



Small Pitch Big Dreams
Rules 2026

4v4 SPECIFIC PLAYING RULES:

GOAL SCORING:

A goal may be scored from anywhere on the field. The ball changes possession after a goal is scored, and is restarted from midfield.

RESTARTS:

All restarts are indirect kicks (including the kickoff to start each half). This does not include penalty kicks, which are direct.

KICKOFF:

All kickoffs are indirect kicks taken from midfield, and may be taken in any direction.

PENALTY BOX (ARC RULE):

There is no ball contact allowed within the goal box. However, any player may pass through the goal box. If the ball comes to rest in the goal box, a goal kick is awarded regardless of who touched the ball last. Any part of the ball or player's body on the line is considered in the goal box and is an extension of such. If a defender touches the ball in the goal box, a penalty kick is awarded to the offensive team. If an offensive player touches the ball within the goal box, a goal kick is awarded to the defensive team.

THREE YARD RULE:

In all dead ball situations, restarts, including game start and halftime start, defending players must stand at least three (3) yards away from the ball. If the defensive player's goal arc is closer than three (3) yards, the ball shall be placed three (3) yards from the goal arc in line with the place of the penalty.

THROW-INS:

There are no throw-ins. All out of bounds balls will be taken as "kick-ins."

KICK-INS:

The ball shall be kicked into play from the sideline instead of thrown in. The defending player must be at least three (3) yards from ball on all kick-ins. All kick-ins are indirect.

GOAL KICKS:

May be taken from any point on the defensive touchline. Goal kicks are indirect.

INDIRECT KICKS:

On an indirect kick, a goal can be scored only if the ball subsequently touches another player before it enters the goal. If the kick directly enters the opponents' goal, a goal kick is awarded. If the kick directly enters the team's own goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opposing team.

PENALTY KICKS:

A penalty kick will be taken from midfield in front of an open goal. There will be no defending players/goalie contesting the penalty kick. All non-kicking players must be behind midfield. In addition to an arc violation, penalty kicks shall be awarded if, in the referee's opinion, an obvious goal scoring opportunity was nullified by an infraction (the infraction does not automatically result in a red card). This is a dead-ball kick. If a goal is not scored, the defense obtains possession with a goal kick.

RULE 1 - TEAM ROSTER:

A. A roster must be submitted, and player ID presented for verification at check-in prior to a team's first match. Guest players may be hand written on roster.

B. All games in which an ineligible player participates will be forfeited. Any team fielding an ineligible player is subject to disqualification from the tournament.

C. Maximum roster size is 8 for 4v4.

RULE 2 - SUBSTITUTIONS:

A. Unlimited substitutions with the permission of the referee are allowed at any stoppage allowable by FIFA rules. An injured player who is bleeding must leave the match for treatment. The player may return after treatment upon checking back in with the center referee.

RULE 3 - TEAM FIELD POSITION:

A. Players and coaches of both teams will be on one side of the field. The home team (team shown first on the schedule) has choice of mid-field side.

B. Parents and other spectators will take up their position on the opposite side for the entire match.

C. Coaches and players are instructed to remain on their side of the mid-field line.

D. No spectators are permitted to stand behind the goal area.

RULE 4 - LENGTH OF GAMES:

A. 4v4 will play 12 minute halves with a 1 minute halftime. Referees will be keeping time with running clocks.

B. In the event of serious injury that drastically reduces the time of play, the tournament committee reserves the right to alter the length of any game.

RULE 5 - BALL SIZE:

A. U13 and older will use size 5 balls; U12 and younger will use size 4 balls.

RULE 6 - CONDUCT:

A. Coaches are not only responsible for their own conduct, but also for the conduct of their players and spectators.

B. Players issued a red card must sit out the remainder of that match, plus the next match.

C. Coaches asked to leave by the referee shall not be allowed to return for the duration of that match. Their permission to return for subsequent matches will be decided by the Tournament Director in collaboration with the referee.

D. The authority of the referee shall continue until the referee and all players leave the immediate area of the field.

E. If a match is terminated by a referee due to misconduct, the game will be considered a completed match and not replayed. If this was caused by one team, the offending team will forfeit the match. If caused by both teams each team will forfeit the match, and no points will be awarded.

RULE 7 - PROTESTS:

A. The referee's judgment pursuant to the application of the Laws of the Game are final. No protests will be allowed.

RULE 8 - REFEREES:

A. All games will be officiated under the USSF approved system.

RULE 9 - FORFEITS:

A. A team shall be allowed a 5 min. grace period after the scheduled kick-off in the preliminary rounds before the match is awarded to their opponent. If the minimum number of players are present at the scheduled start time of the match, the match will start as scheduled, and players arriving late will be allowed to participate after being checked by the referee. Minimum number of players is 3 for 4v4.

B. A team that has forfeited a game may not be declared a group winner or runner-up. If an apparent group winner forfeits, the team with the next best record will be named the group winner.

C. A forfeit in the preliminary rounds shall be awarded as (3) points for a win. For tie-breaking purposes, the full (3) bonus points will be awarded.

RULE 10 - SCORING AND STANDINGS:

A. Each team will play (3) games minimum. Results of each game during preliminary rounds will be scored as follows: Win - 3 pts.; Tie - 1 pt.; Loss - 0 pts. Bonus points are added as follows to the above: 1 point for each goal scored (max 5 per match); 1 point for a shutout.

B. Tiebreakers (in order of application): Head to Head (used for 2-team ties only); Least goals allowed; Goal Differential (3 max per game); Goals Scored (5 max per game); Most shut-outs; Number of yellow or red cards.

C. Playoffs will be single elimination and format determined by number of teams in the flight.
4 Teams - Top 2 teams after pool play will compete in a final
6 Teams - Pool play in 2 groups of 3 teams with top teams from each group competing in final
8 Teams - Pool play in 2 groups of 4 teams with top 2 from each group competing in semifinal and final.

RULE 11 - MISCELLANEOUS:

A. If teams have similar color uniforms, the team listed first (Home Team) will be required to change.

B. Medals for first and second place will be awarded at headquarters tent.

C. The consumption of alcoholic beverages is strictly forbidden on the premises.

D. Dutch FC will not be responsible for any expenses incurred by any team if the tournament is canceled in whole or in part.

RULE 12 - INCLEMENT WEATHER:

A. Regardless of weather conditions, coaches and their teams must appear on the field of play as scheduled ready to play unless notified by a member of the Tournament. Failure to appear will result in forfeiture of the match.

B. The Tournament Director can delay a match, cancel a match, or change field location and game times. In the event of any cancellations, the coach must report to tournament headquarters for additional instructions from the tournament director.

C. Inclement Weather - Before the Match - Preliminary Rounds: Referees and/or the Tournament Committee may reduce the length of the game by 50%. However, the halves of the game must be equal in length. If the game is canceled, 0-0 tie will be awarded by the Tournament.

D. Inclement Weather - During the Match - Preliminary Rounds: The game will be considered complete and the score will stand if half of the game has been played. If less than half of the game has been played, the Tournament will make every effort to restart the game. However, a 0-0 tie will be awarded if the match is not playable.

E. Inclement Weather - Before Start of Tournament: In the unlikely event the tournament is canceled in its entirety each team will be refunded 50% of the registration fee.