

Modified Soccer Playing Rules for SMPA Recreational Leagues:

U6, U8, U10 & U12

SMPA Soccer Association, SMPA Parks & Recreation Department

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The Federation of International Football Associations (FIFA) lays down soccer's 17 Laws of the Game. This booklet contains those rules modified for SMPA Recreational Soccer Leagues, and includes an "18th Law" dealing with coach and parent behavior.

Motto

I am honest in competition, I am humble in victory, I accept defeat without envy, and I have an attitude of sportsmanship.

The SMPA ACADEMY WAY

WE PLAY THE RIGHT WAY

We uphold the true values of the game—not just on the field, but off it too. We are committed to supporting and improving our community.

WE GROW TALENT

We turn potential into excellence, and strive to produce intelligent, technically proficient players in a fun, challenging, and positive learning environment.

WE ARE FORWARD-THINKING

We will be successful tomorrow, as well as today. We spend our time and money wisely, and invest sensibly in the future.

WE PUSH THE BOUNDARIES

We lead, not follow. We constantly innovate beyond the expected in every aspect of our association and invest in quality facilities.

WE NEVER STOP

We constantly strive to be better in everything we do. Whatever the circumstances, whatever the pressure, we never stop believing in who we are and how we do things. We never stop moving forward.

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Law I The Field

- A. Dimensions (as marked by SMPA Parks & Recreation)
- B. Goal Area

C. Goals

League Field Dimensions Goal Area Goal Size

U6 25 x 20 yards None 4'H x 6'W

U8 40 x 30 yards 3 x 18 yards 4.5'H x 9'W

U10 50 x 40 yards 6 x 20 yards 6.5'H x 18'W

U12 80 x 50 yards 6 x 20 yards 7'H x 21'W

D. Build Out Line

In U10 match play, the build out line (BOL) is a tool to encourage “playing the ball out of the back” and building attacks involving the backs and goalkeeper in a less-pressured setting.

The BOL specifically impacts three key parts of the game: Offside, Goal Kicks, and the Goalkeeper putting the ball back into play once she has possession of the ball with her hands.

Offside

The BOL marks where an offside attacker may begin to be penalized. Players are not penalized for offside between the halfway line and the build out line.

Goal Kick

Opposing players must move beyond the BOL during a goal kick, and they must remain beyond the build out line until the ball is “in play” (see Law XVI, p. 17).

Goalkeeper in Possession: Ball in Hand

As soon as a goalkeeper gains possession, opposing players must move beyond the BOL, and they must remain beyond the build out line until the ball is in play.

► Goalkeepers may punt or drop-kick the ball.

Punts and drop kicks should be used sparingly and only when a goalkeeper recognizes tactical clues that make a punt or drop kick advantageous for maintaining possession and scoring.

► Goalkeepers are permitted to put the ball into play before opponents are beyond the build out line. However, by doing so, the goalkeeper accepts the consequences of resuming normal play before the opponents move beyond the build out line.

Law II The Ball

The ball shall be made of leather or other approved material. Its size will depend on the age of the players, but should not exceed 28 inches or weigh more than 16 ounces at the beginning of the game. The ball cannot be changed during a game without the referee's permission.

League Ball Size

U6 3

U8 3

U10 4

U12 4

- ▶ In U8 and U6 play, the home team is responsible for providing the game balls.
- ▶ In U10, U12, the home team is responsible for providing the game balls.

Law III The Number of Players

A. The number of players on the field: League Maximum # on Field Minimum # Required for a Match

U6 : 3 V 3

U8 : 5 V 5

U10 : 7 V 7

U12 : 7 V 7 OR 9 V 9

- ▶ U6 and U8 may play matches using the Dual Field Method.
- ▶ In U6 NO GOALKEEPERS.
- ▶ U8 there are GOALKEEPERS.
- ▶ No team shall play with more than a one-player advantage. Coaches must adjust team sizes accordingly, reducing the number of players below the maximum allowed, to ensure fair play (e.g., in U12, 9v7 should be adjusted to 8v7).
- ▶ If a team does not have the minimum number of players required at kick-off, the result is a forfeit, which is recorded as a 0-3 loss. If neither team has the minimum number of players required at kick-off, the match is abandoned, and no result is recorded.

