

Gunston Soccer Club's Recreation Soccer Rules

1. Field Size and Set-Up

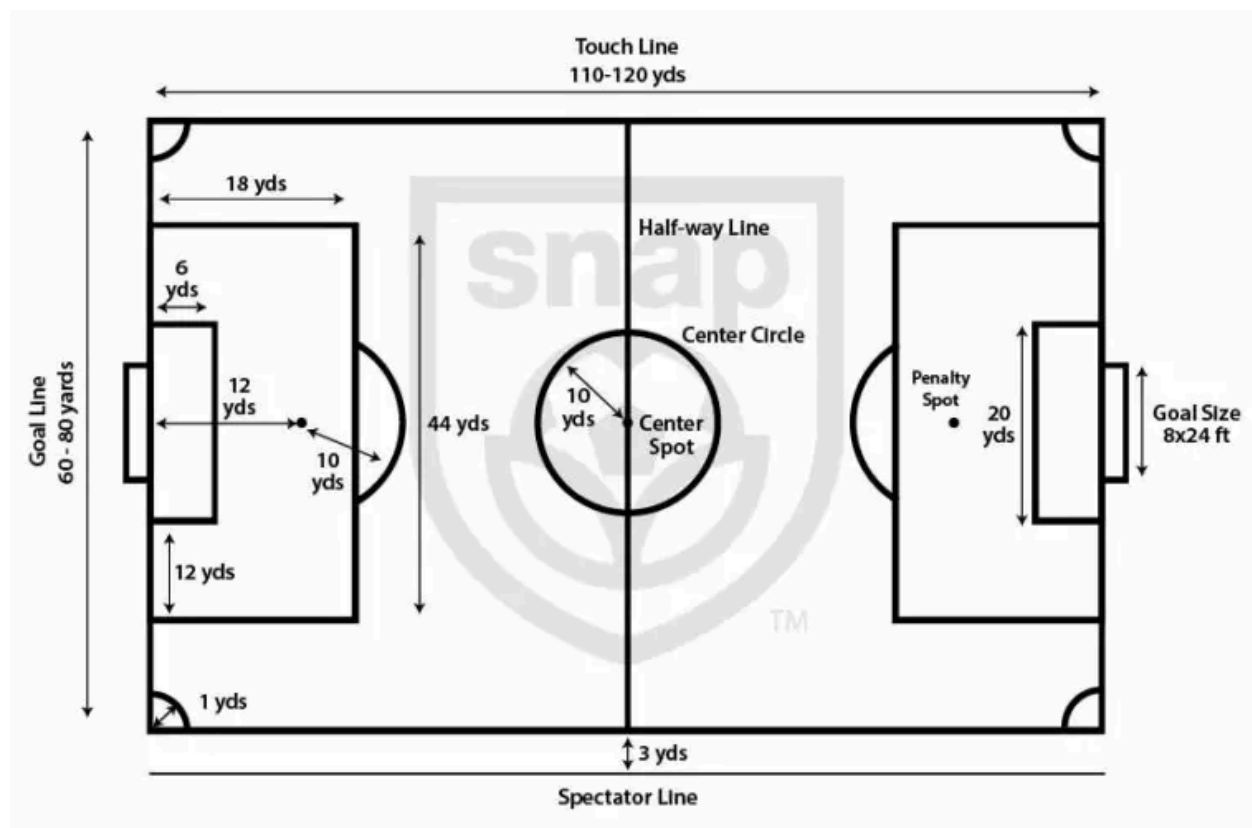
Gunston Recreational Soccer fields start at approximately 30 yards by 20 yards for U5, and progressively increase in size for each age group up through U13 (at which point the field becomes regulation-sized). Please see the addendum to these rules for the size of each age group's pitch.

The teams with the earliest game time on a particular field are responsible for setting up the corner flags and the goals. The teams with the latest game time on a particular field are responsible for breaking down the goals and either (i) returning them to the barn, together with the flags and flag bases (for teams that play at Gristmill); or (ii) pushing them off of the field and properly securing them (in the case of older age groups).

The referee will inspect the field to ensure that it is safe to play on. Teams will play games in wet conditions at the option of the coaches, as long as this can be done safely. Play will stop immediately if there is a weather-related hazard (e.g., lightning, thunder within a certain number of miles from the field, strong winds, etc.).

