



Recreational League

Playing Rules

Under U9 & 10

1) Field of Play

- a) Goals: width = 21 feet, height = 7 feet
- b) Field dimensions: width = 40 to 50 yards, length = 60 to 70 yards
- c) Penalty area: 14 yards out to the side of each goal post along goal line and 14 yards out from goal line.
- d) Goal area: 6 yards out to the side of each goal post along the goal line and 6 yards out from the goal line.
- e) Markings: half line, center spot, center circle with a 8 yard radius, 4 corner arcs with 1 yard radius, touch lines and goal lines, penalty spot 12 yards out from the center of the goal.
- f) Flags: corner flag at each corner at least 5 feet tall
- g) Home Team chooses side of field
- h) Subject to change.

2) The Ball

- a) Size 4 balls in good condition. Ball should be firm.
- b) Game ball provided by Home team.

3) Number of Players for U9

- a) **GU9** (7v7) no more than **7 players/ BU9** (8v8) no more than 8 players from each team on the field one of whom must be the goalkeeper. A minimum of 4 players on each team is needed to start the game. After a 5-minute grace period, the game will be forfeited. If a team is short players, the opposing team is NOT required to reduce the number of players on the field to match the other team's shortage.
- b) Home team is the first team listed on the game schedule.
- c) Substitutions are generally made at the end of each quarter but may be allowed for a problem with the Referee's permission when play is stopped.
- d) Goalkeeper change needs referee's permission.
- e) Each Coach Shall Mark the players on the field at the start of each quarter, working with the other to see that each player plays at least 3 quarters of each game. Otherwise your game will result in a forfeit



4) Number of Players for U10

- a) No more than **8 players** from each team on the field one of whom must be the goalkeeper. A minimum of 4 players on each team is needed to start the game. After a 5-minute grace period, the game will be forfeited. If a team has short players, the opposing team is NOT required to reduce the number of players on the field to match the other team's shortage.
- b) Home team is the first team listed on the game schedule.
- c) Substitutions are generally made at the end of each quarter but may be allowed for a problem with the Referee's permission when play is stopped.
- d) Goalkeeper change needs referee's permission

5) Player's Equipment

- a) Jersey – with number, shorts, socks, shin guards (**mandatory**), soccer cleats.
- b) No rings, earrings, bracelets, necklaces, jewelry, or hard hair clips – any object, which is dangerous, to another player or themselves, is not allowed on the field.
- c) In case of color conflict the Home team needs to change shirts.
- d) Socks must be worn outside of the shin guards and completely cover them.
- e) Goalkeeper shirts must be different colors than those of all field players.

6) Referees

- a) Protect the players. This is their first duty.
- b) Enforces the rules and briefly explains rule violations to players.
- c) May change any decision as long as play has not been restarted.
- d) May caution or send off any player or coach for cause.
- e) Report all cautions, sendoffs, and any coach's misbehavior to your assignor/coordinator.
- f) If a game gets out of control, the referee will end the game and leave the area ASAP; call the assignor at the end of the day to report.
- g) Keep game time – ensure that games start and end on time.
- h) The coaches or parents of each team will each referee half of the game if there is no official referee.

7) Assistant Referees (AR aka. 'Linesman')

- a) Each coach should furnish an AR to help the referee by signaling when the ball goes completely across the goal or touch lines and which team gets to restart the game.
- b) The referee should talk to the AR before the game and explain their duties to them.
- c) The referee has the final word on any decision.

8) Duration of the Game - The game is to be divided into four 12 minute quarters with a 5-minute half-time break. The game must end before the next game's start time

9) Start of Play

- a) Kickoff: Game starts with a kickoff at the center spot by the Home team. The team kicking off must be on their side of the half line. All defenders must be on their side of the field and outside the



center circle.

- b) Second half starts with the visiting team taking the kickoff and the two teams have switched sides of the field.
- c) Kickoff cannot be taken until the referee blows the whistle.
- d) The player taking the kickoff cannot touch it a second time until another player touches it
- e) Drop Ball: When the referee stops the game for an injury, a non-player on the field, or any other unusual cause, the game is restarted with a drop ball.
- f) The ball must touch the ground before it can be played. Since the referee put the ball in play the first player to touch it can touch it more than once.

10) Ball In and Out of Play

- a) The ball is out of play when the whole ball crosses the outside edge of the touchline or the goal line or the referee stops the game.
- b) The ball is in play at all other times; even if it bounces off the referee, corner flag, goal posts and crossbar; as long as it does not go out of play first.

11) Method of Scoring

- a) A goal is scored when the ball goes completely over the goal line, between the goal posts and under the crossbar.
- b) A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw-in or an indirect kick.

12) Offside - “*Offside position*” and “*Offside*” are not the same. It is *not* against the rules to be merely in an *offside position*. It is against the rules to be “*offside*.” A basic principle from the earliest days of soccer is that attacks have to go **through** the other team -- you cannot station a player behind the other team and pass the ball over everybody to him/her. A player commits the offside infraction if she is **(a) involved in active play** while **(b) in an offside position**.

