

# Rules of Play

## Kent County Youth Soccer Association



**KENT COUNTY  
YOUTH SOCCER**

Current May 2024  
Updated 6/2025

# General Youth Soccer Laws (Adapted from FIFA) As Modified By U.S. Youth Soccer & KCYSA For Youth Play and Small Sided Games

## Law 1: Field of Play

Field size for U6-U12 players is reduced for small- sided play.  
U14 –U19 play on regulation size fields.

## Law 2: The Ball

U6 play with size 3 soccer ball  
U8, U10 & U12 play with size 4 soccer balls.  
U14-U19 play with size 5 soccer balls.

## Law 3: Number of Players

U6-5v5 no goalkeepers, U8 & U10-7v7, U12-9v9, U14 and Up-11v11  
Substitutions for U6 may be made at any time but should be made during a stoppage in play.  
U8-U12 are allowed substitutions when the referee is notified from midfield and only during stoppages of play or after a goal.  
U14-U19 are allowed substitutions but may only sub on kick-offs, beginning of half or stoppage of play  
Stoppage of play examples: (Goal kicks, corner kicks, kick off, own team's throw-in, other team's throw-in only if other team subs)  
All players will be given the opportunity to play 50 percent of the game.

## Law 4: Player Equipment

Players in Little kickers and U6 can wear sneakers instead of cleats with their uniform but must have shin guards covered by socks

Players will wear their teams jersey, shorts, shin guards covered by socks and a good pair of soccer cleats in leagues U8 and above age groups

Absolutely no Jewelry is permitted during play. Tape over earrings is permitted if the earrings are new and may not be removed.

## Law 5 and Law 6: The Referee and Assistant Referee

U6 games officiated by coaches  
U8 /U10 games are officiated by two referees  
U12 and higher are officiated by a Center Referee and two sideline Referees

## Law 7: Duration of the Match

U6 play four 8-minute quarters with a 2-minute break between quarters and a 5-minute half-time break

U8 play 3 15-minute quarters with a 3-minute break between each quarter

U10 play two 25-minute halves with a 5-minute half-time break.

U12 play two 30-minute halves with a 5-minute half-time break.

U14 play two 35-minute halves with a 5-minute half-time break.

## Law 8: Start and Restart of Play

The team that wins the coin toss chooses to possess the ball first or which goal to defend.

Teams alternate kicks from the center mark to start play at the beginning of each quarter or half.

Kick-off requirements:

- From the center mark
- Each team in its half of the field
- Players from the other team must be outside the center circle
- Ball is kicked and moves forward (into the “other half” of the field)

The player who takes the kick-off can't touch the ball again until the ball has been touched by another player from either team (Indirect free kick restart if this happens.)

## Law 9: Ball In and Out of Play

The ball is in play until it completely crosses over a touchline or goal line.

## Law 10: Method of Scoring

A goal is scored when the ball completely crosses over the goal line, between the goal posts and below the crossbar.

U6 teams are awarded a kick-in after being scored upon.

Game scores are not counted for division standings for playoff seeding.

## Law 11: Offside

An attacker is in an offside position if, when a teammate has the ball, the attacker is

- Closer to the other team's goal than the ball and
- Closer to the other team's goal than the second to last defender and
- In the other team's end of the field

It is not illegal for a player to be in an offside position. What is illegal is when an attacker who is in an offside position becomes actively involved in play by interfering with play (Having the ball passed to a player, running toward the ball or a combination of these), interfering with an opponent, gaining an advantage (Receiving or running to a ball which has bounced off a goal

post or crossbar or that has been deflected by the goalkeeper or another defender.) When offside is called: Indirect free kick from where the offside player was.

It is not an offside violation if a player in an offside position gets the ball directly from a throw-in, a goal kick, a corner kick

Offside is not called for U6 thru U8 age groups.

