



Recreational Soccer League Rulebook

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Applies to: Recreational/Youth Soccer Division



Assumption: 9-on-9, 8-on-8, 7-on-7, or 5-on-5 format on a 60 x 35 yd field

1. Divisions, Eligibility & Rosters

1.1 Division

- ☐ **Youth Recreational Division**
 - Ages 4-13
 - 4U, 6U, 8U, 10U, & 13U
 - Boys, Girls, or Coed Division
- ☐ **Adult Recreational Division**
 - Ages 14+
 - 1 division
 - Men's, Women's, or Coed Division
- ☐ **Competitive High School or Club Division**
 - Ages 12-18
 - 1 division
 - Boys, Girls, or Co-ed Division
- ☐ **The Refinery Fieldhouse reserves the right to modify or combine age divisions at its sole discretion, based on registration numbers and operational needs**

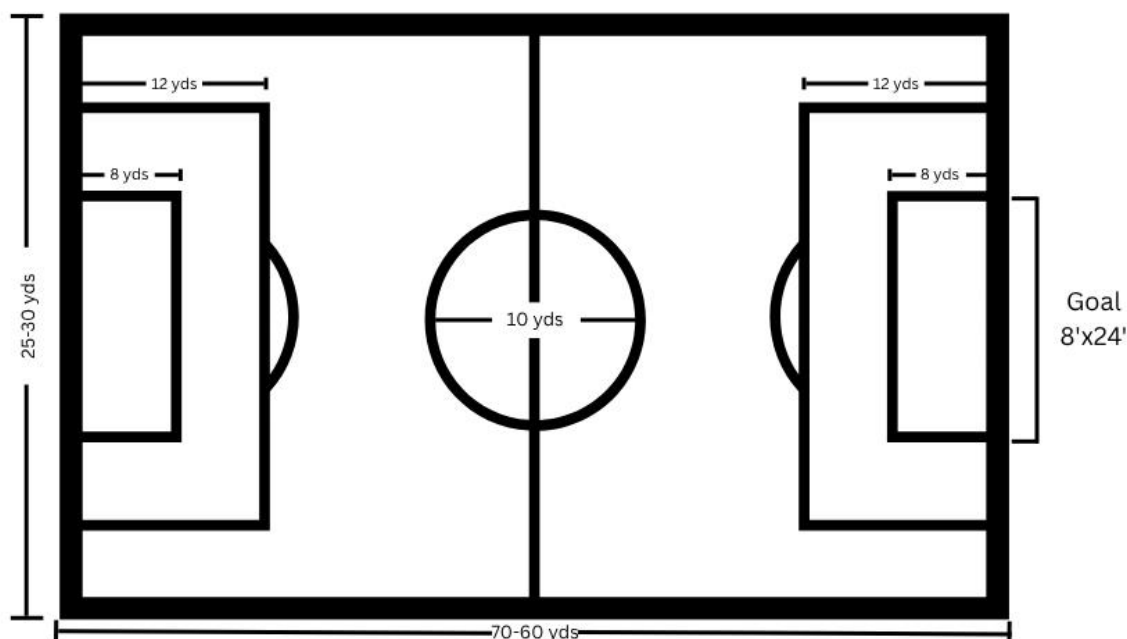
1.2 Rosters

- ☐ Only rostered players may participate in league matches.
- ☐ All players must complete any required waivers and provide current contact information.
- ☐ Rosters are locked after a league-defined deadline unless approved by the league director.
- ☐ Minimum: 5 players (including goalkeeper)
- ☐ Max: 10 players

2. Field & Equipment

2.1 Field Dimensions

- ☐ The playing field is rectangular, 60 yards long, and 35 yards wide. If insufficient space is available, a slightly smaller space can be used. A space of at least 5 yards around the field must be free and clear of obstructions. The field can be marked with chalk, paint, and/or traffic cones.
- ☐ Penalty Areas are marked 12 yards from the inside of each goalpost and extend 12 yards into the field of play. No player may handle the ball outside this area unless they are the designated goalkeeper within their own penalty area.
- ☐ Ball fully crossing sideline or back line is considered out of bounds.



2.2 Ball & Game Equipment

- ☐ **Ball:** Regulation soccer ball (Size 3 for U8-U10, Size 4 for U12-U14, Size 5 for U15+ and Adult, with specific circumference and weight per NFHS/FIFA standards).
- ☐ Two (2) regulation goals with nets securely anchored.
- ☐ Game clock shall be provided by game management.

3. Match Timing & Structure

3.1 Game time

- ☐ The following options are available to the tournament director and will be identified prior to State/Provincial/National competitions based on program needs, time, and number of teams attending. Only one option may be used during the competition.
 - ☐ **Option 1:** The game shall consist of two (2) 20-minute halves (running time).
 - ☐ **Option 2:** The game shall consist of two (2) 15-minute halves (running time) until the last minute of each half at which the clock will stop on all dead ball whistles (i.e., goal kicks, corner kicks, injuries, substitutions).
- ☐ Officials can stop the clock at their discretion (injuries, delays, disciplinary sanctions).
- ☐ There shall be a 5-minute break at halftime.
- ☐ The ball must be put in play promptly and legally and any action or lack of action by either team that tends to prevent this is considered a delay of game.
 - ☐ This includes:
 - ☐ Consuming more than 6 seconds for a goalkeeper to release the ball from their hands.