- a) A player is **in an “offside position”** if he/she is **all** of these things: In the opponents’ half of the field, **and**
 - i) Ahead of the ball (closer to the opponents’ goal line than the ball), **and**
 - ii) Ahead of the second-last defender (usually, the last defender is the keeper, and the second last is the deepest fullback) **and**
 - iii) He/She is **not** receiving a throw-in, corner kick, or goal kick (those three are exempt).
- b) A player is **involved in active play** (participating is a term often used) if she does **any one** of these:
 - i) • Interferes with play (such as receiving a pass or trying for the ball), **or**
 - ii) • Interferes with an opponent (such as getting in their way or challenging for possession), **or**
 - iii) • Gains an advantage as a result of being in that offside position (such as getting the rebound off a goalkeeper’s save, or being in the right spot to capitalize on a defender’s miss-kick). An important feature of offside is that the offside position and participation in play are **judged at the moment the ball is played** by an attacking teammate.
 - iv) If an attacker is in an onside position when the ball is passed forward, and she then runs past the defense to get it, **that is not offside** even if she is beyond the second-last defender when she reaches the ball.
 - v) If an attacker is in an offside position when the ball is passed, and then runs back into an onside



position (such as into her own half) to collect it, **that is offside**, because the offside position was determined when her teammate played the ball.

- vi) You cannot be offside when the opponents have control of the ball – offside position is judged at the moment a teammate plays the ball. Therefore, if the goalkeeper, after controlling the ball with his hands, accidentally throws it to an offside opponent, there is no offense. **Both conditions -- position and participation -- must be met.**
- vii) It is not an offense merely to be in offside position -- the player in offside position does not commit any offense if she just stands there and stays out of play.
- viii) However, if the conditions are met, it is an offense even if the offside player did not intend anything wrong -- this infraction is based on simple geometry and participation in active play, not mind reading by the referee. Offside is restarted with an indirect free kick from the spot of the infraction.

13) Fouls and Misconduct

- a) **Ten penal fouls** – ball must be in play for a penal foul to be called. Game is restarted with a (1) direct free kick if the player committing the foul is outside the penalty area, or (2) a penalty kick if he is inside the penalty area. Referee should explain all infractions to the offending player.
 - i) Kicking or trying to kick an opponent
 - ii) Tripping or attempting to trip an opponent (opponent does not need to fall down)
 - iii) Jumping at an opponent
 - iv) Charging (running into) an opponent
 - v) Striking or attempting to strike an opponent (automatic send off)
 - vi) Pushing an opponent
 - vii) When tackling an opponent to gain possession of the ball, making contact with the opponent before touching the ball.
 - viii) Spitting at an opponent
 - ix) Holding an opponent
 - x) Deliberately handling the ball with hand or arms (not to be called unless the player is trying to contact the ball)
- b) **Six non-penal fouls** – restart with an indirect free kick
 - i) • Dangerous play (for example: high kicking near another player's head; playing the ball while lying on the ground when an opponent is near; trying to head a low ball that someone else is trying to play with their foot)
 - ii) • Impeding the progress of an opponent when not playing or attempting to play the ball (previously called obstruction)
 - iii) Goalkeeper violations:
 - (1) Touches the ball with hands after receiving it directly from a throw-in taken by a teammate.
 - (2) Touches the ball with hands after a teammate intentionally plays it to him with his foot.
 - (3) Releasing a ball (after he has it in control) and picking it up again.
 - (4) Takes more than 6 seconds to release the ball into play.
- c) **Advantage rule:** Referees should not call a foul on the defending team in the attacking part of the field if not doing so would be to the advantage of the attacking team (i.e. “a breakaway”).
Misconduct – 2 kinds, a caution and a sendoff
- d) **Caution** (must show player the yellow card) – referee should warn player first about behavior if at



all possible.

- i) Player enters or leaves the field without permission.
 - ii) Player continually breaks rules
 - iii) Player argues with the referee
 - iv) Unsporting behavior
 - v) Delaying the restart of play
 - vi) Failing to respect the required distance at a corner kick or free kick
- e) **Send off** (must show player the red card)
- i) Violent conduct (in general, any violent act committed when not competing for the ball, including spitting at an opponent **will result in suspension from the league.**
 - ii) Serious foul play (a foul involving excessive force; also includes denying an opponent an obvious goal scoring opportunity by a foul, and denying a goal by handling the ball)
 - iii) Using offensive, insulting, abusive, or threatening language and/or gestures.
 - iv) Receives a second caution
- f) **SUSPENSION: COACH, ASSISTANT COACH, PARENT, OR/AND PLAYER receiving Red Card(s) will be faced with the following actions**
- i) **1st Red Card will Result in a 1 game suspension from ECP (coach, asst. coach, parent or player will not be permitted to participate during their team's next match).**
 - ii) **If the recipient of a Red card does not immediately leave the field of play, a 2nd game suspension will apply. Once a Red card is issued the recipient must head to the parking lot until the game is over. Arguing with the Ref, stepping on the field, or an action deemed a misconduct will lead to further suspension, at the discretion of the league.**
 - iii) **Additional Red Cards for the same individual(s) will be reviewed by the Club Officials, which may result in further corrective action up to and including permanent suspension from the league.**

