

Under 8 Soccer Game Play & Conduct Rules & Guidelines For Coaches

- The U8 game is broken down into FOUR 12-minute quarters. Teams will only change ends at halftime.
- There are 4 players plus a goalie on each side. Teams must use a **different** goalie for each quarter.
- Prior to the game the **referee will** call the team over to **check** their shin guards and cleats. The referee will then call for captains who will call a coin toss to determine possession preferences or side preferences.
- **Uniforms**-shirts should be tucked into their shorts, socks OVER shin guards and cleats tied tightly in double knots (to prevent unties).
- NO jewelry (earrings, necklaces, bracelets...), metal or plastic hair clips are allowed on the playing field. Band-aids or tape to cover earrings is not allowed.
- The **game starts with** a kickoff in the center of the field. Team with possession must kick the ball forward over the centerline. Opposing team must stay out of the center circle until the ball is kicked.
- **Out of bounds-**
 - SIDE: The team that did not kick the ball out re-enters the ball with a throw in which must be 2-handed, go straight back over the player's head while their feet remain on the ground until the ball is released.
 - END: When the defensive team kicks the ball out of their own end, the offensive team re-enters the ball with a corner kick kicked from one of the corners (where the flag is – if present). If the offensive team kicks it out the opposition's end, the defensive team re-enters the ball with a goal kick that is placed halfway between the goal line and the penalty area line. Either a defender or a goalie may take the kick.
- **When a goal is scored**, the game is re-started with a kick off by the non-scoring team from the center of the field in the same process as the starting kick-off.
- **At half time** ball possession changes teams and teams change sides of the field.
- **After the goalie has made a save**, she/he may re-enter the ball by either punting, drop kicking or throwing the ball.
- **Substitutions** may be made on either teams throw-in, goal kick or any re-start kick off (half time or after a goal). Referee must be told if a goalie is being changed.
- **Throw ins** – U8 players are always allowed a second throw in if they violate on the first one. The referee along with the coach should explain the proper method for a throw in.
- There are **NO direct free kicks** in U8 soccer. This includes penalty kicks. All penalties (hand ball, push, trip, etc.) result in a free **indirect** kick (must touch another player before entering the goal to be counted as a goal). If the infraction occurred within the penalty area, the ball should be brought back to the line and an indirect free kick awarded. There are **no** direct penalty kicks. Remember, many of the kids and perhaps even the coaches will not know the difference in kicks. Opposing players must stay back 8 yards when an indirect kick is awarded.
- **Slide Tackling** is NOT allowed in U8 soccer. Keep players on their feet.

- **In the case of an injury** the child sits, the referee pauses the game and then the coach may enter the field. Each team may sub one player on an injury. The ball is restarted with a drop-ball where the referee drops the ball between two opposing players who then may kick the ball only after it has landed on the ground

- **Safety** is the number one concern when dealing with this age group. Referees should not be afraid to stop play at anytime if they see a dangerous situation developing.

- Remember, this is the first game experience for these kids. If inappropriate, aggressive behavior is exhibited; the referee should speak with the individual involved. If this does not solve the problem, the referee should speak with the coach. The use of cards in U8 soccer should be avoided if at all possible.

- Referees should BLOW THEIR WHISTLES LOUD. These kids have a great deal of energy and the only way to get them to stop is with a loud, long whistle.

COACH CONDUCT RULES & GUIDELINES

- The game is to be played for the enjoyment and safety of the PLAYERS. **Under 8 soccer is recreational and instructional ONLY.**

- It is expected that coaches, parents and players respect every individual at the field.

- It is expected that there be NO yelling at players, referees or coaches. Positive comments only.

- Coaches and parents must stay off the field during the game unless a child is injured, then the COACH may enter the field.

- Teaching the kids sportsmanship at this age will build the foundation for their future soccer experience. Players and coaches should always shake hands at the end of the game. Players and coaches should always thank the referee after the game. Teams should celebrate wins, but be cognizant of the other team. Remember, these are 7 and 8 year old kids.

- Please report to your Age group Rep if you witness an unruly person at a game.

All coaches, all assistant coaches, all players, and all spectators shall support the referee before, during, and after the game. Failure to do so undermines the referee's authority and could create a hostile environment for players, the referee, coaches, assistant coaches, and all spectators, including participants in other matches.

NO ONE IS TO ADDRESS THE REFEREE DURING THE GAME!!!!

Coaches/Assistant Coaches – Allowable Exceptions:

During the game:

- *Responding to a referee initiating a communication

- *Making substitutions

- *Pointing out emergencies or safety issues

Penalties:

- *1st Minor Infraction – Referee should issue a verbal warning

- *2nd Minor Infraction – Referee should issue a caution

- *3rd Minor Infraction – Referee should issue an ejection

- *1st Serious Infraction – Referee should issue a caution or ejection depending on the seriousness of infraction per FIFA.

*2nd Serious Infraction – Referee should issue a caution or ejection depending on the seriousness of infraction per FIFA.

Accumulation of two cautions in one match is equivalent to an ejection.

If a coach has an issue with the referee, it should be discussed with your Age Group Rep or Referee Coordinator and NOT the referee.

If during the game, you feel your team could be injured due to the refereeing, you should pull your team off the field and abandon the game. Notify your Age Group Rep and Referee Coordinator as soon as possible.

Spectators should not address the referee at any time!

Penalties:

*1st Infraction – Referee should stop the game, give a verbal warning to the coach, and ask the coach to warn the spectator that the next infraction will be an ejection or the referee will abandon the game.

*2nd Infraction – The referee shall instruct the coach to direct the spectator to leave the field. The referee should abandon the game if the spectator does not leave the field.

Communications among players and referees are governed by the FIFA Laws of the Game.