

Lake Washington Youth Soccer Association

Guide to Playing and Officiating
for
Volunteer Referees, Coaches and Parents
of
U-7 to U-9 Teams



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Preface

About this Guide

This handbook is designed to assist anyone who is new to the great game of soccer and to be a guide for players, coaches, and referees competing in the U7 through U9 program within the Lake Washington Youth Soccer Association (“LWYSA”). The descriptions we present are a simplification of the rules that govern the older participants and are intended to introduce all to a safe, fair, and fun team sport. We invite you to review the presentation on the LWYSA web site (www.lwysa.org) for an interactive description of these rules.

Although suitable for all participants, the focus here is to provide a quick reference guide to volunteer referees. We really appreciate what you are doing to enable LWYSA to provide a safe and fun environment to learn soccer. To assist you, this booklet first presents a quick reference for a referee at this level, followed by a more detailed look at the rules. Basically, your job is to

Keep it Safe!
Keep it Fair!
Keep it Moving!
Keep it Fun!

Note that many of our experienced referees started exactly as you are doing now; they volunteered to blow whistles and manage time for their kid’s team. This is the best time to start as a referee. You grow into the rules of the game as your child progresses through the ranks. As your child moves into U10 and higher, your presence as the team referee will be a significant asset – and a great way to stay in shape. Please contact the LWYSA office if you would like additional information about becoming a referee for older age players.

If you are interested in reading more about the rules governing the game, get a copy of “The Laws of the Game – Made Easy” published by the US Soccer Federation (<http://www.ussoccer.com>).

Quick Reference

The Basics

- You must be able to tell the teams apart (*e.g.*, different colored jerseys or use of training vests).
- For U8 and U9, the goalkeeper must also use a different color jersey so he or she can be easily recognized by players and referee.
- The players must have safe equipment (shirt, shorts, shoes, socks, shin guards – called the “Five S’s”)

As the referee, you must have a watch, reasonable shoes and a whistle.

	U7	U8	U9
Total number of players on field	3	4	5
Is one a goalkeeper?	No	Yes	Yes
Ball size	3	3	4
Match length (minutes/half)	20	20	25

On Game Day

Come to the field before the match. The Coach will decide which half you will officiate. One or both of the referees should:

1. Meet the players of both teams
2. Prepare the players (check equipment – the 5 Ss, **no jewelry**)
3. Check the field for foreign objects
4. Start Play, keep it moving, keep it fun





Out of Bounds		Fouls	
Spectators	Players	If not safe or not fair, it is likely a foul	
	 In Play	Kicking	Tackling
	 In Play	Tripping	Holding
	 In Play	Jumping at	Spitting
	 Out of Play	Charging	Dangerous play
		Hitting	
		Pushing	Handball

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I – The Field of Play

LWYSA makes reasonable efforts to obtain fields complying with these rules. However, teams should be flexible and play on the field assigned.

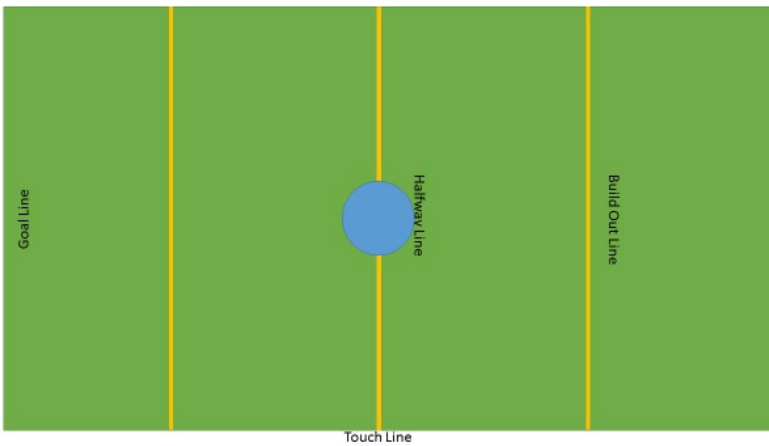
Dimensions

The field of play must be rectangular. The length of the touchline must be greater than the length of the goal line (dimensions are ‘suggested’):

