

The Washington State Youth Soccer Association Small-Sided Program is a modification of the adult game for age-appropriate play. These rules establish team, field, goal and ball sizes for U-6 play, and increases these each year for U-6 through U-11 players. This is done for a number of reasons:

- The number of players on the field should be developmentally appropriate for children to experience and develop the motor skills necessary in soccer. These rules allow players to experience appropriate tactical decisions for their age. It also meets the needs of the players' social development.

- These rules create a comfortable environment for the new youth coach. By increasing the number of players incrementally each year, the new coach is able to focus on creating developmentally appropriate practice sessions without the fear and need to focus on teaching specific field positions. With the emphasis on teaching the individual player, the concern for team results is minimized.

- By increasing the number of players on the field and rosters incrementally, it is easier for the coach to deal with the challenge of new players being added to the team. Often times, the new players added to the team are playing soccer for the first time. The use of small-sided games maximizes player contact time with the ball, which aids in the improvement of these new players and their integration into the team.

Goals: In case permanent goals are not available, portable goals are acceptable but must be staked down to ensure player safety at all times. For U-7 and below, in the event that there are no permanent or portable goals, traffic cones may be set up or any other safe object may be used to mark the goals. In this case the Referee will set the "imaginary" height of the crossbar.

Field markings: The outside edge of the field may be indicated by chalked or painted lines not more than 4" in width. When painted lines are not feasible or permitted other means may be used.

302.2 Game Duration and Ball Size

Age Group Maximum Game Duration (Recommended) Ball Size

Under-11 60 Min./Two 30-minute halves #4

Under-10 50 Min./Two 25-minute halves #4

Under-9 50 Min./Two 25-minute halves #4

Under-8 50 Min./Two 25-minute halves #3

Under-7 40 Min./Two 20-minute halves #3

Under-6 32 Min./Four 8-minute periods (Halves permitted) #3

There shall be a five (5) minute break between halves or a two (2) minute break between periods.

302.3 Number of Players

Teams shall have no more than the following number of players and roster sizes:

Age Group # Players on the Field Roster Size

U-11 - 9 / 14

U-10 - 6 / 10

U-9 - 5 / 9

U-8 - 4 / 8

U-7 - 3 (no goalkeeper) 6 (Big River 4 with a goalie) Max roster 8

U-6 and below 3 (no goalkeeper) 6

302.4 Substitutions

(a) Substitutions may be made, with consent of the referee during any stoppage of play.

(b) The number of substitutes shall be unlimited unless a competition superseding the jurisdiction of the WSYSA determines otherwise. Each player will play a minimum of **50%** of the total playing time. Substitutions will be allowed in order to give an opportunity for all players to get equal playing time and to balance rather than to run up the score.

(c) Players, coaches and spectators not on the field of play must remain two (2) yards behind the touchline and not within the distance of the goal area for the particular age from the corner of the field.

Equipment

(a) ALL PLAYERS MUST WEAR SHINGUARDS. Socks must be worn up and over the shinguards.

(b) All players shall be in uniform to play. A minimum "official" uniform is the standard league shirt (with a number). Goalkeepers shall wear shirt colors that distinguish them from other players.

(c) All players shall wear footwear. A player may not play in their bare feet.

(d) A player shall not wear anything that may be dangerous to other players or to themselves.

(e) All or any member(s) of a team may wear extra protective clothing against the cold, including gloves without dangerous, protruding or hard objects, provided that:

(1) The proper team uniform is worn outermost; and

(2) Any hat should be without peak, bill or dangling or protruding object of any kind; however, the goalkeeper may wear a soft-billed hat; and

(3) Referee discretion may be used to determine if an item of protective clothing is considered to go beyond the purpose of providing a means of retaining body heat.

302.6 Officiating

(a) The home team will be responsible for providing referees. In the event that a referee is not present, both coaches will mutually agree upon one. If one cannot be agreed upon, each coach will referee one-half.

(b) Assistant referees will be used whenever possible to assist the referee. Young players or willing adults may also be used. Volunteer linesmen may be used at the discretion of the referee only for the purpose of calling the ball in or out of play.

302.7 Charging the Goalkeeper

(a) In all Under-11 age groups and below: No player shall make physical contact with the goalkeeper, harass the goalkeeper or attempt to play the ball once the goalkeeper has control of the ball in any manner and to any degree whatsoever.

