight (8) yards from the ball.

Law 14 – The Penalty Kick: Conform to FIFA with the exceptions that the penalty mark is at ten yards and that players other than the kicker and defending goalkeeper are at least eight (8) yards from the penalty mark.

Law 15 – The Throw-In: Conform to FIFA.

Law 16 – The Goal Kick: Conform to FIFA.

Law 17 – The Corner Kick: Conform to FIFA with the exception that opponents remain at least eight (8) yards away from the ball until it is in play.

PLEASE ALSO READ THE U12 ADDENDUM AND APPENDIX.



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ADDENDUM

MODIFIED RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GAME FOR U12

Law 1 The Field of Play dimensions are smaller to accommodate the eight-versus-eight game and are appropriate for the movement capabilities of ten- and eleven-year-old children. These adjusted dimensions provide more practical space allowing players to be successful.

Field Markings: per FIFA with the exception of the center circle, penalty area, penalty mark and penalty arc.

Goals: the goal, 6 x 18 feet, is the same for the U10 and U12 age groups. By using the same size goal for both age groups clubs will have to buy fewer goals.

Law 2 The Ball: must be a size four. The smaller ball is lighter and more easily kicked, received, headed, dribbled, caught, thrown and passed.

Law 3 The Number of Players: The eight-a-side game includes the goalkeeper. The smaller number of field players will provide the opportunity for the children to further develop their physical and technical abilities. These are valuable traits for all soccer players to develop. With fewer players on the field each child has an increased number of contacts with the ball and has more actual playing time. Additionally the players will be required to make more decisions and experience repeating game situations frequently. The work rate and involvement of players will be more consistent. While learning both offense and defense, players will become well rounded and will understand more readily the roles and importance of teammates. The smaller field dimensions and number of players on the field of play will require more concentration on transition, which is a vitally important tactical concept for the players to learn. The minimum number of players to begin a match for preteen players in SSG should be one (1) less than the number required on the field. That is for U12 the minimum will be seven (7) and for U10 the minimum will be five (5). There should not be a minimum for U8 and U6 and clubs, administrators, coaches and referees should be encouraged to allow players from the team with sufficient numbers to 'loan' a player or two to the team that is short players and then PLAY.

Law 6 The Assistant Referees: per FIFA. Use registered referees or club linesmen/women.

Law 7 The Duration of the Match: per FIFA with the exception of the halves being 30 minutes each.

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Law 8 The Start and Restart of Play: per FIFA. The distance the defending players must be away from the ball until it is kicked is the same as the radius of the center circle.

Law 10 Goal Scored: shall conform to FIFA and the sections concerning Winning Team and Competition Rules shall conform to US Youth Soccer guidelines.

Law 12 The rule on the goalkeeper's distribution still allows for the ball to be punted the entire length of the field, it just can not go directly into the opponents' penalty area

Law 13 Free Kicks: per FIFA. The distance the defending players must be away from the ball until it is kicked is the same as the radius of the center circle.

Law 14 Conform to FIFA with the exceptions that the penalty mark is ten yards from the center of the goal line and those players other than the kicker and defending goalkeeper are at least eight yards from the penalty mark. The distance of eight yards conforms to the radius of the center circle. The distance of ten yards from the center of the goalmouth for the penalty mark fits within the reduced dimensions of the penalty area and is a reasonable distance for the kick.

Law 17 The Corner Kick: per FIFA. The distance the defending players must be away from the ball until it is kicked is the same as the radius of the center circle.

- ⇒ Roster Size: The recommended minimum roster size is eleven and the maximum recommended roster size is thirteen.
- ⇒ Playing Time: refer to the Effective Playing Time chart.

ADVANTAGES OF PLAYING SMALL SIDED GAMES

- More time with the coach
- Energetic workouts due to playing both offense and defense
- More efficient use of field space
- Matches can be played simultaneously across a full size field
- Children are physically more efficient in smaller space
- Children are actively involved for a longer period of time
- It takes less time to score a goal or advance to goal
- Greater success rate for the players

US Youth Soccer Recommendations

- ❖ Opposing coaches, players and parents should shake hands after each match.
- ❖ Parent/coaches, non-participating players and spectators should be there to enjoy and encourage the activity of the youngsters.
- ❖ Spectator and team benches should be on opposite sides of the field.
- ❖ No alcoholic beverages or tobacco products will be consumed or allowed near the playing area.

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- ❖ Coaches of U12 teams should attend the U10/U12 Youth Module coaching course and the Grade 9 referee course.

Effective Playing Time Relative to Game Format and Roster Size

Single Game	Roster Size >	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Game Format	Game Duration																
3 v 3 (U-5/6)	4 x 8 min. quarters	100% 32 min	75% 24 min	60% 19 min	50% 16 min												
4 v 4 (U-7/8)	4 x 12 min. quarters		100% 48 min	80% 38 min	66% 32 min	57% 27 min	50% 24 min										
5 v 5 (U-7/8)	4 x 12 min. quarters			100% 48 min	83% 40 min	71% 34 min	62% 30 min	55% 26 min	50% 24 min								
6 v 6 (U-9/10)	2 x 25 min. halves				100% 50 min	85% 42 min	75% 37 min	66% 33 min	60% 30 min	54% 27 min	50% 25 min						
8 v 8 (U-11/12)	2 x 30 min. halves						100% 60 min	88% 53 min	80% 48 min	72% 43 min	66% 40 min	61% 36 min	57% 34 min	53% 32 min	50% 30 min		

Split Game	Roster Size >	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Game Format	Game Duration																
3 v 3 (U-5/6) Split	4 x 8 min. quarters				100% 32 min	85% 27 min	75% 24 min	66% 21 min	60% 19 min	54% 17 min	50% 16 min						
4 v 4 (U-7/8) Split	4 x 12 min. quarters						100% 48 min	88% 42 min	80% 38 min	72% 34 min	66% 32 min	61% 29 min	57% 27 min	53% 25 min	50% 24 min		
5 v 5 (U-7/8) Split	4 x 12 min. quarters								100% 48 min	90% 43 min	83% 40 min	76% 36 min	71% 34 min	66% 32 min	62% 30 min	58% 28 min	55% 26 min
6 v 6 (U-9/10) Split	2 x 25 min. halves										100% 50 min	92% 46 min	85% 42 min	80% 40 min	75% 37 min	70% 35 min	66% 33 min

These tables show effective playing time relative to game format and roster size. The figures are presented as a) percentages of total playing time and b) as actual minutes played. Both figures assume equal rotation of players. At the youth level, a minimum goal of 70% playing time is recommended. Tables provided by Dr. Thomas Turner with contributions from Mr. Bill Spens.