



NVFC RULES, GUIDELINES AND COACHING ADVICE FOR SMALL SIDED GAMES (Ages U6 through U10)

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General Goals and Guidelines of Small Sided Soccer

NVFC strongly encourages that all games are played in a competitive atmosphere whereby the result is not a factor. Coaches, club officials, parents, and players should all contribute to fostering a playing environment where the players' individual needs and development are more important than the result of the games. In all Small Sided Games programming the emphasis shall be placed on development, fun, sportsmanship, education, and respect for teammates, the opponents and officials. Scores or game results may be tracked by the coordinators for future scheduling purposes and to avoid future unfavorable game match ups. Scores are not to be compiled for the sake of standings or league tables.

Goals

- To promote soccer as an enjoyable sport and fitness activity
- To develop age appropriate skills and techniques applicable to soccer
- To foster a spirit of good sportsmanship, fair play and respect for others

Coaching Guidelines

- Equal playing time for all players regardless of skill levels
- Rotation of positions for skill development and maximum touches on the ball
- Emphasis Skill development and understanding the rules of the game
- Encourage Team cooperation and support
- Teach and Display Good sportsmanship
- Exercise Positive reinforcement
- Focus on fun, activity and improvement
- Recognize and respect injury, exhaustion and self-esteem issues
- Positive parents/volunteers on the sidelines and supportive of coach
- Winning games should be an outcome, not a priority.



Small Sided Formats

House League Formats

Age Group	Format: # of fields and # of players	Approximate Field Sizes length x width	Duration of game halves and halftime	League/ Scheduling	Referee
U6	2 fields 4 v 4 on each	2 fields of 35 x 25 m	2 x 20 minute halves, 2 minute half time	In house only	coaches
U7	2 fields 4 v 4 on each	2 fields of 35 x 25 m	2 x 20 minute halves, 2 minute half time	In house only	coaches
U8	2 fields 4 v 4 on each	2 fields of 30-36 x 20-25 m	2 x 25 minute halves, 5 minute half time	Interlock	coaches
U9	6 v 6	40-50 x 30-35 m	2 x 25 minute halves, 5 minute half time	Interlock	refs
U10	7 v 7	45-55 x 30-35 m	2 x 25 minute halves, 5 minute half time	Interlock	refs

All numbers above include goalkeeper. No goalkeepers used at U6/U7. U8 use Rush Goalkeeper.

Substitution Guidelines:

Substitutions for U6 thru U10 shall be unlimited with equal playing time per player.

All players on each team must learn and play all positions.

U6 - U8 GAME RULES

Organization

- 4 players on field for U6/U7, no goalkeepers
- 4 players on field for U8 (3 plus a rush goalkeeper who can use hands around the goal area, identified hi pinnie over team jersey)



- When ball goes out of play, game is restarted by:
 - Sideline: Kick Ins
 - Endline: Goal kicks or corner kicks depending on who kicked it out
- Defending team must be 5 m away from ball on kickoffs and 8 m on corner kicks and free kicks
- Retreat Line: When a team has a goal kick or the goalkeeper has ball in his hands, opposing team must retreat to half until the ball is played by the goalkeeper
- There are no offsides called at U6 to U8

Refereeing

Teams (ideally coaches) should split referee duties. At U6 to U8 one coach from each team may referee on one field.

- Common sense application of calling fouls. (i.e., let all unintentional hand balls go, call only obvious deliberate hand balls).
- If a foul occurs, offending team must be 8 m from the ball during the free kick.
- For U8, “pass back rule” will not be in effect. Goal keepers may handle ball passed back to them by teammate while around their goal. Coaches are not to encourage abuse of this rule.

Time/Length U6-U7

- All teams arrive at scheduled time. All games or training sessions must end within the 1 hour timeslot. No exceptions.
- 2 x 20 minute halves, 2 minute half time
- If a game starts late all games should end within the allotted time. No exceptions.

Time/Length U8

- Games scheduled to Kick-Off at scheduled time. Please arrive 20-30 minutes early to organize team and warm up.
- 2 x 25 minute halves, 2 minute half time
- All games must end within the time allotted on the schedule. No exceptions.
- If a game starts late, then that game will play a shorter second half as all games will end within the allotted time so later games do not start late. No exceptions.

Coaching Points

- Encourage at least one player to go fully wide on goal kicks & when goalkeeper in possession
- Encourage rush goal keeper (U8) to move off goal line to support attacks or intercept through-balls; one player should not stay in an un-attacked net for large portions of the game; the idea of a rush GK who moves out to attack and rushes



back because he/she is the only one allowed to handle the ball is a simple introduction to the idea of transition (the switch from attack to defense).