Age	Size (yards)	Goal Area	Penalty Area	Goal Width
U-7	25 x 35	2 x 6 yards	6 x 25 yards	6 feet
U-8	25 x 40	2 x 6 yards	6 x 25 yards	6 feet
U-9	30 x 45	4 x 11 yards	6 x 30 yards	8 feet

Field Markings

The field is typically marked as in the following diagram, although lines marking the penalty and goal areas are not always present.



The length of the field is marked with the touchline and the goal lines mark each end. Note that a player may run or step outside the field to play the ball, but if the entirety of the ball crosses any of these marked lines, it is out of play.

The Build Out Line

A Build Out Line is defined at each end of the field as a line approximately one-third the length of the field from the goal line extending completely across the field of play.

Marking the Goals

The goals will be supplied by the coaches of each team and should be centered on the field between the touchlines. The best marking is a pair of flags, although cones can be used to mark the goals if flags are not available. Make sure the goals are 6 feet apart (2 large paces) for U7 and U8 and 8 feet apart for U9.

II - The Ball and Match Duration

Age	Half Duration	Ball Size
U7	20 Minutes	3
U8	20 Minutes	3
U9	25 Minutes	4

The ball size depends on the age group. You will find this number printed on the ball. The ball must be inflated so that it is firm, but not rock hard. It also should not be severely worn – peeling panels are not safe, presenting a surface that can cause injury.

The match time depends on the age group as shown in the table above. In addition, there shall be a five (5) minute break between halves.

III – The Players

Number of Players

The total number of players for each team ranges from 3 to 5. One player is designated as the goalkeeper for U8 and U9. U7 play does not use a goalkeeper. In the spirit of competition, we want all teams to enjoy their

experience playing soccer so if a team is behind by 5 goals they may add an additional player to the field.

Age	Total Players	Goalkeeper?
U7	3	No
U8	4	Yes
U9	5	Yes

The Players' Equipment

The rules that govern on-field fashion are designed for safety and to make it easy to tell the teams apart and to differentiate the goalkeeper. Player equipment consists of the five S's:

Shirt, Shorts, Shoes, Socks and Shin Guards

Shirt

Players must wear a shirt and that shirt should be of the same color. Make sure the teams wear different colors, with the home team responsible for switching colors if there is a conflict. Also, the goalkeeper must wear either a different color jersey or some covering (like a training vest) to insure he or she can be spotted reliably.

Shorts

The laws of the game do specify shorts. On cold days, you can let the players wear leggings or warm-up pants (see the Extra Clothing comment below). Note that any tournament play will likely require that shorts be worn.

Shoes

LWYSA requires players to have "appropriate footwear". That means that the shoes must provide adequate protection for both the wearer and other field players:

- no sandals or beach shoes (protect the player)
- no large toe cleats (protect others)
- while metal cleats are not strictly forbidden by soccer rules, most athletic fields, and many leagues, do not permit them to be worn, so avoid metal cleats

Players do not have to wear soccer shoes with cleats, although it is recommended. In a pinch, tennis shoes will work, although the player will be somewhat less sure-footed in wet weather.

Socks

Socks must be worn as part of the uniform and they must completely cover the shin guards. Team sock colors really should match, but this is generally not strictly enforced at the U7-U9 age.

Shinguards

As with the other S's, shin guards are **mandatory** and they must be worn beneath the socks such that no little bit peeks out above the sock line. ***You may not under any circumstances allow a player on the field if he or she is not wearing shin guards.*** Shin guards must also be of appropriate material and design – no stuffing magazines down the socks to provide protection.

Safety

A player must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous to himself or another player.