## Law 12: Fouls and Misconduct

Fouls are classified as either Penal (Contact) or Technical (Non-Contact)

Penal fouls include tripping, pushing, etc. Technical fouls include dangerous play and impeding (obstruction).

For U6 through U8 age groups: All fouls shall result in an indirect free kick taken from the point where the foul occurred. Opponents must be at least eight (8) yards away from the ball until it is in play. Penalty kicks are not awarded in these age groups.

For U10 and up age groups:

Fouls resulting in a direct free kick (e.g., kicking, tripping, pushing, deliberate handball) shall result in a direct free kick taken from the point where the foul occurred. Opponents must be at least ten (10) yards away from the ball until it is in play. (U10 8 yards away)

If a direct free kick foul is committed by a defending player inside their own penalty area, a penalty kick shall be awarded to the opposing team.

Fouls resulting in an indirect free kick (e.g., dangerous play, impeding the progress of an opponent) shall result in an indirect free kick taken from the point where the foul occurred. Opponents must be at least ten (10) yards away from the ball until it is in play.

Fouls can and will occur even at this level. All fouls shall result in a direct free kick with opponents at least 4 yards away.

- Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent
- Trips or attempts to trip an opponent
- Jumps at an opponent
- Charges an opponent
- Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent
- Pushes an opponent
- Tackles an opponent to gain possession of the ball, making contact with the opponent before touching the ball
- Holds an opponent
- Spits at an opponent
- Handles the ball deliberately
- Plays in a dangerous manner
- Impedes the progress of an opponent

For U6 through U10 age groups: Yellow (caution) or red (ejection) cards are never shown. Coaches will deal with inappropriate or repeated misbehavior by removing the player from the game for a "cool down" period. The referee (or coach-referee) should briefly explain the foul to the offending player in simple terms, restart play, and let the game continue.

For U12 and up age groups: Yellow or red cards may be administered for fouls committed carelessly or recklessly, but are rarely required in Youth Recreational Soccer.

Cautions and ejections should only be issued by an independent, certified referee.

Soccer is a contact sport and each action is dealt with at the time it occurs.

Explain the foul in simple terms, restart and let the game continue.

### Law 13: Free Kicks

Free kicks are either direct or indirect. A goal can be scored from a direct free kick.

Indirect kicks must be touched by another player before going in the goal for the score to count. All players from the other team must be at least 8 yards away for all ages

All free kicks for U6 thru U10 are indirect free kicks.

For U8 and under: All kicks are INDIRECT and opponents must be five (5) yards away before kick is allowed. No kicks shall be taken by the attacking team within the defending team's goal box. All fouls shall result in an indirect free kick with the opponent five (5) yards away. No penalty kicks.

### Law 14: Penalty Kick

Penalty kicks are awarded when the defense commits a direct free kick foul in the penalty area. For U10 Penalty kicks occur from the top of the box.

No penalty kicks are awarded for U6-U8 age groups.

For U8 and under: All kicks are INDIRECT and opponents must be five (5) yards away before kick is allowed. No kicks shall be taken by the attacking team within the defending team's goal box. All fouls shall result in an indirect free kick with the opponent five (5) yards away. No penalty kicks.

### Law 15: Throw-In

A throw-in is taken when the ball completely crosses the touchlines (sidelines)

U6 players will use a kick-in when the ball completely crosses either the touchlines or goal lines.

U8 players are allowed a second attempt after an illegal throw. After the second attempt, the opposing team will be awarded a throw-in.

### Law 16: Goal Kick

A goal kick is awarded when the offense kicks the ball over the opponents' goal

line.

The ball must leave the goal area to be in play or the kick is retaken.

U6 use kick-ins instead of goal kicks.

The ball can be placed anywhere in the goal area

## Law 17: Corner Kick

A corner kick is awarded when the defense kicks the ball over their goal line.

Source: [https://www.soccer4life.org/laws\\_game.pdf](https://www.soccer4life.org/laws_game.pdf)

Reference: US Soccer

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