



Little Warriors: U6/U7 Game Rules

Purpose

The Denver United FC Little Warriors game format is designed to provide U6 and U7 players with a fun, active, and developmentally appropriate introduction to soccer. Games emphasize participation, individual development, decision-making, and enjoyment while introducing players to the basic structure and rules of the game.

Coaches should apply the rules consistently while prioritizing player safety and keeping the game moving.

Game Format

- Format: 4v4
- Goalkeepers: None
- Ball Size: Size 3
- Offside: Not enforced
- Heading: Not permitted
- Slide Tackling: Not permitted

All players attack and defend. Players may defend in front of the goal, but no player should be positioned permanently as a goalkeeper.

Game Day Structure

Little Warriors game days will consist of approximately 45–60 minutes of scheduled game play. The exact format may vary based on program enrollment, roster sizes, field availability, and the number of teams participating.

Game days may be organized using one of the following formats:

- 4 x 12-minute blocks — 48 minutes
- 3 x 15-minute blocks — 45 minutes
- 3 x 20-minute blocks — 60 minutes

DUFC will determine the appropriate format based on the size and structure of the program. Teams, opponents, and players may rotate between blocks as needed to create appropriate 4v4 games and provide a positive developmental experience.

Individual playing time within each block may vary based on roster size, substitutions, attendance, and the game-day format. The scheduled game-day length does not represent a guaranteed amount of individual playing time.

Kick-Off

Each game begins with a kick-off from the center of the field.

After a goal is scored, the team that conceded the goal restarts play with a kick-off from the center of the field.

The ball may be played in any direction. A goal may not be scored directly from the kick-off.

Opposing players should provide appropriate space for the team taking the kick-off to restart play.

Ball Out of Play & Restarts

Little Warriors uses a simplified restart procedure designed to keep the ball at the players' feet and get the game restarted quickly.

For kick-ins, goal kicks, and corner kicks, the player restarting play may either pass the ball into play or dribble the ball into play.

If the player chooses to pass, a goal may not be scored directly from the initial kick. If the player chooses to dribble, the ball is considered in play after the first touch and the player may continue dribbling, pass to a teammate, or attempt to score during the normal course of play.

Opposing players must remain approximately 5 yards from the ball unless otherwise specified.

Kick-Ins

When the ball completely crosses the touchline, the team that did not touch the ball last is awarded a kick-in.

The ball is placed approximately where it left the field. The player may pass the ball to a teammate or dribble the ball directly into play.

Throw-ins are not used in Little Warriors.

A goal may not be scored directly from the initial kick of a kick-in.

Goal Kicks

A goal kick is awarded when the attacking team last touches the ball before it completely crosses the defending team's goal line without a goal being scored.

The defending team may restart play by passing or dribbling the ball into play from near its own goal.

On a goal kick, the opposing team must retreat to the halfway line and remain there until the ball is put into play.

A goal may not be scored directly from the initial kick of a goal kick.

Corner Kicks

A corner kick is awarded when the defending team last touches the ball before it completely crosses its own goal line without a goal being scored.

The attacking team restarts play from the corner area nearest to where the ball crossed the goal line. The player may pass the ball to a teammate or dribble the ball directly into play.

Opposing players must remain approximately 5 yards from the ball.

A goal may not be scored directly from the initial kick of a corner kick.

Fouls & Free Kicks

Coaches should call clear fouls while allowing normal and age-appropriate physical play to continue.

Fouls may include:

- Pushing
- Holding
- Tripping
- Kicking another player
- Deliberate handball
- Dangerous or unsafe play

All fouls result in a free kick for the opposing team from approximately the location of the foul.

The player taking the free kick may either pass the ball into play or dribble the ball into play.

If the player chooses to pass, a goal may not be scored directly from the initial kick. If the player chooses to dribble, the ball is considered in play after the first touch and the player may continue dribbling, passing, or attempting to score as part of normal play.

Opposing players must remain approximately 5 yards from the ball until it is put into play.

There are no penalty kicks in Little Warriors. If a foul occurs close to the goal, the restart is still taken as a normal free kick and defenders must provide the required distance.

Yellow and red cards are not used. If a player's behavior becomes unsafe or inappropriate, the coach should remove the player from the game as necessary and use the situation as a teaching opportunity.

Substitutions

Substitutions may be made at any stoppage of play.

There is no limit on substitutions, and players may re-enter the game.

Coaches should make substitutions efficiently to minimize interruptions to play.

Game Officials & Coaches

Little Warriors games are managed by the coaches. Formal referees are not required.

Coaches and other adults must remain outside the field of play during active play.

Any coach or adult helping officiate the game should position themselves outside the touchline, similar to the positioning of an assistant referee. Because Little Warriors fields are small, games can be effectively managed from outside the field without adults interfering with play.

Coaches are expected to:

- Remain outside the field of play during active play.
- Keep the game moving with minimal unnecessary stoppages.
- Explain rules and restarts using short, age-appropriate instructions.
- Encourage players rather than direct their every action.
- Allow players to make decisions and solve problems.
- Promote sportsmanship and respect.
- Work together to create competitive and balanced games.
- Prioritize player development and enjoyment over results.

The objective is for the game to belong to the players. Coaches should provide guidance when necessary while allowing players the freedom to play, make decisions, and learn through the game.

Competitive Balance

Little Warriors games are intended to provide a competitive and developmentally appropriate experience for all players.

If one team takes a four-goal lead, the trailing team may add one additional player, creating a 5v4 game.

If the lead reaches six goals, the trailing team may add a second additional player, creating a 6v4 game.

If the goal difference decreases, the additional players should be removed accordingly:

- Fewer than 6 goals — return to 5v4.
- Fewer than 4 goals — return to 4v4.

The leading team should not be required to remove players. Players should not be asked to stop scoring, stop attacking, remain in certain areas of the field, or otherwise restrict their normal play because of the score.

The purpose of this rule is to create a more competitive environment while allowing every player to continue playing freely.

Quick Reference

Game Situation	Little Warriors Rule
Game Format	4v4
Goalkeepers	None
Ball	Size 3
Game Day	45–60 minutes of scheduled game play
Approved Formats	4 x 12, 3 x 15, or 3 x 20 minutes
Kick-Off	From center; no direct goal
Kick-In	Pass or dribble into play
Goal Kick	Pass or dribble into play
Goal Kick Opponent Position	Retreat to halfway line
Corner Kick	Pass or dribble into play
Fouls	Free kick; pass or dribble into play
Direct Goals From Restarts	Not permitted from the initial kick
Dribble-In	Player may continue playing after first touch
Opponents' Distance	Approximately 5 yards
Penalty Kicks	None
Offside	None
Heading	Not permitted
Slide Tackling	Not permitted
Substitutions	Any stoppage
4-Goal Difference	Trailing team may add one player
6-Goal Difference	Trailing team may add two players
Game Officials	Games managed by coaches from outside the field

The Little Warriors Standard

Keep the game moving. Keep the ball at their feet. Let the players play.