Jewelry – All necklaces, rings, watches, bracelets, earrings must be removed prior to play. The taping of newly pierced ears is **NOT** acceptable. An exception to this rule is made for medical alert jewelry or ornaments that cannot be removed for religious reasons. They may be worn, but only if they do not pose a risk to the wearer or another player. Any bracelet that is too loose or a necklace that can swing around should be taped down. (Note: According to a 2006 FIFA decision, all leather and rubber bands are also considered jewelry that cannot be worn.)

Casts, Splints, and Prosthetic Devices – A player may participate while wearing an orthopedic or prosthetic device, provided the referee has determined that the device does not pose a risk to the wearer or other players on the field. All hard surfaces must be adequately covered by cushioning material. The assessment of risk is at the sole discretion of the referee. It is entirely possible that one week a player is allowed to participate and the next he or she is barred from playing. Tournament play typically does not allow these devices. A player is **NOT** permitted under current LWYSA rules.

Glasses and Sunglasses – A player MAY wear prescription glasses, but the wearing of non-prescription sunglasses is not permitted.

Hats – A goalkeeper MAY wear a hat provided that the hat is of a soft material. No hard-billed caps (like a baseball cap) are allowed. No field player may wear a hat.

Extra Clothing –Players are permitted to wear extra clothing to protect themselves from the cold or if required by religious beliefs, provided the referee determines it does not pose a danger to other players. Extra clothing (such as warm up pants or sweat shirts) should be worn under the uniform shirt, but the referee has a lot of flexibility at this level. Caps that do not have bills and have no extra ornamentation such as watch caps are also acceptable during cold weather. Note again that tournaments will usually be much stricter about extra clothing.

Referee Discretion on Player Equipment

The referee at the match is the final decision-maker as to what may constitute "unsafe" equipment.

In addition, a referee may permit a player to start playing but during the match determine that a device has become unsafe or that the player is using the device in an unsafe manner that was not anticipated at the start of the match. If this happens, the referee may ask the player to leave the field and either correct the problem with the equipment or, if the problem cannot be corrected, they may not allow the player to return to play.

IV – The Referee

At this level, players, parents and even coaches do not have full knowledge of the rules that govern a soccer match; the referee should know the rules. For U7 to U9 play, the referee is a volunteer who is responsible for keeping the game flowing and to insure that it is a fun and safe experience for all participants. The referee is not an on-field coach, but can provide a brief explanation of stoppage of play to assist with understanding of the game.

Referee Equipment

The referee needs to have three pieces of equipment: a whistle, a watch and reasonable shoes.

- A whistle is necessary to get the attention of players on the field for stoppage in play. It is used to start the game, indicate fouls, and signal the end of each half. The referee does not need to blow the whistle for every throw-in, goal kick or corner kick, but if play continues after an out-of-bounds occurrence, the whistle should be used. Safety and convenience suggests a whistle on a wrist lanyard rather than one looped around the neck.
- The referee is the timekeeper for the match. A digital wristwatch is strongly recommended. A stopwatch in the pocket or around the neck is cumbersome to manage during a game.
- Much as the discussion of shoes for players, closed toe athletic shoes or soccer shoes are best. Shoes with cleats are not necessary but are clearly best when fields are wet and muddy. Do not go barefoot or wear sandals. Set a good example.

At the U7 to U9 level, you do not need a uniform, nor do you need a referee wallet (with red/yellow cards, score sheets). No scores are kept. It is good to have a coin handy for the pregame selection of who kicks off.

On Game Day

On game day, you should arrive at the field at least 10 minutes early. For U7 to U9 matches, it is typical that each team provides a volunteer referee for half of the game. So, before the match, the coaches and referees should introduce themselves and decide who will officiate each half. You will also need to review the team jerseys and make sure that the colors are distinguishable on the field. The home team is responsible for changing if there is a conflict.

You may also want to review the rules (particularly the procedure for substitution) and verify the length of the match and the start time.