(b) Note: Also included in "having control of the ball" is, if the goalkeeper holds the ball on the ground with one or both hands.

302.8 Coaching

Soccer presents an excellent opportunity to learn, develop, and establish group behavior, friendly relationships, fair competition, doing things in an organized manner, enjoyment and many other items. Above and beyond anything else it must be fun!

(a) The coach or designated adult (18 years or older, unless approved by the Association) should attend every practice and every game. All coaches, team managers, and assistants must fill out the required Washington State Patrol forms and comply with all Risk Management requirements. There must be an approved adult at all functions.

coach is responsible for his own behavior as well as that of his players and spectators. Remember this is just for fun.

(c) Every player must play in each game at least **50%** of the playing time unless they are not able to play due to illness or injury.

(d) All coaches should attend an appropriate level-coaching clinic prior to the start of the regular season.

(e) Coaching from the sidelines is permitted but not recommended. Coaching must be done in a civil manner and the tone of voice will be informational and encouraging, not demanding or critical.

(f) At home games, you are responsible for field preparation (check with your club) and for referees. Contact the visiting coach at least **three (3)** days before the scheduled game to reaffirm the time, directions to the field, and to share team colors (home team changes jersey color if visiting team is the same color). If the visiting coach is not contacted he/she should contact the home team coach

(g) It is every coach's obligation and duty to attend coaching and referee clinics in order to acquire information that, in turn, may be passed on to the players. Below are

recommended clinics for the indicated age groups:

Age Group Coaching Clinic Referee Instruction

U-6 U-6 Certificate Coaches/parents

U-7 & U-8 U-8 Certificate Level-11 through Level-8

U-9 & U-10 U-10 Certificate Level-9 or Level-8

U-11 "E" License Level-8 or higher

302.9 The Rules of Play

A coin is tossed; the team that wins the toss then decides which goal it will attack in the first half or period of the match. The other team takes kick-off to start the match. The teams will alternate the kick-off prior to the start of the second half or new period. Teams will only switch ends at half time of a game.

(a) Start of Play

(1) The ball will be placed at the center of the field by the referee and the game will start with one player taking a kick into the opponent's half of the field, after a given signal by the referee. At the time of the kickoff, every player will be in his/her half of the field. Every player of the opposing team, to that of the kicker, shall be:

U-11, U-10, U-9 ten (10) yards from the center mark

U-8 and below six (6) yards from the center mark

(2) The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves forward. The kicker shall not play the ball a second time until it has been touched or played by another player. For any infraction of these laws for U-9 and below, the referee will explain the proper procedure and the kickoff shall be retaken. Kick-offs for U-10 and above shall be played per FIFA rules.

(3) At U-7 and below a goal shall not be scored directly from a kickoff without the ball being touched by at least one other player on either team. At U-8 and above the limitation shall be per FIFA rules.

(b) Restart of Play

(1) After a goal has been scored, the game shall be restarted in like manner by a player of the team that gave up the goal.

(2) To start the second half, the game will be restarted with the kickoff by a player of the opposite team to that of the player who started the game.

(3) Restarting play after temporary delay: 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 drop ball at the spot where the ball was declared dead. The ball shall be deemed "in play" when the ball has touched the ground.

(c) Ball In and Out of Play

(1) The ball is out of play when it has wholly crossed the goal line or whole touchline, whether it is on the ground or in the air,

(2) The ball is out of play, when the referee has stopped the game.

(d) Method of Scoring

(1) A goal is scored when the whole of the ball has crossed the whole of the goal line on the ground or in the air.

(2) In the case the goal marker (cone) is knocked over or moved as a result of a direct hit by the ball as it crosses the goal line, the goal will not be allowed. In this case, the ball shall be put into play by either a goal kick or a corner kick, depending on who touched the ball last. The ball striking the inside of the goal marker and deflecting into the goal shall constitute a good goal. As in all judgment calls, the referee's decision will be final.

(e) Offside Rule

(1) The offside rule will not apply to any U-9 and below team, however, the intent of the rule will be followed. Positioning a player in front of the opponent's goal irrespective of the location of the ball on the field is contrary to the aims of the program. The referee shall take appropriate action to prevent this kind of play (an indirect kick to the offended team and instructional statements to the violating players and coach.)

(2) U-10 and above teams will play with the offside rule. The referees will call the rules and the proper penalties will be assessed.