2. Anatomy of the Pitch

The size of the field on which a team plays will depend on the age group, but each field has common reference points and features: (i) the Center Circle and Center Spot; (ii) the corners; (iii) the midfield line (or "half-way line"); (iv) the Sidelines ("Touch Lines"); (v) two goals; and (vi) Goal Lines. For reference, please see the following diagram of a typical 11 v. 11 soccer pitch (U13 age groups and older):



A. Goal Area

The Goal Area is where the goalkeeper (U7 and older) is permitted to use hands on the ball (“handling”) and to play the ball with his or her feet or body. The goalkeeper is not restricted to this area, but can venture anywhere on the field (e.g., “flykeep”). Once out of the Goal Area, however, the goalkeeper may not use hands and must follow the same rules as any other field player.

B. Center Spot

The Center Spot is where the ball is placed for kickoffs at the beginning of periods and after a goal is scored. The midfield line is the line that runs through the Center Spot, bisecting the field in two equal parts.

C. Goals

Goal size starts at 4 feet x 6 feet and increases progressively with each age group. Please see the addendum to these rules for more specificity.

3. Game Ball

The home team provides the ball. Ball size varies by age group. Please see the Quick Matrix to the addendum to these rules for more specificity.

Game balls should be properly inflated and free of nicks, cuts or anything else that might be dangerous to a player or interfere with the integrity of the game.

4. Number of Players on the Field

The number of players varies by age group. For example, the U5 and U6 Age Groups have teams that play 3 v. 3 by default, without a goalkeeper (but by mutual agreement of the coaches, may play 4 v 4). At U7, play increases to 4 v 4 and includes a goalkeeper, U8 increases to 5 v 5 including a goalkeeper, and so on. Please see the Quick Matrix to the addendum to these rules for more specificity.

5. Uniforms and Equipment

Players must wear uniforms that clearly distinguish one team from the other. If there is a jersey conflict, then the home team must either put pinnies on over their uniforms (in a color that differs from the opposing team) or change into a different color jersey.

All players must wear shin guards, shorts, socks and shoes. Shoes must be safe. Socks must always be worn over (not under) the shin guards. Players will not be allowed to play without shoes or shin guards.

The referee will inspect the players’ equipment before each game to ensure it is safe. All other equipment (and all parents, coaches, and spectators) will be kept off the field at a safe distance. The referee’s judgment in matters of safety is final.

If the referee discovers that these requirements have not been met, then he/she must instruct the player and the coach to fix the equipment. If it is not fixed by the next stoppage of play, then the referee will remove the player from the field to fix the equipment. The team may substitute another player for the removed player. The removed player can return to the field only at a stoppage, only from the touchline, and only after the referee re-inspects the equipment.

6. Referees

The referee is responsible for: (i) ensuring the players are safe, (ii) teaching the rules of the game, (iii) enforcing the rules, and (iv) keeping official time.

In the U5 thru U7 age groups, the home team supplies a parent or spectator to referee the game. Neither Head Coaches nor Assistant Coaches may referee a game.

For U8 and older, the referee assignor for our area will appoint a referee.

7. Assistant Referees

There are no Assistant Referees (linesmen) in the U5 through U8 age groups. At the U9 level and above, Assistant Referees may assist with out of bounds calls and offside calls.

8. Duration of the Game

The length of the game, and whether it is divided into quarters or halves (“periods”), varies by age. Please see the Quick Matrix to the addendum to these rules for more specificity.

No more than two (2) minutes should be taken between periods.

The referee must ensure that the total length of the game does not infringe on the start time of the next game. If the game does not start on time, the actual playing time should be shortened to complete the game before the next game is scheduled to start. If this is necessary, then all periods will be of equal length.

9. Kickoffs and Drop Balls

A. Kickoffs

The game begins with a kickoff while the ball is stationary, taken from the Center Spot at the beginning of each period. There will also be a kickoff to restart play after a goal is scored.

The team that gets to kickoff at the beginning of the game is determined by coin toss. Kickoff then rotates to the opposite team at the beginning of each successive game period. After a goal is scored, the team that gave up the goal will take the kickoff.