B. Substitutions

The Referee must be notified prior to the substitution, and the substitute player must enter the field at the halfway line.

Substitutions shall take place prior to a throw-in for that respective team, prior to a goal kick for either team; after a goal is scored by either team; after an injury by either team; at halftime, after a water break, between quarters, or at the referee's discretion.

- There are unlimited substitutions per team.

Law IV The Player's Equipment

Shin guards are mandatory at all games and practices! Players shall not wear anything considered dangerous by the referee (e.g., watch, bracelet, jacket with open zippers, rings, earrings, or hair devices that have sharp points).

Shoes should be athletic shoes (e.g., running or tennis shoes) or soccer cleats. Shoes that are considered dangerous by Referees or the SMPA Soccer Association Staff shall not be worn. Baseball, Softball, and Football cleats are not allowed.

Goalkeepers shall wear colors which distinguish them from other players and the referee.

- Players should bring water to all games and practices.

Law V The Referee

Registered referees will be provided for youth league games. In the event one is not available, a Parks & Recreation employee or a parent/coach shall fill in. The referee acts as timekeeper and scorekeeper; inspects the ball and equipment at the beginning of the match to make sure it meets requirements; administers penalties and cautions/expels players for misconduct; stops the game for injury and restarts when ready; and ends the match because of inclement weather, spectator interference, etc. The referee's decisions on points of fact connected to the match are final. However, the referee is encouraged to explain infractions briefly to the offending player or coach at an appropriate time. After the match, the referee reports to Parks and Recreation staff the final score and the details of any yellow cards or red cards issued.

- Coaches shall serve as referees in all U6 matches.

Law VI The Assistant Referee

As available, assistant referees will be used in recreational league games for U10 & U12.

Law VII The Duration of the Match

A. U6

There shall be 4 equal quarters of 10 minutes each. There shall be a 2 minute break between quarter 1 and 2, and quarter 3 and 4, with a 5 minute halftime break between quarters 2 and 3.

B. U8

There shall be (2 games) 4 equal quarters of 10 minutes each. There shall be a 2 minute break between quarter 1 and 2, and quarter 3 and 4, with a 5 minute halftime break between quarters 2 and 3.

C. U10

There shall be 2 equal halves of 25 minutes in length with a 5 minute halftime break.

D. U12

There shall be 2 equal halves of 25 minutes in length with a 5 minute halftime break.

F. Playing Time

Each youth player must play at least one full half of every match and receive equitable playing time throughout the season, provided they regularly attend practices and follow team conduct rules. Coaches must also ensure players experience multiple positions over the course of the season.

G. Water Breaks

If both head coaches agree and notify the referee before the match begins, the referee shall provide a brief water break of at least one minute and no longer than two minutes approximately midway through each half. Even if coaches have not requested water breaks, the referee may, at their discretion, implement water breaks if they determine it is necessary for player safety and well-being. The match clock will continue running during all water breaks.

Law VIII The Start & Restart of Play

A kick-off is used to start play at the beginning of the match, after a goal has been scored, and after half-time. The ball is placed on the center spot and no opposing player may be within the center circle (i.e., within 10 yards of the

ball) until the ball is in play. The ball is “in play” after the kicker has touched the ball and the ball clearly moves in any direction. The kicker may not play the ball again until it has been touched by another player. The kick-off is a direct free kick (see Law XIII). If the ball directly enters the kicker's goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opponent. The toss of a coin determines which team gets to decide whether to kick off first or to have its choice of ends at the beginning of the game. After a team scores a goal, the other team kicks off. Following halftime, ends are changed; and the kick-off is made by the team that did not kick off to start the game. When restarting play from causes other than those just mentioned or those mentioned elsewhere in the laws, and providing the ball has not passed over the touchline or goal line, the referee drops the ball at the place where it was when play was suspended and is in play when it touches the ground.

