



The Laws of Soccer (Youth Game)

There are 18 Laws of Soccer at the youth club and recreational levels. These sacred laws that are standard and must be carried out for an official game to be played and registered.

LAW 1: Field of Play – The game must be played on a rectangular field made of grass or turf with two goals at each end, a goalkeeper box -six yards from each goal post and six yards deep, a midfield stripe with a ten-yard circle, a penalty area -a box that is eighteen yards from each goal post and eighteen yards deep with a penalty shot mark 10 yards from center of the goal, and the out of bounds lines to shape the field (field size based on U-level) plus 4-5 foot flags in each corner.

LAW 2: The Ball – The ball is round or a sphere. The ball size is based on the U-level and can be size #3, #4, or the official size #5. The ball must be inflated to the recommended PSI (no more/no less). The referee should check all balls to be used prior to and game. Only the balls the referee agrees can be used will be used for the game.

LAW 3: Number of Players- For U-13 and above there are 11 players including the goalkeeper. For U9 thru U12 there are 9 players including the goalkeeper, and for and U-level below that there are 7 players. Any level can play an official game with a minimum of 7 players. Any less than that the team must forfeit the game.

LAW 4: Player's Equipment – All players must wear a numbered jersey, shorts, soccer rated socks with shin guards, and cleats to play. The referee will check for the equipment prior to every game. If the referee deems the equipment a player is using is outside of the guidelines for the level of play the player must remedy the situation before the start of the game to the satisfaction of the referee or sit out of the entire game.

LAW 5: The Referee – Is the authority on the pitch (field). Anyone who questions the referee's decision may face further disciplinary action by the referee simply for dissent. That action may be as much as removing the person from the field or stadium.

LAW 6: The Assistant Referees – They assist the referee if needed and will use a flag to signal out-of-bounds, offside, and anywhere else the referee needs help.

LAW 7: Duration of the Match – At the U13 level and above the game is played in a continuous 45 minutes per half with extra time added to each half when necessary. U-levels below U13 are typically 25 to 30-minute halves run off in the same manner as U13. The end of the game is at the discretion of the referee. Half-time can be no longer than 15 minutes.

LAW 8: Fouls and Misconduct – When a foul occurs it results in a **direct free kick** or a penalty kick when done in the penalty area from any of the following actions; -when a player tries to physically injure an opponent (in any manner) -when a player holds an opponent – when a player uses foul language (refs discretion) -deliberate ball handling -impedes opponent's progress on



a breakaway. An **indirect free kick** is awarded when the following occurs; impeding an opponent -playing in a dangerous manner -blocking the GK from releasing the ball. **Blue Card (Youth Soccer Only)/Yellow Card Offenses**; unsportsmanlike conduct -foul language or actions (dissent) - persistently breaking the rules -delaying any play restart -entering/re-entering the field without ref permission -leaving the field without ref permission -**Red Card Offenses**; violent foul or violent conduct -Offensive language and/or actions -Impeding an opponent from an obvious scoring situation – **second Yellow Card**.

LAW 9: How to Score – The entire ball must be across the goal line within the confines of the goal and net to score a point. At the completion of the game, the team with the most points wins. There can be a tie in league play.

LAW 10: Offside – When an attacking player is on the defense's side of the ball only. The player cannot have any part of their body past the last defender (not counting the GK) before the ball is played to another player on their team in a forward direction. You are NOT offside if you are receiving the ball directly on a throw-in, corner kick, or a goal kick.

LAW 11: How to Tackle – As a defender engages an attacker with the ball, then takes the ball away with his feet. You must be first to touch the ball and move it away with your foot in challenges where there is body-to-body contact.

LAW 12: When the Ball is In or Out of Play – Out-of-Play, when the ball completely crosses the touchline, the goal line, or when a goal is scored. The ball is also Out-of-Play when the referee stops play. Otherwise the ball is in play.

STARTING AND RESTARTING PLAY

LAW 13: Kickoffs – The kickoff can begin with a coin toss or be chosen by who is the home team. The winner decides if they want the ball or a desired goal to shoot toward. The kick begins each half with the offense or attacking team that begins with the ball in the first half giving it to the other team to begin attacking the second half. A kickoff will also always restart play after a goal is scored with the defending team who was scored against getting the ball to now attack. Only players on the team attacking or on offense in a kickoff may enter the center ten-yard circle to begin the attack.

LAW 14: Goal Kicks – When the attacking team sends the ball out-of-bounds over the defending team's goal line the defending team is awarded a goal kick. A goal kick may only be touched by the GK to be placed anywhere in the goal box. Any player may take the goal kick and put the ball back in play as a restart, but it is NOT in play until it has left the penalty area and therefore may NOT be touched by anyone until it has done so.

LAW 15: Throw-Ins – A throw-in is awarded when the ball completely crosses a touch line (side out-of-bounds lines) and is out-of-bounds. The ball is awarded to the team opposing the team



that last touched it judged by the referees. A throw-in must be done using two hands on the ball and both feet firmly planted upon release. If these criteria are not met, play must be stopped and the throw-in is now awarded to the other team. At the youth level, one warning may be issued to the team as a courtesy at the referee's discretion then allowing the same team a retry at the throw in. That same courtesy must be extended to the opposing team for the same violation.

LAW 16: Free Kicks - There are two types of free kicks; direct and indirect. A direct free kick may be a shot-on-goal if the team taking it chooses to do so. When the referee raises their hand during the free kick it is an indirect free kick and must include a pass before a shot-on-goal may be taken. The ball must begin stationary from where the foul occurred. A ten yard wall may be set up by the opposing team.

LAW 17: Corner Kicks – This is awarded when the defending team knocks the ball over its own goal line and out-of-bounds. It is taken by the attacking team as a restart of play by kicking the ball from the corner area on the side it went out-of-bounds on. You can score a goal directly off a corner kick.

LAW 18: PKs or Penalty Kicks – A penalty kick is awarded when a foul is committed by the defending team inside of the penalty area. The ball is placed ten-yards from the goal line at the center of the goal and is put back in play by the attacking team usually by a direct shot. All other players must be outside of the penalty area before the ball is struck. The GK must also be on the goal line until the ball is struck. Once the ball is struck it is back in play.

-PKs are used as a tie breaker in the event of a tie when a winner is required. There are 5 PKs awarded to each team with each team taking one at a time. All 5 must be taken before a winner is decided or unless a team can no longer tie. If there is a tie score after all 5 PKs are taken by each team there is a sudden-death PK run-off where each team takes a PK until there is no longer a tie and both teams have taken an equal number of PKs.

Know the titles of each law and understand the definitions. Learn by sections (i.e.-play start/restart). Must know the Laws of Soccer to matriculate to the club level of play.

-FC7Soccer® Management Team