The first half referee is responsible for doing the pre-game tasks:

1. Prepare the field;
2. Prepare the players; and
3. Determine who kicks off.

Check the field to make sure the goals are in place. If necessary, you can add a couple of markers (the flat disk cones) to the field to show where the penalty area begins or to mark where lines have faded. Scan the field to make sure there is no debris (pop cans, tree branches) that can cause injury. Have parents on the sidelines move their chairs and team gear away from the touchline. Remember that a player can be outside of the touchline when playing the ball and the sideline clutter impedes player access to the ball.

Check the players to make sure both teams are in different colors and, for U8 and U9, the goalkeepers are wearing distinctive shirts. Next, conduct a pregame safety inspection of all players. Four of the 5 Ss are pretty obvious (shirt, shorts, shoes, socks); make sure all players are wearing shin guards and that the socks completely cover them. Have the players remove watches and jewelry and give them to parents on the sideline. The referee should not be the repository for these items, as it is too easy to drop them during a game or forget to return them. Get the game ball from the home team and make sure it is properly inflated. If necessary, ask the coach to adjust the inflation.

The first half referee should call for the captains to come to the center of the field for a coin toss two to three minutes before the start of the match. Have the players introduce themselves and shake hands. Identify one player to call the coin toss (it doesn't really matter who) and flip the coin.

- The winner of the toss will decide which goal they want to attack.
- The loser of the toss will have the first possession of the ball (kick off)

One minute prior to start time, loudly announce that it is time for the players to take the field. Once the players are in position, count the players on each side and make sure that the goalkeeper is in place and ready (U8 and U9). Make a mental note of who is kicking off and the sides the players are on – in the second half, players switch ends and the other team kicks off. Make sure that spectators are off the field. Start your stopwatch and blow the whistle to start the match with a kick-off.

V – Playing the Game

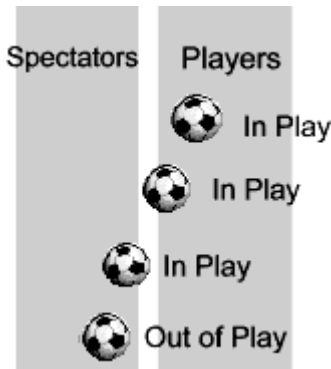
Soccer is a simple game; two teams of players meet on a field and compete with each other to try to get a ball into their opponent's goal. In pursuit of this end, they may use any part of their body except their hands or arms. There are no time-outs and the intent is to play with a minimum of stoppage. The only interruption of this flow is when the ball goes out of

play or if the play is stopped by the referee. The clock does not stop even if play is halted.

This section will describe more fully the details of the game of soccer and the rules that govern fair play at this age level.

Out of Play

The ball is out of play when it leaves the field either in the air or on the ground. The key is that the ENTIRE ball must cross the ENTIRE line in order for play to be stopped.



Only the ball is considered when assessing if a stoppage is warranted. A player can be completely off the field and playing the ball as long as the ball is in play.

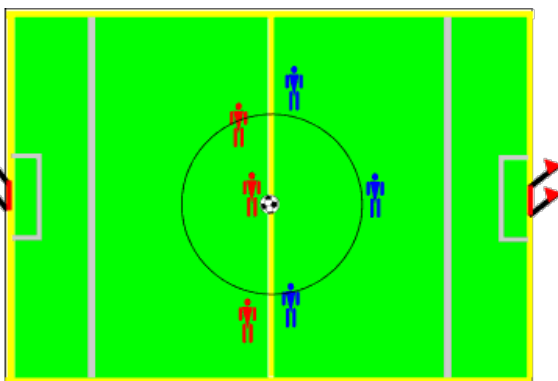
This applies to scoring a goal as well. The entire ball must cross the entire goal line between the flags. If the goalkeeper traps the ball against the side of the goal post, no goal has been scored.