► U6 and U8: All players must be at least 5 yards from the ball

at the taking of a place kick.

Law IX The Ball In & Out of Play

The ball is out of play when the entire ball has crossed the entire goal line or entire touch line, whether on the ground or in the air, and when the game has been stopped by the referee. The ball is in play at all other times, including when it rebounds from the goalposts and off of officials who are on the field of play.

Law X The Method of Scoring

A goal is scored when the entire ball has passed over the entire goal line, between the goalposts and under the crossbar, providing it has not been thrown, carried, or propelled by hand or arm by a player of the attacking side. The team scoring the most goals wins the match. If no goals are scored, or if an equal number of goals are scored by each team, the game is declared a draw.

Law XI Offside

A player is offside if she is nearer her opponent's goal line than the ball at the moment the ball is played by her teammate, unless:

- 1) She is in her own half of the field; and/or
- 2) At least 2 opponents (including the goalkeeper) are nearer their own goal line than she is; and/or
- 3) She receives the ball directly from a goal kick, corner kick, /throw-in, or drop-ball situation.

The penalty for being offside is an indirect free kick by a player of the opposing team from the place where the infringement occurred. Even though a player may be technically in an offside position, the penalty is not called

unless—in the opinion of the referee—she is interfering with play or with an opponent or is seeking to gain an advantage by being in an offside position.

- ▶ U6 and U8: the Offside Rule shall not be enforced.
- ▶ U10: the build out line marks where an offside attacker may begin to be penalized, replacing the halfway line.

Law XII Fouls & Misconduct

A player who commits a foul shall be penalized by awarding an indirect free kick or direct free kick (see Law XIII) to the opposing side from the place where the offense occurred.

Fouls for which a direct free kick is awarded:

- ▶ Slide tackling an opponent
- ▶ Kicking or attempting to kick an opponent
- ▶ Tripping an opponent
- ▶ Jumping at an opponent
- ▶ Charging an opponent in a violent or dangerous manner
- ▶ Charging from behind unless the opponent is obstructing
- ▶ Striking or attempting to strike an opponent
- ▶ Holding an opponent
- ▶ Pushes an opponent
- ▶ Carrying, striking, or propelling the ball with the hands or arms (i.e., except for the goalkeeper within his own penalty area).

Should a defending player intentionally commit one of the Direct Free Kick offenses within the penalty area, a penalty kick (see Law XVI) is awarded to the opposing team.

Fouls for which an indirect free kick is awarded:

- ▶ Playing in a dangerous manner
- ▶ Charging fairly when the ball is not within playing distance of the players concerned, and they are not trying to play it
- ▶ When not playing the ball, intentionally obstructing an opponent

- ▶ Charging the goalkeeper, except when he is holding the ball, obstructing an opponent, or has moved outside his goal area
- ▶ When playing as goalkeeper, indulging in tactics designed to delay the game to his team's advantage
- ▶ Intentionally heading the ball in U6, U8, U10, and U12 play A player or coach is cautioned (i.e., “yellow card”) if he:
 - ▶ Enters, re-enters, or leaves the field without the referee’s permission
 - ▶ Persistently infringes the Laws of the Game
 - ▶ Shows by word or action dissent from a decision made by the referee
 - ▶ Is guilty of unsporting behavior.

A player or coach is sent off the field (i.e., “red card”) if she:

- ▶ Is guilty of violent conduct or serious foul play
- ▶ Uses abusive language
- ▶ Persists in misconduct after receiving a caution.
- ▶ The referee should explain the offense to the player and to the coach at an appropriate time. If play is stopped when a player or coach is ordered off the field, the game is resumed by an indirect free kick awarded to the opposing side from the place where the infringement occurred.
- ▶ A coach or player who receives a red card is suspended for the remainder of that game and his team’s next scheduled game. A coach or player receiving four cumulative yellow cards, or two red cards, will be suspended from the league for the remainder of that season (including tournament play). The League Sports Coordinator will submit a report to the Board of Directors, which may result in further disciplinary action.
- ▶ After the match, the referee shall report to the League Sports Coordinator the details of all cards issued.
- ▶ All coach infractions will be reported to the Board of Directors, and may result in further disciplinary action.