All players must be on their own side of the field prior to the kickoff. The players on the team not taking the kick must be at least five (5) yards from the Center Spot. The player who takes the kickoff cannot make a second play (i.e., kick it again) until after a different player touches or plays the ball.

If a player does not take the kickoff correctly, then the referee will grant a re-do after the child has been instructed how to properly kickoff. If the child cannot master the skill after two attempts, then the referee will give the ball to a teammate and have that teammate kickoff.

In the U5 thru U8 age groups, a player cannot score a goal directly from a kickoff. Instead, a different player must touch or play the ball after the kickoff, before the ball enters the goal.

B. Drop Balls

If the referee stops play for an injury or unsafe situation, he/she will restart by dropping the ball where the ball was when play was stopped, unless the ball was inside a Goal Area. This is called a “Drop Ball.” If the ball was inside the Goal Area, then the referee will drop it at the nearest point on the six- (6-) yard line (or the equivalent, in a smaller-sided field). Please see the field diagram above in Section 2 (“Anatomy of the Pitch”) for more guidance.

As with a kickoff, a player taking the Drop Ball cannot score a goal directly. Instead, a different player must touch or play the ball before it enters the goal.

C. Goalkeeper Ball-in-hand situation (U8 and Younger)

When the goalkeeper has the ball-in-hand during play from the opponent, the opposing team must move behind the build out line until the ball is put into play. The goalkeeper can pass, throw, or roll the ball to put it back into play (punts and drop kicks are not allowed).

10. In and Out-of-Play, Explained

The ball is out of play when any of the following occurs: (i) 100% of the ball goes 100% over the Side Line / Touchline; (ii) 100% of the ball goes 100% over the Goal Line; or (iii) the referee blows the whistle for any reason. Although play stops when the ball is out-of-play, time still runs.

11. Method of Scoring

As noted above in Section 9 of these rules (“In- and Out-of-Play, Explained”), a goal is scored when 100% of the ball goes 100% over the Goal Line. For the goal to be valid, this must occur between the upright side-posts of the goal and below the upper crossbar.

Players may score a goal from anywhere on the field after the ball has been properly put in play and has been touched by at least two (2) players, unless the ball is thrown (or “handled”) by an attacking field player (i.e., a player who is not the goalkeeper).

At the U5 thru U8 Age Groups, a ball that enters directly into the goal from a kickoff, Throw-In, Free Kick, Corner Kick, Drop Ball or Goal Kick is not a valid goal. Instead, the ball is out-of-play and will re-enter play either through a Goal Kick or a Corner Kick, depending upon which team touched the ball last.

12. Offside Violations

Offsides does not apply to the U5 through U8 age groups. Referees begin calling offside violations at the U9 and older age groups.

13. Free Kicks

When the referee has stopped play due to infringement of the rules, the referee will restart play by awarding the non-offending team with a Free Kick. The non-offending team will take the Free Kick from the spot where the infringement occurred, while the ball is stationary.

At the U5 thru U8 age groups, players on the non-attacking team (i.e., the team that is not taking the Free Kick) must back up to at least five (5) yards from the ball. The ball is in play as soon as the player performs the kick, and the ball moves. The player taking the free kick cannot perform

a second play (kick it again) until another player kicks or touches the ball. No player may score a goal directly from a Free Kick in the U5 through U8 age groups.

If a team infringes the rules inside a Goal Area, then special rules apply. Specifically:

- If the defending team committed the infringement inside their own Goal Area, then the attacking team takes the Free Kick from the nearest point on the six- (6-) yard line (or the equivalent, for smaller-sided fields). Please see the field diagram in Section 2 of these rules (“Anatomy of the Pitch”).
- If the attacking team commits the infringement inside its opponents’ Goal Area, then the opponent will take the Free Kick from anywhere inside that same Goal Area. The ball is in play and can be played or touched by another player only after it leaves this Goal Area. All members of the infringing team must stay out of the Goal Area until the ball leaves it.

14. Fouls, Misconduct, Dangerous Actions and Unsportsmanlike Behavior

A team receives a Free Kick when the opposing team has tripped a player, handled the ball improperly, kicked the ball while lying on the ground, slide-tackled an opponent, performed a “high-kick” or other dangerous action, or engaged in unsportsmanlike actions.

