

MINI SOCCER RULES

Introduction

Mini Soccer is accepted by experts all over the world as being the best environment for children to learn the game, have fun and develop individual and team skills.

Mini Soccer benefits include:

- Smaller fields allow for a smoother transition between offense and defense.
- Mini soccer lets teams succeed when players support each other, move the ball out of pressure, depend on their individual skills, good first touch, passing and receiving the ball.
- The smaller goalposts give goalkeepers a chance to make saves that would be impossible with full size goals.
- Fewer players on the field which means more touches on the ball
- Simplified rules allow players to play and have fun.

RULE 1: The Field of Play

The Mini field is created by dividing Adult fields into mini fields. The goals are portable and have nets attached.

Fields markings identify the side lines (touch-line), goal lines (end-lines), goal area and corners. Corner flags are placed in each corner by the referee before the game.

RULE 2: The Ball

Each player must bring their own practice ball each week. Their name and number should be printed on the ball with permanent marker. At the end of the practice the player should give their ball to their parents for safe keeping. The club provides **one** free practice ball for each player. Replacement balls may be purchased.

A size 4 game ball will be provided by the referee.

RULE 3: Number of Players

The number of players on the field for each team will usually be 7 players plus a goalkeeper. However, the Club will adjust the number of players accordingly to accommodate enrollment, age groups and to the size of the mini fields to ensure that optimum learning and quality of programming is maintained. The maximum number of players on the team will be 14.

A minimum of 5 players is required to start the game.

In the younger divisions where there are no team standings kept, a team that has less than 5 players may borrow players from the opposing team so that the game is not one sided and so that one team is not playing short handed while players on the other team are sitting on the bench. There will be pinnies in the trailer that can be borrowed for the game.

In divisions where standings are kept, a team that has less than 5 players at game time will forfeit the game and the opposing team will win by a 1 – 0 default. If both teams have less than 5 players then no points are awarded for either team. The game will continue as a friendly game and the team that is short handed can borrow players from the opposing team.

RULE 4: Player's Equipment

Players shall not wear anything which endangers themselves or other players. This includes jewelry & watches.

Basic compulsory equipment shall consist of a numbered shirt, shorts, socks, soccer shoes and shin guards. **The referee cannot permit any player to play without shin guards.**

The goal keeper must wear a pinnie which will be provided by the referee.

A player who is asked to leave the field of play because of defective or dangerous equipment may not re-enter the field of play until the referee is satisfied that the equipment is permissible.

RULE 5: The Referee

The referee appointed to officiate a mini-soccer game will have the full authority to enforce the mini-soccer rules. Referee decisions regarding facts connected to play are final.

The referee shall:

- Enforce the rules of the game.
- Refrain from penalizing in cases where the offending team may gain an advantage.
- Report to the field convener or head referee, any misconduct by players, parents, spectators or other persons which takes place on the field of play or it's vicinity at any time during the game.
- Control who may enter or leave the field of play.
- Control when players may enter or leave the field of play.
- Stop the game immediately if a player appears to be Injured or bleeding.
- Signal to start the game, and to restart it after a stoppage.
- Decide if the field of play and all applicable equipment is suitable.
- Ask coaches, players, parents and spectators to move from behind the net
- Ask coaches, players, parents and spectators to back up if they are too close to the sidelines
- Ensure that coaches, assistant coaches and subs are on one side of the field and spectators and parents are on the opposite side of the field.

RULE 6: Duration of the Game

The game shall be divided into 6 seven minute intervals, 3 in the first half and 3 in the second half.

There will be a half-time break which shall be 5 minutes in duration.

If for any reason, a game is terminated before the end of full-time play, the league manager shall decide the outcome of the game.

Substitutions are permitted only at the end of each interval which are equally timed and signaled by the referees. All players sitting on the bench must play the next shift. The exception is for injuries or illness.