- Encourage players to pass, dribble, and communicate with each other
- On throw-ins or kick-ins, encourage non-throwing players to look for open space and not to go too close to thrower
- Encourage lots of movement and maintaining proper passing distance (5-10 m for this age) as opposed to standing and clumping

U9 GAME RULES

Organization

- Field size is: 40-50 x 30-35 m. Goal area. within which designated goalkeeper may handle the ball, corners are 9 m towards the side and into the field.
- 6 players on field (5 + a goalkeeper)
- When ball goes out of play, game is restarted by:
 - Touch line (Sideline): Kick in / Dribble in
 - Goal line (Endline): Goal kicks or corner kicks depending on who kicked it out
- After a goal, restart with a centre kick.
- Defending team must stand 8 m away from ball for all kick offs, corner kicks, and free kicks

Retreat Line:

When a team has a goal kick, opposing team must retreat to half until the ball is kicked and received (e.g., goalkeeper kicks to teammate who touches the ball).

Offsides

There are no offsides called at U9 and U10, however, coaches should not abuse this rule and are discouraged to have their player(s) “goal suck” or just stand in front of the opposing net when the play is in their defensive end.

Refereeing

At U9 and U10 young referees with limited experience are used. Please respect that these young referees are in training and will make mistakes. Fair play and sportsmanship should be displayed by coaches, parents, and players at all times. If a foul occurs, offending team must be 8 yards from the ball during the free kick. At U9/10, “pass back rule” is in effect. Goal keepers may not handle ball passed back to them by teammate while in their goal area.



Time/Length

- Games scheduled to start as per scheduled time. Please arrive 20/30 minutes early to organize team and warm up.
- All games will end at the scheduled end time. No exceptions.
- 25 minute halves with 5 minute half time, unless game starts late (see below)
- If a game starts late, then that game will play two shorter halves as all games will end as scheduled. No exceptions.
- Unlimited substitutions allowed, equal playing time for all players, and players must learn and play all positions

Coaching Points

Unlike U6/U7/U8, coaches must be on the sidelines and must not step onto the field to give instructions or referee.

- Encourage players to pass, dribble, and communicate with each other
- At practice, teach how a throw-in is done, to reduce no foul throws called by the refs at the games as this slows play down and wastes time.
- Encourage lots of movement and maintaining proper passing distance (5-20 metres for this age) as opposed to standing and clumping
- Ideally, all teams should be playing in a formation consisting of the following 3 elements: defenders, midfielders, forwards. To that end, it is recommended to play a 3-1-1 formation. With the two outside defenders and 1 midfielder playing the whole field (central defender holding more), and one forward, plus a goalkeeper. This will give your team depth and width in their play.

U10 GAME RULES

Organization

- Field size is: 45-55 x 30-35 m. Goal area. within which designated goalkeeper may handle the ball, corners are 9 m towards the side and into the field.
- 7 players on field (6 plus a goalkeeper)
- When ball goes out of play, game is restarted by:
 - Touch line (Sideline): Kick in / Dribble in
 - Goal line (Endline): Goal kicks or corner kicks depending on who kicked it out
- After a goal, restart with a centre kick, defending team to stand 8 m away from ball.
- Defending team must stand 8 m away from ball for all kick offs, corner kicks, and free kicks



Retreat Line:

When a team has a goal kick, opposing team must retreat 1/3 until the ball is kicked and received (e.g., goalkeeper kicks to teammate who touches the ball)

Offsides

There are no offsides called at U9 and U10, however, coaches should not abuse this rule and are discouraged to have their player(s) “goal suck” or just stand in front of the opposing net when the play is in their defensive end.

Refereeing

At U9 and U10 young referees with limited experience are used. Please respect that these young referees are in training and will make mistakes. Fair play and sportsmanship should be displayed by coaches, parents, and players at all times. If a foul occurs, offending team must be 8 m from the ball during the free kick. At U9/10, “pass back rule” is in effect. Goal keepers may not handle ball passed back to them by teammate while in their goal area.

Time/Length

- Please arrive 15 minutes early to organize team and warm up.
- All games will end at the scheduled end time. No exceptions.
- 25 minute halves with 5 minute half time, unless game starts late (see below)
- If a game starts late, then that game will play two shorter halves as all games will end as scheduled. No exceptions.
- Unlimited substitutions allowed, equal playing time for all players, and players must learn and play all positions

Coaching Points

Unlike U6/U7/U8, coaches must be on the sidelines and must not step onto the field to give instructions or referee.

- Encourage players to pass, dribble, and communicate with each other
- At practice, teach how a throw-in is done, to reduce no foul throws called by the refs at the games as this slows play down and wastes time.
- Encourage lots of movement and maintaining proper passing distance (5-20 m for this age) as opposed to standing and clumping
- Ideally, all teams should be playing in a formation consisting of the following 3 elements: defenders, midfielders, forwards. To that end, it is recommended to play a 3-2-1 formation. Three defenders, two midfielders, and one forward, plus a goalkeeper. This will give your team depth and width in their play. 2-3-1 is another option.

