

# Laws of the Game – Modified

8 and Under

## Law 1 – The Field of Play

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### **MINI FIELD**

**Dimensions:** The field of play must be rectangular. The length of the touchline must be greater than the length of the goal line.

**Length:** minimum 25 yards      maximum 35 yards

**Width:** minimum 15 yards      maximum 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:** Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line four (4) yards from the inside of each goalpost. These lines extend into the field of play for a distance of five (5) yards and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line.

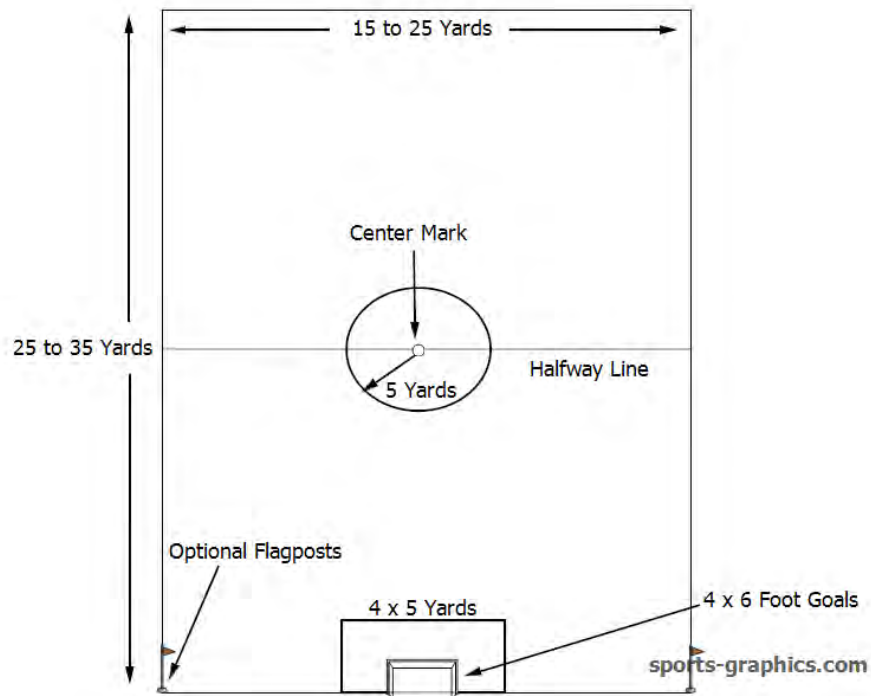
**The Penalty Area:** None.

**Flagposts:** Corner flags are optional.

**The Corner Arc:** None.

**Goals:** Goals must be placed on the center of each goal line. They consist of two upright posts equidistant from the corners and joined at the top by a horizontal crossbar. The recommended distance between the posts is six (6) feet and the distance from the lower edge of the crossbar to the ground is four (4) feet. Goals for this age group may be smaller.

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



## Law 2 – The Ball

Size three (3). The ball will need to be FIFA Quality.

Optional: use a lightweight<sup>1</sup> size four (4) ball or a Futsal ball to keep the ball mostly on the ground.

## Law 3 – The Number of Players

A match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than four (4) players. There are NO goalkeepers.

Substitutions: At any stoppage of play and unlimited.

N. B.: A player who is suspected to have a head injury<sup>i</sup> leaves the field of play for additional evaluation, a substitution can be made in that moment.

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. Teams and matches may be coed.

The maximum team roster size is six (6).<sup>ii</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A lightweight version reduces the weight of a size 4 soccer ball while still staying within the standards set by U. S. Soccer. Physical benefits of a lightweight ball include less stress on joints at the moment of impact and young players can make long passes, hard shots and block attempts by opponents.

## Law 4 – The Players Equipment

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Conform to the FIFA 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; with the exception of a medical alert bracelet).

## Law 5 – The Referee

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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 Other Match Officials

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None.

## Law 7 – The Duration of the Match

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The match shall be divided into four (4) periods of not more than 10 minutes, based on the energy and motivation of the players. The length of the match should be determined before the match starts by both coaches. There shall be a maximum of a five (5) minute break between each period. The four periods do not have to be of equal duration.

## Law 8 – The Start and Restart of Play

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Conform to the FIFA 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

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Conform to the FIFA Laws of the Game.

## Law 10 – The Method of Scoring

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Conform to the FIFA Laws of the Game.

## Law 11 – Offside

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None.

## Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

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Conform to the FIFA 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 from the spot of the offense. If the deliberate header occurs within the goal area [if one is being used], the indirect free kick should be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred.

The game official must explain ALL infringements to the offending player. No cards shown for misconduct.

N.B.: 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

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Conform to the FIFA Laws of the Game with the exception that all free kicks are indirect and all opponents are to be at least five (5) yards from the ball until it is kicked. Deliberate heading is not allowed in 4 vs. 4 games.

## Law 14 – The Penalty Kick

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None.

## Law 15 – The Throw-In

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Conform to the FIFA Laws of the Game.

Optional: the throw-in may be replaced with the pass-in<sup>2</sup>; otherwise conform to the FIFA Laws of the Game. Opposing players are to be at least two (2) yards from the ball until it is kicked. *This option is strongly recommended by US Youth Soccer.*

## Law 16 – The Goal Kick

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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.

Optional: If the goal area is marked on the field of play then the goal kick shall be taken there. The ball must leave the goal area before being touched by another player.

## Law 17 – The Corner Kick

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

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<sup>2</sup> The ball is placed on the ground off of the field of play and is kicked into the field of play.

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<sup>i</sup> Per U.S. Soccer's Concussion Initiative, if a player is suspected to have a head injury the referee\* is instructed to stop play allow for treatment/evaluation as needed. If the player leaves field of play for additional evaluation, a substitution can be made in that moment. The player with the suspected head injury may not return to game unless a Health Care Professional (HCP) or Certified Athletic Trainer (ATC) has cleared the player. Any coach or parent insisting on returning the player to game without approved clearance will result in the referee\* ending the game.

\*Since there is no referee in 4 vs. 4, this responsibility falls to the coaches and parents involved.

<sup>ii</sup> The Youth Academy philosophy emphasizes player development over team development and focuses on the technical development of each child without the pressures of short-term match outcome. This club based format is in the best interest of both the short-term and long-term development of the children. In most instances, the youth academy format does not have set teams. Instead, the players all register with the club, but not a specific team. US Youth Soccer supports this approach for the 8 and Under age group.

