

BRECK League Optimist Youth Soccer Spring 2025 Rules and Coach Handbook

- Unless specified otherwise in the document below, games will follow *FIFA Laws of the Game* using the modifications below for 10U and 12U age groups.
- NO heading will be allowed in either age group.

The Purpose

The Breck League Optimist Youth Soccer League exists to provide a positive soccer experience that is fun, developmentally appropriate, and teaches the fundamentals of the game of soccer to all children. The program is for all levels of players and teaches the foundational skills of the game while also incorporating a curriculum that teaches important life skills.

The coaching curriculum and structure is provided by Mighty Kicks Southern Kentucky. To learn more about the Mighty Kicks methodology and curriculum, please visit mightykicks.net.

Overview of Play-Practice-Play

This curriculum is designed to provide soccer players with a fun and engaging introduction to soccer through US Soccer's Play-Practice-Play methodology. It focuses on individual skill development, teamwork, and learning through play and exploration. By building on fundamental skills and introducing more advanced skills and tactics, players will develop a solid foundation for future success in soccer.

The Play-Practice-Play methodology is a player-centered approach to coaching soccer that is used by U.S. Soccer at the Grassroots level. The methodology is designed to help coaches create enjoyable environments where players can develop their skills and understanding of the game.

Coach Expectations and Code of Conduct

To clarify expectations of coach conduct, we at Breck League Optimist Club and Mighty Kicks expect all coaches and assistant coaches to conform to this code of conduct.

1. Recognize that the players are young and impressionable, therefore you must always maintain a high level of sportsmanship, professionalism, integrity, and emotional maturity
2. Never use foul or abusive language, and never direct abuse to any

participant mentally, verbally, or physically

3. Instruct players to play within the written laws of the game as modified by Break League Optimist and its governing bodies for the age group you are coaching and within the spirit of the game at all times
4. Be a positive role model, and be responsible for the actions and sportsmanship of both your players and spectators
5. Create a fun and positive environment for both your players and the players on opposing teams, and understand that ensuring the players are enjoying the game is more important than winning
6. Treat all players fairly and with respect, and use positive reinforcement when dealing with them
7. Understand that referees are human, therefore you should always treat them with respect and never criticize, belittle, or argue about calls with referees during or after games
8. Bring all comments regarding referees, other coaches, and parents to a Breck League Optimist board member and not to any involved party

General Coaching Rules

1. Coaches are not allowed to leave any team activities until all players have a responsible guardian present
2. All players must be supervised by at least two adults at all times
3. The players' bench must be on the opposite side of the field from the spectators for all games
4. During games, if there is not already a technical area marked, coaches are expected to create a bench area for all substitutes to remain in. Bench area can consist of cones, a blanket, bags, etc.
5. If your team chooses to have snacks at the end of games, coaches must be aware if any of their players have food allergies

Parent Expectations (Fall 2024 Updated)

In order to create a positive and enjoyable experience for all participants, it is important for parents to adhere to certain behavior expectations during the soccer season. These expectations include:

1. **Respect for all participants:** All parents are expected to demonstrate respect for all participants, including players, coaches, and other parents. This includes refraining from using foul language or engaging in confrontational or aggressive behavior.
2. **Encouragement of positive attitudes:** Parents are encouraged to foster a positive and supportive environment for all players. This includes encouraging players to try their best, celebrating successes, and providing constructive feedback when needed.
3. **Attendance and punctuality:** Parents are expected to ensure that their child attends all practices and games, and arrives on time. If a child is unable to attend, parents are expected to communicate with the coach in advance.
4. **Safety and equipment:** Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child is properly equipped for practices and games, including appropriate clothing and equipment such as shin guards. Parents are also expected to follow safety guidelines set by the coach or program, and to report any safety concerns or injuries to the coach. All children must wear shin guards to any practice or game. Children without shin guards will not be allowed to participate.
5. **Communication with the coach:** Parents are encouraged to communicate regularly with the coach and to ask questions or express concerns as needed. This includes informing the coach of any relevant medical or behavioral issues that may affect their child's participation.
6. **Parents must remain OFF the field during practices and games.** Anyone on the field with players must have completed SafeSport and have a background check on file with the club.

By adhering to these behavior expectations, parents can help create a positive and supportive environment for all players, and ensure a fun and enjoyable soccer season for all involved.

Parent Sideline Policy for Soccer Games

At Mighty Kicks, we believe that parents play an essential role in their child's development and learning process. However, during games, we have implemented a parent sideline policy to ensure the safety and fair play of all players.

All parents must remain at least 3 yards off the sideline during the game. This policy ensures that players have enough space to play, and coaches can communicate with players and provide instructions without interference.

Parents are also required to stay on the opposite side of the team's bench area during games. This policy ensures that players can hear their coach's instructions without any interference or distractions.

Additionally, parents are not allowed to enter the field during the game, except in the case of an emergency. If a player gets injured or requires medical attention, a parent or guardian can enter the field with the coach's permission.

By adhering to these policies, we can create a safe and supportive environment for all players, coaches, and parents. Thank you for your cooperation in helping us create a positive and rewarding experience for everyone involved in the Mighty Kicks program.