The Kick-off

The kick-off is taken at the start of each half and after every goal. The key points of the kick-off are:

- The ball is placed in the center of the field;
- Members of the kicking team can be anywhere on their half of the field;
- Members of the non-kicking team must be on their half and at least 6 yards away from the **ball**;

- When the ball is kicked, it must move (in any direction)— if it does not move, the kick is retaken; and
- If the player taking the kick touches the ball for a second time before any other player touches the ball, instruct the player that is not permitted and have them retake the kickoff.



Typical kick-off for a U7 match

The Throw-in

Whenever the ball goes out of play over a touchline, the restart is a throw-in. The throw-in is taken by an opponent of the player to last touch the ball.

- The throw-in is taken at the point where the ball left the field;
- The player must face the field while throwing;
- Some part of both feet must be on the ground when the ball is released;
- The feet must both be either on the touchline or outside of the field;
- The player must use both hands when throwing;
- The throw must begin behind the head and be delivered over the head;
- If the person taking the throw touches the ball again before touched by another player, instruct the player that is not permitted and have them retake the throw; and
- If the player throws the ball into the opponent's goal (without touching another player), the goal does not count - give a goal kick to the opposing team.
- If the player throws the ball into the his/her own teams goal (without touching another player), the goal does not count - give a corner kick to the opposing team.

The throw-in is a skill that many young players struggle to do correctly. In an effort to help them learn this skill, LWYSA modifies the rules for the U7 to U9 range. So, if the throw-in is not taken in accordance with the above bullets:

Explain to the player what they did incorrectly, and then permit the player to try again. If still not right, allow play to continue.

The proper referee signal for a throw-in is to face the touchline and extend the arm at a 45° angle in the direction the throw is to be taken as shown to the right. For U7 to U9 play, we recommend that the referee announce the team and position him or herself near the point where the throw-in will be taken. For example,

“Throw-in, Red. It is your throw-in right here.”



The Goal Kick

If the ball goes out of play by passing over a goal line when last touched by a member of the attacking team, the play is restarted with a goal kick. In a goal kick:

- The ball may be placed anywhere within the goal area;
- Members of the kicking team may be anywhere on the field;
- The goal kick may be taken by any member of the kicking team, it does not have to be taken by the goalkeeper;
- Members of the non-kicking team must be outside of the Build Out Line AND at least 6 yards from the ball;

- Once the ball is kicked, **NEITHER** team may touch the ball until it leaves the penalty area;
- The non-kicking team must remain outside of the penalty area until the ball exits the penalty area;
- If any player touches the ball before it leaves the penalty area, the goal kick is retaken;
- If the person taking the kick touches the ball again after it leaves the penalty area but before another player touches the ball, then the kick is retaken.

The proper referee signal for a goal kick is to extend the arm, pointing in the direction of the goal as shown below. For U7 to U9 play, the referee should announce “Goal Kick” and indicate the team to take the kick.



The Corner Kick

If the ball goes out of play by passing over a goal line, the match is restarted with a corner kick if the last player to touch the ball was a member of the defending team. A proper corner kick has the following attributes:

- The corner kick is taken from the corner that is closest to where the ball crossed the goal line out of play;
- The ball must be placed within 1 yard of the corner, on the field of play;
- Members of the kicking team may be anywhere on the field;
- Members of the non-kicking team must be at least 6 yards from the ball;
- Once kicked, the ball is in play;

- If the person taking the kick touches the ball again before another player touches it, the referee will explain that this is not permitted, and the kick is retaken.

The proper referee signal for a corner kick is similar to the signal for a throw-in. Extend the arm at a 45° angle in the direction of the corner from which the corner kick is to be taken. For U7 to U9 play, we recommend that the referee announce the restart and the team as before. For example,

“Corner kick, White. Place the ball there.”