Foul language, taunting, and fighting are strictly prohibited. Players who engage in such conduct will receive a warning and, depending upon the severity, be forced to sub out and then sit out for a period. The opposing team will be awarded a Free Kick to restart play.

Free Kicks are also awarded to a team when a player on the opposing team improperly engages in a second play following a kickoff, throw-in, Drop Ball, Corner Kick, or Goal Kick.

The referee’s decision is final. At all times, coaches, parents and players should show respect for the rules, the referees and the referee’s decisions in a dignified manner. Coaches, parents, and players who cannot control themselves will be asked to leave the game field. If the person who has been asked to leave does not depart within five (5) minutes, then the referee can abandon the game and must report the incident to the Recreation Commissioner.

15. Penalty Kicks

There are no Penalty Kicks in the U5 through U8 age groups.

16. Throw-Ins

When the ball goes over either sideline, the referee will restart play by awarding a throw-in to the team that did **not** touch the ball last before it went out of bounds. The player must take the throw-in within one (1) yard of the spot at which the ball left the field. The player must stand on or behind the Sideline / Touch Line, keep both feet on the ground, and toss the ball with both hands, from behind the player’s head, onto the field. The player taking the throw-in cannot touch the ball (i.e., make a second play) until another player has touched or played the ball.

If a player does not take the throw-in correctly, then the referee will grant a re-take after the child has been instructed how to properly perform the skill. If the child cannot master the skill after two (2) attempts, then the referee will give the ball to the other team.

A player cannot score a goal directly from a throw-in. Instead, another player must touch or play the ball before it may be kicked into the goal.

17. Goal Kicks

When the ball goes over a Goal Line and is last touched by an attacking player, the defending team will receive a Goal Kick.

The defending team may take the Goal Kick from anywhere inside the Goal Area, and the ball must be stationary prior to the kick. The attacking team must back up behind the “build-out line” before the defending team takes the Goal Kick in U5 through U10 matches.

For U5 thru U8 age groups, the “build-out line” is midfield (i.e., the line that crosses through the center kickoff circle).

For U9 and U10 age groups, the “build out line” is not the midfield line. It is a line that is closer to the Goal Line from which the Goal Kick is taken, and it may be marked with cones or chalk lines on the field. Coaches should confirm the precise location of the “build-out line” with the official referee before kickoff.

There is NO build out line for U11 and older (NCSL play). Opponents must be outside of the penalty area until the ball is in play.

If a child does not take the Goal Kick correctly, then the child will re-take the kick after the child has been instructed how to do so properly. If the child cannot master the skill after two attempts, then the referee will give the ball to one of the child’s teammates. The player taking the Goal kick cannot make a second play until after another player plays or touches it.

Players cannot score a goal directly from a Goal Kick. Instead, the ball must be passed to or played by another player before the player who has taken the Goal Kick may make a second play.

18. Corner Kick

When the ball is last touched by a defending player and goes over a Goal Line, the attacking team will be awarded a Corner Kick.

The attacking team will take the Corner Kick from inside the Goal Area, within one (1) yard of the corner on the side of the field where the ball went out of bounds. The ball must be stationary at the start of the Corner Kick, and the defending players must be at least five (5) yards from the ball. Once the attacking player kicks the ball and the ball moves, it is in play. The player who takes the Corner Kick cannot make a second play until after another player touches (or plays) the ball. Players may not score a goal directly from a Corner Kick.

If the attacking player does not take the Corner Kick correctly, then the referee will instruct the child on how properly to take the Corner Kick, and the attacking player will be granted a

do-over. If the child cannot master the skill after two (2) attempts, then the referee will give the ball to a different attacking player, and that player will take the Corner Kick.

19. Travel Players Playing Recreation

To facilitate the transition from Recreation to Travel, all new Travel players are allowed to play simultaneously on a Recreation team and on a Travel team for one season only (either Fall or Spring), provided that those players are in the U9 or U8 age group. Any Travel players who are older than U9 may not play simultaneously at both levels, even if they are new to Travel.

Addendum to Gunston Soccer Club's Recreation Soccer Rules

I. Agreements Between Coaches

All agreements between coaches must be relayed to the center referee before the game.

