

Soccer Rules Overview

Lines and circles and arcs

The two lines that run lengthwise are called “touch lines.” When the ball *completely crosses* this line a throw-in is awarded to the opponent of the team who last touched the ball.

The two lines at the ends of the field are “goal lines,” sometimes referred to as “end-lines.” When the ball *completely crosses* this line a goal kick or corner kick is awarded depending on who last touched the ball. (Or a goal may be awarded if the ball completely crosses the goal lines in between the goal posts and underneath the crossbar.)

The line that runs in the middle of the field between touch lines is the halfway line, also called the midfield line. All Substitutions are made from this line. The circle in the middle of the field is called the midfield or kick-off circle.

The penalty box is also called the “18 yard box” because it is 18 yards from the goal line and 18 yards wide from each goal post. This box contains the penalty spot which is 12 yards from the goal line. It also has an arc at the top end. This is to mark 10 yards from the penalty spot.

There is also a 1-yard arc on each corner of the field. It is used for corner kicks. The ball must be touching or inside the arc when it’s kicked.

The goal box or “6 yard box” is 6 yards from the goal line and 6 yards wide from each goal post.

Full-size goals are 8 feet high and 24 feet wide.

Free kicks in Soccer

The opposing team must give the kicker 10 yards of space from the ball.

Direct free kicks are awarded for these offenses:

- Jumping at an opponent.
- Kicking or attempting to kick an opponent.
- Tackling an opponent illegally.
- Charging at an opponent.
- Pushing an opponent.
- Tripping or attempting to trip an opponent.
- Handling the ball deliberately.
- Holding an opponent..
- Spits at an opponent
- Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent.

Other direct free kicks:

- Corner kicks, kick-offs, and goals kicks

A penalty kick is awarded if any of the above ten offenses is committed by a player inside his /her own penalty area.

Indirect free kicks

Generally, an indirect free kick is given to the opposing team when a player commits an offense other than the 10 already mentioned. Most common indirect kicks are for “dangerous play” (where contact isn’t made but injury could’ve occurred if it had), or situations where certain technical requirements of the rules of the game are violated (a goalkeeper picking up the ball directly from a teammate’s throw-in, for example).

Throw-ins are indirect.

Offsides are indirect.

A player is in an offside position when in the opponents’ half of the field, and when the attacking player does not have two defenders (one of these is most often the goalkeeper) between him/her and the opponents’ goal. To be called for offside, the attacker must be in an offside position when the ball is last touched by a teammate, and the attacker then *plays or attempts to play* the ball *or is interfering with play*.

A player cannot be Offside 1. In his/her own half of the field 2. Directly from a goal kick or corner kick 3. On a throw-in.

Throw-ins

The player must have both feet on the ground and either *touching* the line or *behind* the line.

The ball must come straight over the head, with two hands, all in one motion.