REMEMBER!

The Goalkeeper is not allowed to use his hands on a ball that is deliberately kicked (by the foot of a teammate) or thrown (by a teammate) to him. Punishment for this foul is an indirect free kick taken from the spot where the goalkeeper touches the ball, unless it is in the goal area, in which case the kick shall be taken at the six yard line.

► Slide Tackling is not allowed in youth recreational league play. Players must attempt to stay on their feet. Slide-tackling an opponent is a foul (see Law XII, p. 11), for which a direct free kick is awarded.

► Heading the ball is not allowed in U6, U8, U10, and U12 youth recreational league play. Intentionally heading the ball is a foul (see Law XII, p. 12), for which an indirect free kick shall be awarded. If a deliberate header occurs within the goal area, the indirect free kick will be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred.

Law XIII Free Kicks

There are two types of free kicks: Direct (from which a goal can be scored), and Indirect (from which a goal cannot be scored, unless the ball has been played or touched by a player in addition to the kicker before it passes through the goal). When a player is taking a free kick inside her own penalty area, all opposing players must remain outside the area and at least 10 yards from the ball. When she is taking a free kick outside her own penalty area, all opposing players must be at least 10 yards from the ball, unless they are standing on their own goal line between the goalposts.

On free kicks, the ball is in play once it has traveled the distance of its own circumference, and the ball cannot be played again by the kicker until it has been touched by another player.

► U6 and U8: Indirect free kicks shall be taken for all offenses, with opposing players located at least 5 yards from the ball.

Law XIV The Penalty Kick

If a defending player is within his own team's penalty area when he intentionally commits any one of the nine offenses that result in the awarding of a direct free kick, the opposing team is granted a penalty kick. The penalty kick is taken from the penalty spot, and all players (except the defending goalkeeper) must stay outside of the penalty area and at least 10 yards away from the ball. The defending goalkeeper must remain on his goal line between the goalposts until the kick is taken. The goalkeeper may move side to side along the line before the kick is taken, but not forward off the line. The player taking the kick must propel the ball forward and cannot play the ball a second time until it has been touched by another player.

► U6 and U8: No penalty kicks shall be taken. Indirect free kicks shall be used for penalty kick offenses.

To restart play after the whole of the ball has passed over a touchline, the ball is thrown in from the point where it crossed the line by a player of the team opposing that of the person who last touched the ball.

The thrower must use both hands and deliver the ball from over her head, while keeping part of each foot either on or outside the touchline. She cannot play the ball again until it has been touched by another player.

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

Opposing players are not allowed to dance about or try to impede the thrower.

► U6: Throw-ins will not be used. Instead, the coach will quickly restart play by announcing “Ball’s In” (or “New Ball”) and tossing a ball into the field of play.

► U8: Throw-ins will not be used. Instead, Kick-ins will be used to restart the play. The Kick-in is considered an indirect free kick with opposing players at least 5 yards away.

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Law XVI The Goal Kick

When the entire ball passes over the goal line (i.e., excluding that portion of the line between the goalposts and under the crossbar) and it was last played by a member of the attacking team, a goal kick is awarded to the defending team. The ball is then kicked into play from a point within the goal area.

Players of the opposing team must remain outside the penalty area until the kick is taken.

The ball is considered “live” when it is kicked and clearly moves. The kicker cannot play the ball a second time until it has been touched by another player.

A goal may be scored directly from a goal kick, but only against the opposing team. An own goal by the kicker cannot be scored directly from a goal kick.

► U6: The goal kick will not be used. Instead, an on-the-field coach will quickly restart play by announcing “Ball’s In” (or “New Ball”) and tossing a ball into the field of play.

