

US YOUTH SOCCER

US Youth Soccer Official Under 10 Playing Recommendations

US Youth Soccer recommended modifications to the FIFA Laws of the Game.

FIFA Laws of the Game can be found at www.ussoccer.com/referees.

Please also note the U10 addendum and appendix.

Law 1 – The Field of Play

Dimensions: The field of play must be rectangular. The length of the touchline must be greater than the length of the goal line.

Length: minimum 45 yards maximum 60 yards

Width: minimum 35 yards maximum 45 yards

Field Markings: Distinctive lines not more than five (5) inches wide. The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line. The center mark is indicated at the midpoint of the halfway line. A circle with a radius of eight (8) yards is marked around it.

The Goal Area: Conform to FIFA.

The Penalty Area: A penalty area is defined at each end of the field as follows: Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line, ten (10) yards from the inside of each goalpost. These lines extend into the field of play for a distance of ten (10) yards and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is the penalty area. Within each penalty area a penalty mark is made eight (8) yards from the midpoint between the goalposts and equidistant to them. An arc of a circle with a radius of eight (8) yards from each penalty mark is drawn outside the penalty area.

Flag posts: Conform to FIFA.

The Corner Arc: Conform to FIFA.

Goals: Goals must be placed on the center of each goal line. They consist of two upright posts equidistant from the corner flag posts and joined at the top by a horizontal crossbar. The maximum distance between the posts is eighteen (18) feet and the maximum distance from the lower edge of the crossbar to the ground is six (6) feet.

Safety: Goals must be anchored securely to the ground. Portable goals may only be used if they satisfy this requirement.

Law 2 – The Ball: Size four (4).

Law 3 – The Number of Players: A match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than six players, one of whom is the goalkeeper. A match may not start if either team consists of fewer than five players.

Substitutions: At any stoppage and unlimited.

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Playing time: Each player SHALL play a minimum of 50% of the total playing time. Teams and matches may be coed.

Law 4 – The Players’ Equipment: Conform to FIFA. Non-uniform clothing is allowed based on weather conditions, but uniforms must still distinguish teams.

Law 5 – The Referee: Registered referee, especially Grade 9 or parent/coach or assistant coach. All rule infringements shall be briefly explained to the offending player.

Law 6 –The Assistant Referees: Not required. May use club linesmen/women if desired.

Law 7 – The Duration of the Match: Conform to FIFA with the exception of the match being divided into two (2) equal halves of twenty-five (25) minutes each. There shall be a half-time interval of five (5) minutes.

Law 8 – The Start and Restart of Play: Conform to FIFA with the exception of the opponents of the team taking the kick-off are at least eight (8) yards from the ball until it is in play.

Law 9 – The Ball In and Out of Play: Conform to FIFA.

Law 10 – The Method of Scoring: Conform to FIFA.

Law 11 – Offside: None.

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct: Conform to FIFA with the exception that an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team at the center spot on the halfway line if a goalkeeper punts or drop-kicks the ball in the air from his/her penalty area into the opponents penalty area.

Law 13 – Free Kicks: Conform to FIFA with the exception that all opponents are at least eight (8) yards from the ball.

Law 14 – The Penalty Kick: Conform to FIFA with the exception that the penalty mark is made eight (8) yards from the midpoint between the goalposts and equidistant to them.

Law 15 – The Throw-In: Conform to FIFA.

Law 16 – The Goal Kick: Conform to FIFA.

Law 17 – The Corner Kick: Conform to FIFA with the exception that opponents remain at least eight (8) yards from the ball until it is in play.

PLEASE ALSO READ THE U10 ADDENDUM AND APPENDIX.



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ADDENDUM

MODIFIED RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GAME FOR U10

Law 1 The Field of Play: dimensions are smaller to accommodate the six-versus-six game and are appropriate for the movement capabilities of eight- and nine-year-old children. These adjusted dimensions provide more practical space allowing players to be successful.

Field Markings: the penalty area is marked, but is smaller than the adult field size penalty area. The center circle is two yards smaller in radius than the adult size field marking. All other markings are per FIFA.

Goals: the goal, 6 x 18 feet, is the same for the U10 and U12 age groups. By using the same size goal for both age groups clubs will have to buy fewer goals.

Law 2 The Ball: must be a size four. The smaller ball is lighter and more easily kicked, received, dribbled and passed.

Law 3 The Number of Players: the six-a-side game now includes the goalkeeper. The smaller number of field players will provide the opportunity for the children to further develop their physical and technical abilities. These are valuable traits for all soccer players to develop. With fewer players on the field each child has an increased number of contacts with the ball and has more actual playing time. Additionally the players will be required to make more decisions and experience repeating game situations more frequently. The work rate and involvement of players will be more consistent. While learning both offense and defense, players will become well rounded and will understand more readily the roles and importance of teammates. The need for the players to make the mental and physical transition from offense to defense and vice-versa will be enhanced in this playing environment.

The minimum number of players to begin a match for preteen players in SSG should be one (1) less than the number required on the field. That is for U12 the minimum will be seven (7) and for U10 the minimum will be five (5). There should not be a minimum for U8 and U6 and clubs, administrators, coaches and referees should be encouraged to allow players from the team with sufficient numbers to 'loan' a player or two to the team that is short players and then PLAY.

