SYSL Game Day Reference

2026–2027 Season • Summary of SYSL Playing Rules and Regulations

The full Playing Rules and Regulations control if this summary differs. Section references below point to that combined document.

Before kickoff

Home team: prepare the field, nets, corner flags, completed game card, and at least three appropriate game balls. Change jerseys or use pinnies for color conflicts. The home team or club provides referees. Both coaches have a game ball. Sections 4 and 12

Passes: valid physical or digital player and coach passes are accepted. No valid player pass, no play. Substitute coaches must be from the same club with a valid physical or digital coach pass. Section 3

Equipment: approved numbered jerseys, required clothing, safe footwear, socks, and covered shin guards. Equipment and accessories must comply with Law 4; dangerous items are prohibited. The referee decides whether protective equipment is safe. Section 6

Playing time: every player plays at least half unless the coach notifies the referee before the game, identifying the player by jersey number. Injury and concussion requirements still apply. Section 7

Sidelines and conduct

Keep spectators, chairs, and tents at least 12 feet back. No spectators behind goals. Only eligible coaches direct players or occupy the bench area; coaching is limited to within 10 yards of halfway. No artificial noisemakers except medically prescribed vocal amplification devices. Section 5

Respect officials and encourage both teams. For spectator misconduct, the referee stops play and directs the coach to address it. Continued misconduct requires spectators to leave within two minutes; refusal or continued misconduct results in termination and forfeiture. Section 19

Game lengths and player minimums

Age	Playing periods	Rest	Minimum to play
U10	2 × 25 min	10 min	5
U12	2 × 30 min	10 min	6
U14	2 × 35 min	10 min	7
U16	2 × 40 min	10 min	7
U19	2 × 45 min	10 min	7

Minimums apply to starting and continuing. U10 is 7v7; U12 is 9v9, both with goalkeepers and size 4 balls. Clubs set U6/U8 in-house formats. League-wide U6/U8 play follows the published competition format and small-sided standards: 4v4 without goalkeepers, four quarters of up to 10 minutes, and five-minute breaks. Section 8

During and after the game

Technical reminders

Substitutions are unlimited at stoppages. Inform the referee; substitutes enter at halfway after the outgoing player leaves and the referee signals permission. Section 9

Do not challenge a goalkeeper controlling the ball with the hands or arms or prevent its release. Otherwise normal foul rules and applicable build-out-line restrictions apply. Section 9

U9/U10: opponents retreat behind the build-out line on goalkeeper possession in the hands and goal kicks. Opponents may advance on release from the hands or when a goal kick is kicked and clearly moving. No punts or drop kicks. Offside applies beyond the build-out line. Section 10

Goal kicks are taken from the goal area. The ball is in play when kicked and clearly moving; it need not leave the penalty area. Opponents remain outside the penalty area until it is in play, with additional U9/U10 build-out-line restrictions. Section 10

Heading is prohibited in U12 and younger games and for players age 11 and younger playing up. Deliberate heading by a prohibited player results in an indirect free kick, subject to goal-area provisions. Section 11

Suspected concussion: remove the player and follow applicable return-to-play requirements. Complete an incident report. Accept referee concussion-protocol decisions. Section 11

Scores and interruptions

U9–U19: keep winning margins to six goals. A first win by seven or more triggers a warning; a second in the same season converts both games to losses. The President handles standings changes. Report actual scores accurately. Section 14

No referee at a game requiring an assigned referee: record a 0–0 forfeit. Both coaches may agree to a scrimmage; its score does not count. No eligible coach: the game cannot be played. A delay exceeding 15 minutes without authorization is grounds for a 1–0 forfeit, subject to PAD review. Sections 3, 12 and 15

Coach send-off: another eligible coach from the same club with a valid physical or digital pass may take over. If no eligible coach can take over, the referee terminates the game and PAD determines disposition. A sent-off coach must leave and may not continue coaching. Section 16

After the final whistle

Both coaches or managers sign the game card. Unless there was a send-off, the referee returns it to the home coach for forwarding within 48 hours. Both coaches report scores within 24 hours. Clean up team and spectator litter. Sections 5 and 16

Send-off: referee retains the game card and submits it with required reports to PAD within 24 hours. Coaches notify the Club Manager and PAD Chairperson within 24 hours. A sent-off player is ineligible until PAD reinstatement. Section 16

Submit PAD responses and evidence by email. Referee judgment calls cannot be protested. Appeals of PAD decisions go to the SYSL Board under Section 18. Follow current injury-claim procedures and deadlines. No dogs in playing or spectator areas, subject to applicable access requirements; no alcohol before, during, or after games. Sections 17–21