II. Fair Playing Time

Each coach must ensure that every player plays at least half a game (and as close to equal playing time as possible). Every player must also get in the game at least once before the second half begins. The only exception to these two preceding requirements is if a team has no available substitutes –for example, because other players have opted out of their rotations, or the team has exactly the number of players that is required to play the game (e.g., a U7 team plays 4 v. 4, and only four players show up to game day).

At no time should a player play the entire game unless the team has no available substitutes. Moreover, at the U9 age group, no single player may play goalkeeper for more than one half during the game.

To facilitate the fair playing-time rules in this section, U5 through U8 coaches should substitute players during, and not just after, every quarter.

It is the coaches' responsibility to enforce these rules. In cases of flagrant disregard for the rules, the referee will report the coach to the Recreation Commissioner.

III. Substitutions

For the U5 through U8 age groups, it is preferable, whenever appropriate, to substitute players at the end of each quarter. As noted above, however, U5 through U8 coaches should substitute players whenever needed in order to implement the Fair Playing Time requirements described in Section II of this addendum ("Fair Playing Time").

For the U9 and older age groups, substitutions may only be made according to FIFA substitution laws.

IV. Score Reporting and Sportsmanship

The recreational league does not record game scores or post standings, except for those teams that play in the National Capital Soccer League ("NCSL," formerly the Suburban Friendship League ("SFL")). Certified referees do, however, keep score at the U9 and older age groups, and coaches are expected to report scores to their age group commissioners in a timely fashion beginning at U8 so that internal tournaments may be accurately seeded.

We do not officially keep scores at the U5 thru U8 age groups. Nevertheless, most coaches (and players) know the score during a game. For the U5 through U8 age groups only, if a team is losing by four (4) goals or more, then that team may add an extra player to the field (e.g., a 4 v. 4 game in U7 would become a 5 v. 4 game). That team may keep its extra player on the field until the score differential falls to three (3) goals or less. Once the score differential drops below four (4) goals, the extra player must come off the field and the teams return to even play.

There are some games in which the score differential will continue to increase, even with the extra player on the field. In those circumstances, coaches for both teams are expected to work together to take measures to help ensure that the game remains a fun and engaging development opportunity for both teams. There are many ways to implement this. For example, the team that is in the lead may: (i) move its build-out line back to its Goal Kick line in order to give the other team more time and space; (ii) require that three (3) or more of its players touch the ball before the team can score again; (iii) require that the team complete three (3) or more passes before the team can score again; (iv) change the position of a dominant player; or even (v) swap certain players with players on the team that is down by four (4) or more goals. These are examples only; not limitations.

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**Quick Matrix to the Addendum
to Gunston Soccer Club's Recreation Soccer Rules**

Age Group	Minutes Per Period	Ball Size	Players on the Field	Field Size	Does Offsides Apply?	Substitutions
U5	5 minutes (quarters)	3	3 v 3	30 x 20 yards	No	As needed to implement Fair Playing Time (see Addendum Section II)
U6	7 minutes (quarters)	3	3 v 3 (default) or 4 v 4 (by coaches' mutual agreement)	30 x 20 yards	No	As needed to implement Fair Playing Time (see Addendum Section II)
U7	8 minutes (quarters)	3	4 v 4 including GKs (NO punting)	35 x 25 yards	No	As needed to implement Fair Playing Time (see Addendum Section II)
U8	15 minutes (quarters)	3	5 v 5 including GKs (NO punting)	50 x 35 yards	No	As needed to implement Fair Playing Time (see Addendum Section II)
U9 & U10	30 minutes (halves)	4	7 v 7 including GKs	70 x 50 yards	yes	Throw Ins, Goal Kicks, Half Time
U11 & U12 (NCSL)	30 minutes (halves)	4	9 v 9 including GKs	80 x 60 yards	yes	Throw Ins, Goal Kicks, Half Time
U13 & U14 (NCSL)	35 minutes (halves)	5	11 v 11 including GKs	100 x 70 yards (full size)	yes	Throw Ins, Goal Kicks, Half Time
U15 – U19 (NCSL)	45 minutes (halves)	5	11 v 11 including GKs	100 x 70 yards (full size)	yes	Throw Ins, Goal Kicks, Half Time