14) Free Kick

- a) Free kick is given due to a player breaking a rule while the ball is in play and causing the referee to stop the game
- b) Direct free kick – can score directly. Referee indicates by pointing in the attacking direction of the team taking the kick.
- c) • Indirect free kick – a player besides the kicker must touch the ball before a goal can be scored. Referee indicates by holding arm straight up until the kick is taken and touched by another or goes out of play.
- d) Opponents must be 6 yards from the ball when the kick is taken.

15) Penalty Kick - Penalty kick is given if a player commits one of the penal fouls within his or her own penalty area.

- a) Referee indicates by pointing toward the penalty spot.
- b) The ball is placed on the penalty spot (8 yards from the goal).
- c) The goalkeeper must have both feet on the goal line and can move laterally on the goal line, between the goal posts, before the ball is kicked. He may not move forward.
- d) All other players, except the kicker, must be behind the penalty spot, and outside the penalty area



and the penalty arc.

- e) If someone on the defending team encroaches into the penalty area before the kick is taken and the kick scores, the goal counts. If the shot misses, the shot is retaken. If someone on the kicking team encroaches and the shot is made, then it must be taken over. If it misses, game goes on.
- f) If someone from each team encroaches, the kick is retaken in any case.
- g) The ball must be played forward and the kicker cannot strike it again before another player touches it.

16) Throw-In - A throw-in is taken to restart play when the ball goes over the touchline. One re-throw must be allowed if foul throw occurs. The referee shall explain the proper method before allowing the player to re-throw.

- a) Part of each foot has to be on the ground on or behind the touchline prior to release of the ball.
- b) The thrower at the moment of delivering the ball must face the field of play.
- c) Throw must be started with the ball behind the head.
- d) The ball must be thrown, not dropped.
- e) The player must face the direction of the throw.
- f) The thrower cannot play the ball again until another player touches it.
- g) A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw-in.

17) Goal Kick - During play, if the attacking team propels the ball over the goal line, but not into the goal, play stops. The Opposing team puts the ball back into play using a Goal Kick.

- a) The ball must be stationary and is kicked from any point within the goal area by a player of the defending team.
- b) The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves.
- c) Opponents must be outside the penalty area until the ball is in play.

18) Corner Kick - If the defending team propels the ball over the goal line, but not into the goal, play stops. The opposing team puts the ball back into play using a Corner Kick.

- a) Kick taken from quarter-circle in corner area.
- b) Corner flag or cone cannot be moved.
- c) Ball is in play once it is kicked.
- d) Kick is taken from the corner nearest the spot where the ball went out of play.
- e) All opponents must be at least 8 yards from the ball.
- f) Kicker cannot play the ball again unless touched by another player (either team).
- g) A goal can be scored directly from a corner kick.

19) League Standings and Scoring

- a) Teams will be awarded points for games:
 - points for a win
 - for a forfeit win – scored 1 - 0
 - 1 point for a tie
 - 0 points for a loss

3
3 points



- b) Ties in points in the preliminary rounds shall use the following tiebreaker rules in order:
1. The winner in head-to-head competition
 2. Goal differential (goals scored minus goals allowed to a maximum differential of 4 per game)
 3. Least goals allowed
 4. Most goals scored
 5. Shut-out wins (forfeits not counting)
 6. FIFA kicks from the penalty mark
 7. If more than two (2) teams are tied at the end of the round, the tiebreaker criteria listed shall be used in the order shown until one team is advanced or one team is eliminated, or both. If remaining teams are still tied at this point in the tie-breaking process, they will then be compared beginning again with step 1 until another team is either advanced or eliminated or both.

20) Common Sense

- a) Do what is fair and right.
- b) Team officials and players are encouraged to shake hands with opponents before and after the game.
- c) The Coach controls the behavior of players and parents. If Coach loses control then so will everyone else.
- d) Positive encouragement and praises are required at all times for players.

21) Recreational Play – Mercy Rule

The following rules will be applied to all recreational games played in Empire Soccer Club recreational leagues. The mercy rule is as follows:

1. When there is a 4-goal differential, the winning team may not score within the Penalty Box area and all the shots must be taken from the outside of the Penalty Box.
2. When there is a 6-goal differential, the winning team must pull out a player; preferably, their striker.
3. When there is a 7-goal differential, the winning team must pull out another player