General Rules (10U and 12U)

UPDATED Points of Emphasis (FALL 2024)

1. Drop Balls will no longer be contested. The ball will be dropped to the team that had possession when play was stopped.
 - Exception: Any dropped ball in the penalty area goes to the goalkeeper, who may play it with their hands.
2. Handling, even if unintentional, will be called when:
 - A goal is scored as a result of handling
 - A goal-scoring opportunity results from handling
 - The player has made themselves “unnaturally bigger” with their arms → The hand/arm is above shoulder height.
3. Goal kicks, the ball is in play as soon as it is kicked and moves. The ball no longer has to leave the penalty area.
4. For the age groups where the Build-Out Line (10U) is in effect, the opposing players may not cross the build-out line until one of the following occurs:
 - A second player from the kicking team has full control of the ball → The ball crosses the half field line.
5. Substitutes ready to enter must still report to the half line and wait until recognized by the referee. Players leaving the field during a substitution, may do so at the nearest boundary line (goal line or touch line).
6. Team officials (coaches, assistant coaches, managers, or anyone acting as such temporarily) may now be shown yellow and red cards.
7. All players must play at least half a game and every effort should be made to give all players equal playing time
8. Substitutions should be sent to wait a yard behind the half line and are not permitted to enter the field of play until a referee permits it at appropriate stoppages
9. Unless modified above, all rules conform to FIFA

Player Equipment

All players must wear the following to every game:

- BRECK League Uniform
- Safe footwear (sneakers or soccer cleats; cannot have a toe cleat or spikes)
- Shin guards (completely covered by soccer socks)
- Goalkeepers must wear a different color shirt or pinnie

Players are not allowed to wear the following in a game:

- Jewelry (i.e. necklaces, bracelets)
 - ◆ NO EARRINGS ALLOWED, NOT EVEN TAPED OR BANDAGED OVER, NO EXCEPTIONS
 - ◆ Medical bracelets are allowed so long as they are taped down
- Metal hair clips or hard headbands
- Hats with any hard portion

Cold weather gear:

- Any long sleeves or jackets must be worn underneath the SKY jersey
- Hoods must be tucked into the jersey and not hang out
- Some zippers may be considered dangerous and illegal to wear
- Black athletic or sweat pants are allowed

10U Specific Rules

Game Length:

25 minute halves with a five minute halftime

Number of Players:

Maximum: 7

Minimum: 5

Ball size: 4

1. All players must play at least half a game and every effort should be made to give all players equal playing time
2. Only blatant or repetitive offside are enforced
3. No intentional headers
4. Substitutions should be sent to wait a yard behind the half line and are not permitted to enter the field of play until a referee permits it at appropriate stoppages
5. Build out line is enforced
 - a. On keeper possession (keeper may choose to release early)
 - b. On goal-kicks
6. Unless modified above, all rules conform to FIFA

12U Co-Ed (Same as 10U with exceptions noted below)

Game Length:

30 minute halves with a five minute halftime

Number of Players:

Maximum: 9

Minimum: 7

Ball size: 4

Other:

1. No headers
2. Unless modified above, all rules conform to FIFA

6U and 8U Specific Rules

Game Rules for 6U and 8U

As the soccer season begins, we want to ensure that everyone understands the rules of the game. Here are the basic rules of soccer for a game at this age group:

1. Field size: The field is smaller than a full-sized soccer field and typically measures approximately 20 yards by 30 yards.
2. Number of players: Each team has 4 players on the field at a time, with no goalkeeper. Players may not stand in front of the goal to just block the goal. Coaches are encouraged to encourage all players to be active in the game (no set positions).
3. Duration of the game: The game consists of four 10-minute quarters, with a 2-minute break between each quarter.
4. Ball size: Size 3 soccer balls are used for all games.
5. Kick-off: The game starts with a kick-off at the center of the field. The opposing team must be at least 5 yards away from the ball until it is kicked. If there is a circle painted on the field, players must be outside of that circle until the ball is kicked.
6. Scoring: Goals are scored when the ball crosses the opponent's goal line between the goalposts and under the crossbar.
7. No offside: There is no offside rule at this age level.
8. Kick-ins: When the ball goes out of bounds, a kick-in is used to put the ball back into play.
9. Goal kicks: When the ball goes out of bounds over the goal line after being last touched by the attacking team, a goal kick is awarded to the defending team. The ball is placed on the ground on the goal line and kicked back into play. The opposing team must go to the halfway line until the ball is put into play.
10. Corner kicks: When the ball goes out of bounds over the goal line after being last touched by the defending team, a corner kick is awarded to the attacking team. The ball is placed on the ground at the corner nearest the goal the team is attacking. The opposing team must be at least 5 yards from the ball until it is kicked.
11. Fouls: At this age level, there are no formal fouls, but coaches will remind players to play fairly and not push, trip, or kick other players. Players should not attempt any sort

of slide tackle, and coaches should immediately address this if a player attempts to slide tackle.

12. One coach from each team is permitted to be on the field to support the players.

Coaches are not to touch the ball except to keep the ball in play when needed to keep the game flowing.

Parent Behavior at Games Policy

At all times, parents are expected to act in a respectful and appropriate manner while attending their child's soccer games. Any behavior deemed inappropriate, disruptive or unsafe by the coaches or program director will not be tolerated. Examples of inappropriate behavior include, but are not limited to, using profanity, verbally attacking coaches, players, or officials, and being excessively loud or disruptive.

If a parent is observed engaging in inappropriate behavior during a game, the coach or program director will approach the parent and ask them to stop. If the behavior continues, the coach or program director may ask the parent to leave the game. If the parent refuses to leave or the behavior is particularly egregious, the coach or program director may involve law enforcement.

Parents who observe inappropriate behavior from other parents during games are encouraged to report it to the coach or program director immediately. Reports should include a detailed description of the behavior and the names of any witnesses. The coach or program director will then take appropriate action to address the situation.