



Laws of the Game

For the 8 and Under Age Group



Law 1 – The Field of Play

Dimensions: The field of play must be rectangular.

Field Length Range: 25 – 35 yards

Field Width Range: 15 – 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.

Optional: A circle with a radius of five (5) yards should be marked around the center mark.

The Goal Area: None.

Optional: A goal area that is 10 yards wide (4 yards from each goal post) and 5 yards out from the end line.

The Penalty Area: None.

Flag Posts: Corner flags are optional.

The Corner Arc: None.

Goals: Goals must be placed on the center of each goal line. The recommended goal size is six (6) feet wide by four (4) feet high.

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

Law 2 – The Ball

The 8 and under age group uses a size three (3) ball.

Law 3 – The Number of Players

A match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than four (4) players on the field. There are NO goalkeepers. Teams and matches may be coed.

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.

Team Formation: For games in the 8 and under age group, it is recommended that flexibility is allowed in forming teams and moving players as needed. To balance games, provide maximum playing time and make the game as enjoyable as possible for all players, set team rosters are discouraged at this age group.

Ideally, players will be registered into a 'pool', consisting of all the players in the age group. From this pool, teams can be selected for each game day. In this set-up, forming teams of 4-6 players to play 4 vs 4 games works well. The teams selected for each game day can be different from week to week and players can be moved from one team to another to balance the games, provide manageable numbers for each team and for other factors.

If set team rosters are used, the roster must have no more than 8 players per team.

Law 4 – The Players Equipment

Conform to the IFAB Laws of the Game. Non-uniform clothing is allowed based on weather conditions, but uniforms must distinguish teams. Shinguards 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, except for a medical alert bracelet/necklace).

Law 5 – The Referee

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

Law 6 – The Assistant Referees

None.

Law 7 – The Duration of the Match

The match shall be divided into four (4) quarters up to ten (10) minutes in length. The length of the quarters should be determined before the match starts by both coaches. There shall be up to a five (5) minute break between each quarter.

Law 8 – The Start and Restart of Play

Conform to the IFAB 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 IFAB Laws of the Game.

Law 10 – The Method of Scoring

Conform to the IFAB Laws of the Game.

NMYSA Suggestion: A goal may only be scored from a team's attacking half of the field. A ball kicked from within a team's defending half of the field and not touched by any other player before going in the goal does not count as a goal and play is restarted with a goal kick for the opposing team.

Law 11 – Offside

None.

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

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

When a player deliberately heads the ball in a game, an indirect free kick should be awarded to the opposing team at the spot of the infraction.

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

A hand ball infraction occurs when a player handles the ball deliberately. The “hand” includes the entire arm up to the top of the shoulder. Instinctive, self-protective reactions are not penalized at this young age. Accidental contact (ball striking hand or arm) is not an offense and should not be penalized.

Law 13 – Free Kicks

Conform to the IFAB Laws of the Game except that all free kicks are indirect and all opponents are to be at least five (5) yards from the ball until it is kicked.

Law 14 – The Penalty Kick

None.

Law 15 – The Throw-In

The throw-in should be replaced with the pass-in. The ball is placed on the ground off the field of play and is kicked into the field of play. Opposing players are to be at least five (5) yards from the ball until it is kicked. The player taking the pass-in may not touch the ball again until it has touched another player. The pass-in, like all free kicks for this age group, is indirect.

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.

Option: If the goal area is marked on the field, then the goal kick shall be taken from anywhere inside the goal area. The ball is in play when it is kicked.

NMYSA Suggestion: When a team is taking a goal kick, the opposing team should retreat to the marked X's on the center circle. Once the ball is kicked, the game is live. Having the defending team stand on the X's on a goal kick allows the team taking the kick to start play in an unpressured setting, encourages the defending team to get into a good defending 'team shape' and discourages one player from standing all the way in the back in front of the goal.

Law 17 – The Corner Kick

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

8 and Under Age Group
Field Dimensions, Interior Markings and Suggested Team Formations

