

Families Guide to Soccer

Source: [Parent's Guide to Soccer](#), [10 Simpler Soccer Rules](#)

Basic FAQ

What does my child need?

1. BALL - Each child should have his or her own age appropriate ball and bring it to team practice.

Under 8 yrs - Size 3

8-11 yrs - Size 4

12+ yrs - Size 5

2. SHIN GUARDS - An absolute requirement for games, and should also be worn for all practices, the pull-on type with foam padding protecting the front of the leg from ankle to shin.

3. SOCCER SHOES - Recommended, but not required. Soccer cleats must be rubber or molded plastic (no metal cleats), and no less than 3/8 inch in diameter. Baseball or football type shoes with square or rectangular cleats are not legal for soccer.

4. WATER BOTTLE (with child's name on it) - Fresh water should be available to your child at each practice and game.

5. SHIRTS, SOCKS, SHORTS - provided for each player by your local club for games.

How is soccer played?

The game begins with a kickoff, and two teams compete against each other to kick the ball into the other team's net to score points. The game is split into two halves (length of half depends on age). The ball must stay within the bounds of the soccer field, and each team has a goalkeeper in the goalie box to block the other team's shots (U8 and above).

What happens when the ball goes out of bounds on the sidelines?

When a ball is "out of play," that means the entire ball has crossed the white boundary lines of the field, and it can apply to a ball on the ground or in the air. When the ball goes out of play (specifically along the sidelines), the referee stops the game and the team that didn't touch the ball last before it went out is awarded a throw-in to restart the game (U6 and under kick it in).

What happens when the ball goes out of bounds on the goal lines?

When the ball goes out of bounds along the shorter sides of the field, or the goal lines, a corner or goal kick is awarded. The key distinction between corner kicks and goal kicks lies in which team is awarded the restart. If the defending team was last to touch the ball before it went out, a corner kick is awarded to the attacking team. If the attacking team was last to touch it, a goal kick is given to the defending team. The positioning of the kicks also differs, as corner kicks are taken from the corner of the field nearest to where the ball went out, while goal kicks are taken from within the defending team's six-yard box. Gameplay continues after each type of kick is taken. U6 and under no corner kicks, only goal kicks. When a player kicks it out on their own end line. Coaches will take the ball and place it on the side of the field for a kick in.

When can the goalie pick up the ball?

Goalies are the only players that have the ability to use their hands to save or block a ball kicked from the opposing team. Goalies can only use their hands while they're in the goalie box. But, it's important that goalies don't touch the ball with their hands outside of the goalie box, as they could trigger a free-kick or penalty kick for the opposing team. Goalies also cannot use their hands when the ball was last kicked by their own teammate.

What is offsides?

Offsides is enforced at the U10 and up levels. A player is considered offside if they are closer to the opponent's goal line than both the ball and the second-to-last defender (assuming the goalie is the last defender) when the ball is passed to them or when they affect the play. You can think of it as an attacker being too far forward and getting behind all of the other team's defenders. A player can be in an offside position, but not be called offsides if they don't touch the ball or affect the play. The player who was in the offside position is unable to rejoin play until another player from either team touches the ball, ensuring that the attacking team does not gain an unfair advantage by positioning their players behind the opposition's defense.

When the offside rule is called, play is stopped, and the opposing team is awarded an indirect free-kick from the spot where the offside offense occurred.

Offsides can be confusing. Here is a resource to help:

<https://www.adidas.com/us/blog/953975-offsides-in-soccer-explained>

What happens if a field player touches the ball with their hands?

Within this rule, there's a distinction between accidental and deliberate handballs. If the ball accidentally grazes a player's arm or hand, it's not likely to receive a flag from the referee unless it leads to a goal or serious scoring opportunity. For less severe handball infractions,

the opposing team gets an indirect free kick. But for glaring handball infractions that take place in the box, the other team may get a penalty kick.

What is the difference between a direct and indirect kick?

Direct and indirect free kicks are triggered by fouls. When a player commits a minor foul, it results in an indirect free kick, where the ball must be touched by another player before it can go into the net (first the player handling the free kick, then another touch). On the other hand, a more serious foul – like being aggressive to another player or intentionally touching the ball with your hands – leads to a direct free kick. These can be kicked directly into the net from the free kick.

Advanced

When can't the goalie pick up the ball?

This is sometimes called the back-pass rule. Goalkeepers cannot pick up a pass that came directly from one of their teammates. In this case, the goalkeeper must use his feet. Infraction of this soccer rule will result in an indirect kick from the point of the infraction.

What is the two-touch rule?

A player cannot touch the ball twice in a row when putting the ball in play. You will see this called many times in youth soccer. It applies everywhere. You will see it frequently on kick-offs, corner kicks, or direct and indirect kicks. If a kid barely hits the ball and decides to take another swipe at it, that is a two-touch violation. This also applies to throw-ins. A kid cannot throw the ball in and then kick it. The only exception to this rule is on a drop ball restart.

How can I tell if it is a direct or indirect kick?

Direct and indirect kicks are two primary ways that play is restarted after the referee stops play for an infraction. For both of these, the ball must be stationary before it is kicked and the opposing players should be a minimum of 10 yards away. The 10 yard allowance is often reduced for the smaller age groups and is left up to the discretion of the referee. The simple difference between the two is this: On a direct kick you can score by kicking the ball directly into the goal. On an indirect kick you cannot score. An indirect kick must be touched by another player before it can go into the goal - that is the kicker and a second person. **As a parent on the sideline, you can tell whether the kick is direct or indirect by looking at the referee. For an indirect kick, the referee will hold one arm straight up in the air until the second person touches the ball. No arm up, it's a direct kick.**

There are many soccer rules around what causes a direct or indirect kick. In general, a direct kick comes from a contact foul or hand ball. Everything else is indirect. Also, be aware that some youth leagues will not allow any direct kicks until after U-8.

I'm still confused about when there is offsides in a game?

The first thing to know is that you cannot be offside on a corner kick, goal kick, or throw-in. Also, it is not an offense for a player to be in an offside position. The player must be involved in active play as determined by the referee to be called offside. An offensive or attacking player can't be ahead of the ball and involved in the play unless there is a defender between him and the goalkeeper. Or, in other words, you can't hang out at the other team's goal waiting for the ball. You can't be offside if you are standing on your half of the field. Also, the offside rule applies when the ball is kicked, not when the player receives the ball. To accurately judge offside, one has to stay even with the second-to-last defender and not watch the ball. Listen for the kick of the ball and judge at the time of the kick whether or not the player was offside.