Scoring a Goal

A goal is scored when all of the following conditions are satisfied:

1. The ball travels COMPLETELY over a goal line;
2. The ball crosses the goal line between the goal posts;
3. The ball crosses the goal line beneath the crossbar or, if using flags, the ball crosses below the top of the flags.

Note these are two situations that can arise where a goal **DOES** count:

- A player kicking the ball into his or her own goal scores a goal for the other team.
- On a kick-off (U8 or U9 only) or a corner kick, an untouched ball can score a goal for the kicking team.

Two plays that **DO NOT** constitute a goal are:

- The goal does not count if somebody does a throw-in and it travels without being touched into the goal.
- The goal doesn't count if you kick it into your own goal on a goalkick.

The proper referee signal after a goal is scored is much like the signal for a goal kick. In this case, the referee extends the arm toward the center of the field, indicating the point of restart of play (*i.e.*, a kick-off from the center of the field).

The Goalkeeper

Each team in U8 and U9 **MUST** have one person designated as the goalkeeper. They must wear something that differentiates them from the field players on both teams; everyone needs to be able to know who they are at a glance. The rules that govern the goalkeeper are as follows:

- A goalkeeper may go anywhere on the field;

- A goalkeeper may play the ball with hands or arms behind his or her Build Out Line.
- If a goalkeeper is holding the ball, it must be put back in play within a reasonable amount of time (up to 6 seconds);
- If the goalkeeper puts the ball on the ground, he or she may not use the hands to touch the ball again until someone else has touched it;
- If a teammate deliberately kicks the ball to the goalkeeper, they may not use their hands;
- If a teammate throws the ball to the goalkeeper directly from a throw-in, the keeper may not use his hands;
- A goalkeeper may not punt the ball; it must be thrown into play. .

Keeping Time and Ending the Half or Match

A soccer match is played in two equal halves. The duration of the halves is different for the three age groups (with a 5 minute interval for half-time):

U7	U8	U9
20 minutes	20 minutes	25 minutes

Soccer games are played without time-outs. The clock is always running, even in the event of an injury. However, the referee should add time to a half to make up for time lost for any substantial delays.

At the conclusion of the first half, the referee signals the stoppage of play with two long whistles and the announcement “Half Time” while pointing toward the center of the field. The end of the match is traditionally signaled with three long whistles. To assist U7-U9 players, the referee may announce that the game has ended, again pointing to the center of the field.

Substitutions

In U7 to U9 games, the coaches will want to make substitutions frequently to get the eager players on the sideline into the game. Either team can request a substitution at any stoppage of play, such as:

1. A goal kick, corner kick, throw-in or kick-off;
2. Any direct or indirect free kick;
3. A dropped ball; or
4. An interruption due to injury.

The request usually comes in the form of a loud yell, “SUB REF!” The referee needs to give permission for the substituting players to enter the field and then insure that the same number of players leave.

Referees need to be sensitive to the fact that the coaches are trying to give players adequate playing time and listen for the coach’s call.

***Note to coaches: Do not** send in replacement players until the referee says it is OK. Also, make sure that your players are ready to come in and are standing near you BEFORE you call for substitution. Have the exiting players come off the field next to you so that it is easier for the referee to count. If you are replacing the goalkeeper, let the referee know; this takes more time.*

Using the Whistle to Stop Play

Unlike many sports, the referee does NOT blow the whistle every time the ball is out of play. It is blown only when necessary to get the attention of the players. If the ball goes out of play and the players continue, you need to use the whistle, otherwise a throw-in signal should suffice. The whistle will be used every time a foul is called, to start and stop each half of the match, or if there is an injury.

Restarting Play After An Injury

In the case of a temporary suspension due to an injury or any unusual situation, if one team is clearly in possession of the ball, the game shall be restarted by an indirect free kick by the team in possession of the ball at the point where the ball was when play was suspended. Should there not be clear possession at the time play is suspended due to an injury or any unusual situation, there will be a dropped ball at the spot where the ball was when the referee blew their whistle.