► U8: Opposing players must move beyond the halfway line during a goal kick, and they must remain beyond the halfway line until the ball is in play.

► U10: Opposing players must move beyond the build out line during a goal kick, and they must remain beyond the build out line until the ball is in play (see Law I, p. 2).

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Law XVII The Corner Kick

When the entire ball passes over the goal line (i.e., excluding that portion of the line between the goalposts) and it was last played by a member of the defending team, the attacking team is awarded a corner kick.

The ball is kicked from the corner arc (the quarter circle in the corner area) at the nearest corner flag post, which must not be moved.

A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick.

Opposing players must remain at least 10 yards from the ball

until it is in play (i.e., when it is kicked and clearly moves).

The kicker may not play the ball a second time until it has been touched by another player.

► U6: The corner kick will not be used. Instead, an on-the-field coach will quickly restart play by announcing “Ball’s In” (or “New Ball”) and tossing a ball into the field of play.

► U8: Opposing players must be at least 5 yards from the ball.

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Law XVIII Adult Behavior

A. By Alabama law, all youth sports coaches must be certified by the Coach Safely program. A “coach” is defined as anyone who is a head coach, assistant coach, or other person older than 14 years that helps lead or instruct during youth practices and/or games. The City of SMPA Parks and Recreation Department will implement these requirements.

B. Coaches are to remain within their team’s respective “bench area” during the game. A coach may provide assistance that will help the referee keep the game running well, but a coach will cease such assistance if the referee decides that it is hindering the game. Coaches are not allowed to stand behind the goal area.

Coaches are not permitted on the field of play during a match, except in U6 games: U6 coaches are allowed to be on the field of play. In the event of an injury, the referee will waive the coach onto the field.

► Only players and up to three coaches or other team officials

(e.g., head coach, assistant coach, and a designated team manager) are permitted in the bench area during matches. Exceptions are granted by league administrators in special circumstances (e.g., U6 and U8 leagues utilizing dual field method), or when additional adult supervision is required.

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- ▶ Coach comments shall be limited to positive reinforcement of the sport, and no foul or abusive language will be tolerated.
- ▶ Coaches must conduct themselves in a professional manner. Inappropriate conduct includes, but is not limited to, arguing with officials, abusive language, and confrontations with players, parents, and officials.
- ▶ Coaches are expected to report concerns immediately to Jason Burnett, League Sports Coordinator, at jburnett@smpaalabama.org or 334-501-2943.
- ▶ A referee may order a coach to leave the vicinity of the field, in which case the assistant coach or a parent may then take over. This will be reported to the League Sports Coordinator.
- ▶ All coach infractions will be reported to the SMPA Soccer Association Board of Directors, which may result in disciplinary action.

C. Teams and Spectators shall sit on opposite sides of the field as designated for all age groups, except during U6 and U8 matches. U6 and U8 spectators may sit behind the goal line to watch the game. U6 and U8 spectators shall not sit in the team area designated for coaches and players.

D. Spectators are to watch the game at least 2 yards from the touch line and 5 yards or more from the goal line.

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- ▶ Spectator comments and cheering shall be limited to positive reinforcement of the sport, and no foul or abusive language will be tolerated.
- ▶ No “coaching” from spectators is allowed.
- ▶ Furthermore, except in U6 and U8 leagues, no spectators are to be around the goal areas, behind the goals, or near the goal line.
- ▶ Parents and other spectators are expected to report concerns immediately to their Recreational League Commissioner or to Jason Burnett, League Sports Coordinator, at jburnett@smpaalabama.org or 334-501-2943.
- ▶ A referee or league official may order a parent or other spectator to leave the vicinity of the field. This will be reported to the League Sports Coordinator.

E. Opposing coaches and players shall shake hands after each match.

F. No alcoholic beverages shall be consumed or are allowed at any City of SMPA Soccer Facility.

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Tournament Play.

All SMPA Soccer Association recreational league tournament games will be played in accordance with Modified Soccer Playing Rules for SMPA Recreational Leagues, and as

specifically modified by the rules below.