(f) Fouls and Misconduct

(1) **FREE KICKS:** Free kicks shall be classified under two (2) headings: "Direct", from which a goal can be scored by a direct kick against the offending side and "Indirect", from which a goal cannot be scored unless the ball has been played or touched by a player other than the kicker before passing through the goal.

(2) **NO DIRECT KICKS SHALL BE AWARDED AT U-9 AND BELOW.**
ONLY INDIRECT KICKS WILL BE USED.

(3) **Penalty Kicks will be granted ONLY at U-11 and above.** They will be taken at ten (10) yards from the goal.

(4) A **DIRECT KICK** shall be awarded for the following nine (9) intentionally committed offenses:

- Kicking an opponent
- Tripping an opponent
- Jumping at an opponent
- Charging an opponent in a violent or dangerous manner

- Charging an opponent from behind
- Striking an opponent
- Holding an opponent
- Pushing an opponent
- Handling the ball, with the exception of the goalie, in the designated area

(5) An **INDIRECT KICK** shall be awarded for the following offenses:

- Dangerous play, (high kicking)
- Charging fairly (shoulder to shoulder) when the ball is not within the playing distance of the players involved
- Impeding the progress of an opponent
- Obstructing the goalkeeper (there will be NO INTENTIONAL physical contact with the goalkeeper in the "penalty area")
- Preventing the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his hands
- Lying on the ball and not allowing others to play it
- Unsporting behavior

(6) SLIDE TACKLING WILL NOT BE ALLOWED AT U-10 AND BELOW! If a slide tackle occurs it shall be considered dangerous play. The referee will stop play and instruct the player of his infraction and then award the opposing team an indirect free kick at the spot of the foul.

(7) Consistent with the educational intent of the Small-Sided Program, the referee should inform the offending player of the infraction that was committed.

(8) For all free kicks, the required distance for a defending player will equal that of the age-appropriate center circle (diameter).

(g) Throw-ins

(1) When the whole of the ball passes over the whole touch line, either on the ground or in the air, it shall be put back into play by a throw-in. The throw shall be taken from the point where it crossed the line, by a player of the opposing team.

(2) The thrower must face the field of play and must keep both feet on the ground while releasing the ball. He/she shall use both hands on both sides of the ball to deliver the ball from behind and over his/her head.

(3) For U-9 and below in the event of any infraction of these laws the throw-in shall be retaken. Instruction shall be given by the referee. For U-10 and above, throw ins shall be done per FIFA rules.

(4) A goal shall not be scored directly from the throw-in.

(h) Goal Kicks

(1) When the whole of the ball passes over the whole of the goal line, excluding the portion between the goal posts and under the crossbar (either in the air or on the ground), having last been played by one of the players on the attacking team, it shall be kicked directly into play by a goal kick.

(2) A goal kick may be taken from any point inside the goal area.

(3) Any defending player, including the goalkeeper, may take the goal kick. The ball must be kicked outside of the penalty box on a goal kick or it must be retaken.

(4) The kicker shall not play the ball a second time until it has been touched or played by another player.

(5) At U-7 and below a goal shall not be scored directly from a goal kick.

(6) The ball is in play when it crosses outside the penalty area.

(i) Corner Kicks

(1) When the whole of the ball passes over the whole of the goal line excluding that portion between the goal posts and under the crossbar, (either in the air or on the ground), having last been played by one of the defending team, a player of the attacking team shall have a corner kick.

(2) The ball shall be placed within a three (3) foot arc from the corner flag or cone and shall be kicked into play from that position by an attacking player.

(3) A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick.

(4) Players from the opposing team to the kicker shall not approach within the distance of the center circle measurement of the ball until it is in play.

(5) If the player who takes the kick plays the ball a second time before it has been touched by another player, the referee shall explain to the kicker the proper procedure of a corner kick. Then the referee shall award an indirect kick to the opposite team from a spot where the infringement occurred.

(6) For any other infringement the kick shall be retaken.

(j) Miscellaneous Rules

(1) Unless otherwise modified by these rules, the standard laws of the game will govern.

(2) Good judgment, sportsmanship and fair play should govern the decisions and actions of all coaches, referees and spectators.

(3) For all U-10 and below age groups, a selection process will not be used for teams rostered for league play, there will be no published team standings, and game scores will not be recorded.

Questions? Please call you Clubs' Coaching Director or Club President.