Dropped Ball

There may be times when the game must be restarted, but there is no clear reason that one team should have possession of the ball. Stoppages like this can occur for injury, or because of some outside interference, such as a dog running on the field. In those cases, the match is restarted with a “Dropped Ball”. The referee simply holds the ball and “drops” it onto the field wherever the ball was when play was stopped. Normally, one member of both teams is there to try and kick it. Nobody may kick the ball until AFTER the ball has touched the ground.

VI – Fouls and Misconduct

If the referee stops play while the ball is still on the field, the reason for the interruption is a violation of one of the rules. In the U7 to U9 age range, all of the infractions will result in an indirect free kick. By “indirect”, we mean that somebody other than the kicker of the ball must touch the ball before a goal can be scored; the kicker may not kick the ball *directly* into the goal. For all indirect free kicks, the requirements are:

- The ball must be placed at the point of the violation as indicated by the referee;
- The ball must be stationary;
- All opponents of the kicker must be at least 6 yards from the ball;

- The ball is in play as soon as it is touched by the kicker and moves (by any amount);
- The kicker may not touch the ball a second time before it is touched by another player; and
- For any infringement of the rules, the kick is retaken (U7-U9 only).

To signal an indirect kick, point first to the spot where the ball should be placed and announces a very quick explanation of the foul and the restart: “Tripping, Red (the team that fouled). Indirect free kick, Blue (the team that will take the kick). Place the ball here.” Then raise one hand in the air as shown to the right and hold it there until the ball is touched by a player other than the kicker.



As you look over the rules, it becomes evident that many infringements will call on your judgment. Basically, if something does not look safe, or if it does not look fair, it is likely a foul. Let’s look at situations that are considered to be fouls.

Careless, Reckless or Excessive Force

Our emphasis is on safety. We want to avoid injury wherever possible, so blow your whistle before someone gets hurt. If you see any of the following six offenses committed in a way that YOU consider to be careless, reckless, or involving excessive force, it is a foul:

1. Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent;
2. Trips or attempts to trip an opponent;
3. Jumps at an opponent;
4. Charges an opponent (bangs into them);
5. Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent (hitting); or
6. Holds an opponent.
7. Pushes an opponent carelessly, recklessly or with excessive force

Other Offenses

If a player commits any of the following four offenses, it is also considered a foul.

1. Spits at an opponent (the coach should immediately replace this player);
2. Holds an opponent;
3. Tackles an opponent to gain possession of the ball (you cannot go through your opponent to get the ball); or

4. Handles the ball *deliberately*, except the goalkeeper within the Build Out area.

Note we emphasize the word *deliberately* in the fourth offense listed above. This is a rule that is often misinterpreted by spectators of this age in soccer. It is NOT the case that every time a ball comes in contact with a hand, a foul has occurred (even though you will hear the call for “Handball” from the sidelines). The following are common situations that SHOULD NOT be called as a foul.

- A kick is taken and the ball travels quickly at a player who is unable to avoid the ball. If this player instinctively throws their hands up as a reaction to protect himself or herself from injury, there is no foul.
- If a player was not facing the play and didn’t know the ball was coming in their direction, but the ball hits their hand, there is no foul.
- If a swarm of players is kicking at the ball and it pops up and inadvertently deflects off a hand or arm, there is no foul.

The emphasis on the rule for ball handling is on the word *deliberate*.

Goalkeeper Technical Infractions

The referee should strive to instruct rather than punish the goalkeeper. If any of the infractions occur, the first approach is to remind the goalkeeper of the rules and play on. However, if the goalkeeper continues to do the following, an indirect free kick should be awarded to the opponent.