Law 5 The Referee: per FIFA. Clubs are urged to use this age group as a field training opportunity for Grade 9 Recreational Referees. All rule infringements shall be briefly explained to the offending player.

Law 6 The Assistant Referees: use club linesmen/women. Implement here the referee-in-training program.

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Law 7 The Duration of the Match: per FIFA with the exception of the halves being 25 minutes each.

Law 8 The Start and Restart of Play: per FIFA. The distance the defending players must be away from the ball until it is kicked is the same as the radius of the center circle.

Law 10 Goal Scored: shall conform to FIFA and the sections concerning Winning Team and Competition Rules shall conform to US Youth Soccer guidelines.

Law 11 Offside: there shall be no offside called during these games.

Law 12 The rule on the goalkeeper's distribution still allows for the ball to be punted the entire length of the field, it just can not go directly into the opponents' penalty area

Law 13 Free Kicks: per FIFA. The distance the defending players must be away from the ball until it is kicked is the same as the radius of the center circle.

Law 14 The Penalty Kick: conform to FIFA with the exceptions that the penalty mark is ten yards from the center of the goal line and that players other than the kicker and defending goalkeeper are at least eight yards from the penalty mark. The distance of eight yards conforms to the radius of the center circle. The distance of ten yards from the center of the goalmouth for the penalty mark fits within the reduced dimensions of the penalty area and is a reasonable distance for the kick.

Law 17 The Corner Kick: per FIFA. The distance the defending players must be away from the ball until it is kicked is the same as the radius of the center circle.

- ⇒ Roster Size: Under the single field method the recommended minimum roster size is nine players and the maximum roster size is eleven players. Under the dual field method the recommended minimum roster size is fourteen players and the maximum roster size is sixteen players. This range of roster sizes allows for a club to use either the single field or dual field set up.
- ⇒ Split-Field Model: See appendix for options.
- ⇒ Playing Time: A minimum of at least 50% playing time is required.
- ⇒ No score or standings should be kept.

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ADVANTAGES OF PLAYING SMALL SIDED GAMES

- ❑ More time with the coach
- ❑ Energetic workouts due to playing both offense and defense
- ❑ More efficient use of field space
- ❑ Matches can be played simultaneously across a full size field
- ❑ Children are physically more efficient in smaller space
- ❑ Children are actively involved for a longer period of time
- ❑ It takes less time to score a goal or advance to goal
- ❑ Greater success rate for the players

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- ❖ Opposing coaches, players and parents should shake hands after each match.
- ❖ Parent/coaches, non-participating players and spectators should be there to enjoy and encourage the activity of the youngsters.
- ❖ Spectator and team benches should be on opposite sides of the field.
- ❖ No alcoholic beverages or tobacco products will be consumed or allowed near the playing area. Opposing parent/coaches and players should shake hands after each match.
- ❖ No slide tackles to be allowed in this age group.
- ❖ Coaches of U10 teams should attend the U10/U12 Youth Module coaching course and the Grade 9 referee course.

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Effective Playing Time Relative to Game Format and Roster Size

Single Game	Roster Size >	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Game Format	Game Duration																
3 v 3 (U-5/6)	4 x 8 min. quarters	100% 32 min	75% 24 min	60% 19 min	50% 16 min												
4 v 4 (U-7/8)	4 x 12 min. quarters		100% 48 min	80% 38 min	66% 32 min	57% 27 min	50% 24 min										
5 v 5 (U-7/8)	4 x 12 min. quarters			100% 48 min	83% 40 min	71% 34 min	62% 30 min	55% 26 min	50% 24 min								
6 v 6 (U-9/10)	2 x 25 min. halves				100% 50 min	85% 42 min	75% 37 min	66% 33 min	60% 30 min	54% 27 min	50% 25 min						
8 v 8 (U-11/12)	2 x 30 min. halves						100% 60 min	88% 53 min	80% 48 min	72% 43 min	66% 40 min	61% 36 min	57% 34 min	53% 32 min	50% 30 min		

Split Game	Roster Size >	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Game Format	Game Duration																
3 v 3 (U-5/6) Split	4 x 8 min. quarters				100% 32 min	85% 27 min	75% 24 min	66% 21 min	60% 19 min	54% 17 min	50% 16 min						
4 v 4 (U-7/8) Split	4 x 12 min. quarters						100% 48 min	88% 42 min	80% 38 min	72% 34 min	66% 32 min	61% 29 min	57% 27 min	53% 25 min	50% 24 min		
5 v 5 (U-7/8) Split	4 x 12 min. quarters								100% 48 min	90% 43 min	83% 40 min	76% 36 min	71% 34 min	66% 32 min	62% 30 min	58% 28 min	55% 26 min
6 v 6 (U-9/10) Split	2 x 25 min. halves										100% 50 min	92% 46 min	85% 42 min	80% 40 min	75% 37 min	70% 35 min	66% 33 min

These tables show effective playing time relative to game format and roster size. The figures are presented as a) percentages of total playing time and b) as actual minutes played. Both figures assume equal rotation of players. At the youth level, a minimum goal of 70% playing time is recommended.

Tables provided by Dr. Thomas Turner with contributions from Mr. Bill Spens.