A. Tournament Seeding is based upon total points earned during Regular Season Play. Points are determined in the same way as in Sections C, D, and E, below.

B. Group Winners advancing to the Tournament Championship Round will be those teams accruing the most total points in the preliminary games.

C. Group Play. Each age group will use Group Play to determine the standings for the Championship Round.

Points will be awarded as follows:

Win 3 points

Tie 1 point

Loss 0 points

Shut-out Bonus 1 point

Note: The shutout bonus shall only be earned by playing and winning a game. A 0-0 tie and a win-by-forfeit do not qualify for a shutout bonus point.

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D. In case of a tie in total points after the Group Play games, the Group Winners will be determined in the following sequence:

1. Result in head-to-head competition during Group Play (note: this does not include results from Regular Season Play).
2. Least number of goals allowed in Group Play.
3. Highest goal differential in Group Play. The maximum goal differential of three (3) per game (e.g., a team winning by a 5-0

score will only receive a +3-goal differential).

4. Penalty kicks. Pursuant to rule F.5, below, each coach will select players to participate at a time and field chosen by the Tournament Director. In the case of a tie involving three or more teams, the results in head-to-head competition during Regular Season Play will determine the two teams that advance to penalty kicks.

E . A forfeit will result in a 3-0 loss (0 points) for the team that forfeits the game, and a 3-0 win (3 points) for the winning team. Note: The team winning by forfeit does not earn a bonus point for the shutout.

F. Rules for settling ties in the Championship Game:

1. Two five (5) minute, sudden-death, overtime periods will be played beginning five (5) minutes after the end of regulation play.

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2. All tournament rules will apply.

3. A Referee coin toss will determine kick-off and choice of end.

4. Teams will switch ends and kick off after the first overtime period; play is to be restarted after a 1-minute break. No substitutes will be permitted at this time.

5. If tied at the end of the sudden death overtime periods, a 5-person penalty kick shootout will determine the outcome of the game. Any 5 players may participate, but cannot shoot again until every player, including the goalkeeper, has shot

once. If still tied after five 5 rounds, a sudden death shootout will proceed one round at a time. The taking of penalty kicks continues, alternatively, until one team scores and the other does not.

G. Any player or coach who is ejected from a game by the Referee must leave the Soccer Complex for the remainder of the game and is automatically banned from the next tournament game. The Field Marshal is required to report to the Tournament Director, as expeditiously as possible, any player or coach who is given red or yellow cards during a game. Violations of a serious nature require notification of the Tournament Director and may result in further disciplinary action, including suspension from the Tournament.

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H. Any player or coach who is ejected from a game by the Referee must leave the Soccer Complex for the remainder of the game and is automatically banned from the next tournament game. The Field Marshal is required to report to the Tournament Director, as expeditiously as possible, any player or coach who is given red or yellow cards during a game. Violations of a serious nature require notification of the Tournament Director and may result in further disciplinary action, including suspension from the Tournament.

I. Spectators must sit on the opposite side of the field from the coaches and players. Coaches are responsible for the behavior of their spectators. Players, coaches, and spectators

shall conduct themselves in a temperate, sportsmanlike manner. Displays of temper or dissent are cause for ejection from the field of play. (see Law XVIII, p. 19)

J. Inclement Weather and Schedule Changes

1. The Tournament Director will determine whether or not to cancel games due to inclement weather.

2. The Tournament Director holds the right to cancel or reschedule games as he or she deems necessary.

K. General Tournament Rules

1. All decisions of the Referee are final and binding.

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2. The Tournament Director reserves the right to decide on all matters pertaining to the Tournament. His or her judgment is final.

3. No protest is allowed.

4. The count of accumulated yellow and red cards, and the suspension policy (see Law XVIII, p. 19), continues in Tournament Play. The card count is not reset to 0 at the beginning of the tournament.

MAY GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP

PREVAIL AND MAY EVERYONE ENJOY

A WEEK OF COMPETITIVE SOCCER!

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