1. The goalkeeper must not hold the ball, but should put it back into play within a reasonable amount of time (6 seconds);
2. If the goalkeeper puts the ball down, they may not use their hands again until another player has touched the ball;
3. If a teammate deliberately kicks the ball to the goalkeeper, they may not use their hands;
4. The goalkeeper may not touch the ball with his hands if received directly from a throw-in by a teammate; and
5. A goalkeeper is not allowed to punt the ball.

It is important to note that a goalkeeper at this level may not have received specialized training and, as such, is in a vulnerable position. As a referee, you should take care to protect the goalkeepers such that, whenever the

goalkeeper gains possession of the ball, you may announce “Goalkeeper Ball” to prevent an imminent collision. No player should make contact with the goalkeeper when they are inside their penalty area and they have possession of the ball *in any way or to any degree whatsoever*. This means they cannot be contacted while bobbling the ball, or even if they only have a single finger touching it. The rule is constructed to protect the goalkeeper from an overzealous attack.

Under no circumstances should a player be rewarded with a goal if they have contacted the goalkeeper to win the ball or if they have kicked the ball out of the goalkeeper’s hands.

However ...

The attacking team should not be penalized if the goalkeeper initializes the contact with an attacking player.

Other Infractions

There are several other violations of the rules that can be considered unsafe or unsporting and could be sanctioned by awarding an indirect free kick.

1. Impeding the progress of an opponent (deliberately getting in their way to block them or slow them down when you are not playing or shielding the ball);
2. Preventing someone from putting the ball back in play – such as getting in the way of the goalkeeper punting the ball or a field player taking a throw-in;
3. Kicking high in the close proximity of another player;
4. Ducking down low to head the ball (thus risking your own face);
5. Continuing to try to kick the ball when lying on the ground in the vicinity of another player (again risking injury to self); and
6. Slide tackles, or a motion like sliding into 2nd base in baseball, in an attempt to win the ball are not permitted at the U7 to U9 levels.

As you become more comfortable with the game of soccer, there are several additional concepts you can consider when you call a game.

VII – Advanced Concepts

Offside/Cherry Picking

When the players get to the U10 level, they will be introduced to the soccer law known as offside. The offside law is not enforced at the U7 to U9 levels, primarily because it can be confusing to young players and their

parents. We also want the kids to focus on developing the basic soccer skills.

The offside rule is designed to prevent a player from lingering behind the defenders in the hope that a ball will be played that gives that player an easy attack on the goal.

Even though the offside rule is not in force, we do not permit this “cherry picking”. If a referee sees a player positioning himself behind the defenders, the referee should suggest that the player join his teammates, preferably before a ball is kicked in his vicinity. If a player is a few steps behind the defense as part of active play, don’t worry about it. If cherry picking continues, let the coach know.

Advantage

As the players get older, you will hear this term a lot. Advantage is when play is allowed to continue when the team against which an offense has been committed will benefit from not calling the foul.



For example, if a player is tripped but the ball goes straight to the feet of a teammate who is in the position to score, a foul should not be called. The referee signal is outstretched arms with the statement “Play on”.

In most cases, unless the advantage is significant, most fouls at this age should be called; teaching a player what constitutes a foul is every bit as important as scoring goals at this age.

References

There are many references to small-sided games in soccer. If you want to find out more about the research behind the rules presented in this booklet, go to the U.S. Youth Soccer site:

<http://www.usyouthsoccer.org/downloads/officialshandbook.pdf>
http://www.usyouthsoccer.org/doc_lib/06_small_sided_games.ppt

This will provide additional detail on the steps leading up to full 11 versus 11 play. Their key points are:

- The small-sided game gives the players more frequent contact with the ball;
- There is much less standing around – all players must both attack and defend;
- The small-sided game is less complicated and is easier to understand;
- This form improves fitness and fosters more individual responsibility; and
- The repeat situations promote experience for solving tactical problems encountered in the game.

And please be sure to check out the material on the Lake Washington Youth Soccer Association website. For general information:

<http://www.lwysa.org>

and for referee-specific resources:

<http://referees.lwysa.org>