RULE 7: Start of Play

At the beginning of the game, choice of halves and the kick-off shall be decided by the toss of a coin or “rock, paper, scissors”. The team which wins the toss will take the kick-off at the start of the game. The opposing team will take the kick-off at the start of the second half.

At all other intervals the kick-off will be awarded to the team who last had possession of the ball before at the end of the previous interval.

Teams change ends at half time.

At a kick-off, all players shall be in their own half of the field of play. All players opposing the team taking the kick-off shall be not less than 6 yards (5.5 meters) from the ball until it is kicked-off. The game shall be started by the referee giving a signal. The ball will be in play when it is kicked forward into the opponent’s half of the field.

For any infringement of this rule, the kick-off shall be retaken.

Should the player taking the kick-off play or touch the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player, a free-kick shall be awarded to the opposing team.

After a goal has been scored, the game shall be restarted by a kick-off, to be taken by a player of the team against which the goal was scored

For any stoppage not mentioned elsewhere in these rules, the referee shall restart the game by dropping the ball at the place where it was when play was stopped, unless play was stopped in the penalty-area. In this case, the ball shall be dropped on the penalty-area line at the point nearest to where the ball was when play was stopped. The ball shall be in play as soon as it touches the ground.

A goal may be scored directly from a kick-off.

RULE 8: Ball In and Out of Play

The ball is OUT of play:

- When the **entire** ball has crossed the end line, or side line, whether on the ground or in the air.
- When the play has been stopped by the referee.

The ball is IN play:

- At all other times including when it rebounds into play from a goal-post, a cross-bar, a corner flag post, or referee and remains in the field of play.

RULE 9: Method of Scoring

A goal is scored when the entire ball has crossed over the goal-line, between the goal-posts and under the cross-bar, provided it has not been thrown, carried or intentionally propelled by hand or arm of an attacking player, except by a goalkeeper from within his own penalty-area.

The referee shall be the sole judge as to whether a goal has been scored.

During the course of play, should any outside agent prevent the ball from passing into the goal or assist the ball into the goal, play shall be stopped. The referee shall restart the game by dropping the ball.

** The goal posts, the corner flags and the referee are part of the game and are not considered outside agents.*

RULE 10: Direct Free-kicks

For any infringement of the mini-soccer rules when the ball is in play, the referee may award a direct free-kick to the non-offending team. The free-kick shall be taken from the place where the infringement occurred, unless the free-kick is awarded to the attacking team within its opponents' penalty-area, in which case the kick shall be taken from the penalty mark (or the edge of the penalty area).

At the taking of a free-kick, the ball shall be stationary and all opponents shall be not less than 6 yards (5.5M) from the ball until it has been kicked. The ball shall be in play when it is kicked and moved.

A player taking a free-kick within his own penalty-area shall kick the ball into play beyond the penalty-area. The ball shall be in play when it has been kicked and moved and has passed outside the penalty-area. All opponents shall be outside the penalty area and not less than 6 yards (5.5M) from the ball until it has been kicked.

For any infringement of this rule, the free-kick shall be retaken.

A player taking a free-kick shall not play or touch the ball a second time until it has been played or touched by another player. For any infringement of this rule, a free-kick shall be awarded to the opposing team.

Goals can be scored directly from the free kick and do not have to be touched by another player before entering the opposing team's goal.

RULE 11: Penalty-kick

A penalty-kick shall be taken from the penalty-mark. A penalty kick is a direct kick. All players, with the exception of the defending goalkeeper and the player taking the kick, shall be outside the penalty area but within the field of play, not less than 6 yards (5.5M) from the ball until it has been kicked.

The goalkeeper shall remain on his own goal-line facing the kicker, and between the goal-posts, until the ball has been kicked.

The player taking the penalty-kick must kick the ball forward. The ball shall be in play when the ball is kicked and moves forward. The player shall not play or touch the ball a second time until it has been played or touched by another player.

If necessary, the time of play shall be extended to allow a penalty-kick to be taken.

For any infringement of this rule:

- By a member of the attacking team, if a goal is scored it shall be disallowed and a free kick awarded to the defending team, to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred.
- By a member of both teams, the kick shall be retaken whether a goal has been scored or not.

If, after the kick has been taken, the ball or the goalkeeper is interfered with by an outside agent, the kick shall be retaken.

RULE 12: Fouls and Misconduct

A player who, **in the opinion of the referee**, intentionally commits any of the following offences, shall be penalized by the awarding of a free-kick to the opposing team:

- **Spits at an opponent**
- **Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent**
- **Trips or attempts to trip an opponent**
- **Jumps at an opponent**
- **Charges an opponent**
- **Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent**
- **Holds an opponent**
- **Pushes an opponent**
- **Handles the ball deliberately, (except a goalkeeper from within his own penalty area)**
- **Tackles an opponent to gain possession of the ball, making contact with the opponent before touching the ball**

Should a player commit one of the above offences within his own penalty-area, a penalty kick shall be awarded.

RULE 13: Throw-In

When the entire ball has crossed the side-line, either on the ground or in the air, the ball shall be thrown in from the point where it left the field of play, by a member of the opposing team of the player who last played or touched it.

The player taking the throw-in shall:

- Face the field of play,
- Have part of each foot on the touch line or on the ground outside the side-line
- Use both hands, and deliver the ball from behind and over her/his head.

If the player fails to throw the ball in correctly, she/he **may** be permitted a second attempt at the referee's discretion.

If the throw-in is unsuccessful, a throw-in shall be awarded to the opposing team.

The ball will be in play immediately after it enters the field of play.

If the player taking the throw-in plays or touches the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player, a free-kick shall be awarded to the opposing team.

At the taking of a throw-in, all opponents must be at least 2 meters from the ball.

A goal may not be scored directly from a throw-in.

RULE 14: Goal-kick

When the entire ball has crossed the goal-line, either on the ground or in the air, excluding that portion between the goal-posts, having last been played or touched by a member of the attacking team, a goal-kick shall be awarded to the defending team.

The ball shall be kicked into play from a point within that half of the penalty area nearest to where the ball crossed the goal-line.

At the taking of a goal-kick, all opponents shall be outside the penalty-area until it has been kicked into play. The ball shall be in play when it has traveled directly beyond the penalty-area.

If the player taking the goal-kick plays or touches the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player, a free-kick shall be awarded to the opposing team.

A goal may be scored directly from a goal-kick.

RULE 15: Corner-kick

When the whole of the ball has crossed the goal-line, either on the ground or in the air, excluding that portion between the goal-posts, having last been played or touched by a member of the defending team, a corner-kick shall be awarded to the attacking team.

The corner-kick shall be taken from within the corner-arc nearest to where the ball crossed the goal-line.

All opponents shall be not less than 6 yards (5.5M) from the ball until it has been kicked.

The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves.

If the player taking the corner-kick plays or touches the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player, a free-kick shall be awarded to the opposing team.

A goal may be scored directly from a corner-kick.

Pass-Back to goalkeeper:

In 11 aside soccer a free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a goalkeeper, inside his own penalty area:

- touches the ball with his hands after it has been deliberately kicked to him by a team-mate
- touches the ball with his hands after he has received it directly from a throw-in taken by a team-mate

**** It will be at the discretion of the referee as to whether the pass-back rule is enforced. This will depend on the age and understanding of the players. Consistency will be maintained should the rule be enforced in a division.***

Sometimes the referee must use common sense, use discretion and take the age of the players into account in applying the rules.

Off-side: Not applicable in Mini Soccer.

Safety is the first priority.

It is the responsibility of all adults at the field to set a good example of sportsmanship and fair play by both word and action.

Smoking and consumption of alcohol is strictly prohibited on or around the grounds.