- ☐ Deliberately delaying the restart of play (e.g., kicking the ball away, refusing to leave the field).
- ☐ Taking excessive time to take a free kick, throw-in, or corner kick.

3.2 Dead Ball & Stoppage

- ☐ The ball is dead when it wholly crosses the boundary lines (touchline or goal line), when a goal is scored, or when the referee stops play for an infringement or injury.
- ☐ Play restarts with a throw-in, goal kick, corner kick, or free kick depending on the cause of the stoppage.
- ☐ All balls that go out of bounds alongside the sidelines must be thrown in with two hands overhead
- ☐ All balls that go out of bounds behind the goal line will either be a goal kick or corner kick depending on which team touched the ball last.

3.3 Overtime

- ☐ If the score is tied at the end of regulation play in elimination matches:
 - ☐ A coin toss is held to determine first possession/kick-off direction.
 - ☐ Two (2) equal periods of extra time (e.g., 5 minutes each) are played.
 - ☐ If still tied, the match proceeds to a penalty shootout (best of 5 kicks, then sudden death if necessary).
- ☐ In regular season league play, ties stand as drawn unless otherwise specified by league policy.

3.4 Warm-Up & Start Time

- ☐ Teams should be ready to take the field at least 5 minutes before the posted match time.
- ☐ A brief pre-match meeting with captains and officials will cover key rules and league expectations.

4. Basic Playing Rules

The league uses modified NFHS/FIFA soccer rules.

4.1 The Game & Possession

- ☐ The object is to move the ball into the opponent's goal using any part of the body except the hands and arms (goalkeepers excepted within their own penalty area).
- ☐ Kick-offs and restarts following a goal will always begin at the center circle.
- ☐ There are no "downs"; possession continues until the ball goes out of play or an infringement occurs.

4.2 Kick-offs & Restarts

- ☐ The ball must be stationary on the center mark or appropriate restart spot.



- ☐ Opponents must remain at least 6 yards (or outside the center circle) until the ball is in play.
- ☐ The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves.
 - Goals cannot be scored directly from the center arc during a kick-off or restart.

4.3 Handling & Goalkeeper Rules

- ☐ Players (except the goalkeeper within their own penalty area) cannot deliberately handle the ball with their hands or arms.
- ☐ The goalkeeper cannot handle the ball if it was deliberately kicked to them by a teammate (back-pass rule).
- ☐ The goalkeeper has 6 seconds to release the ball from their hands once they have gained control.

4.4 Offside

- ☐ **Youth Divisions (U10 and below):** Offside rules are typically not enforced to encourage participation and flow.
- ☐ **Older Divisions (U12+ and Adult):** Standard offside rules apply. A player is in an offside position if they are nearer to the opponent's goal line than both the ball and the second-last opponent when the ball is played to them, unless they are in their own half.
- ☐ Offside is only penalized if the player becomes involved in active play.
- ☐ **The Refinery Fieldhouse reserves the right to modify the offside rules for older divisions as see fit. Players will be notified of the change before the first official league game.**

4.5 Fouls & Misconduct

- ☐ **Direct Free Kicks** are awarded for careless, reckless, or excessive force offences such as kicking, tripping, pushing, striking, or handling the ball.
- ☐ **Indirect Free Kicks** are awarded for non-contact offences such as dangerous play, impeding an opponent without contact, or goalkeeper infractions (e.g., holding the ball >6 seconds).
- ☐ **Penalties (Penalty Kick)** are awarded if a direct free kick offence is committed by a defender inside their own penalty area.

5. Team Composition & Specific Rules

5.1 Player Safety & Conduct

- ☐ Players must wear appropriate footwear (**NON-METAL** cleats or athletic shoes). **Metal cleats are prohibited.**
- ☐ No jewelry (watches, rings, necklaces, earrings) is allowed for safety reasons.

5.2 Dangerous Play



- ☐ **Restrictions.** No player shall commit an act deemed dangerous to themselves or others. Any other act of unnecessary roughness is a foul. Any player commits a foul when they take any of the following actions:
 - High-footing (kicking near an opponent's head).
 - Slide tackling in a manner that endangers an opponent (slide tackles are often restricted or prohibited in youth recreational leagues).
 - Charging an opponent violently.
 - Striking or attempting to strike an opponent.
 - Holding an opponent.
 - Spitting at an opponent (Immediate Disqualification).
 - Using offensive, insulting, or abusive language/gestures.
- ☐ **Penalty:** Direct Free Kick (or Penalty Kick if inside penalty area). Serious fouls result in a Yellow Card (Caution) or Red Card (Sending-off/Disqualification).

5.3 Flagrant Foul

- ☐ A flagrant foul is so severe or extreme that it places an opponent in danger of serious injury and/or involves violations that are extremely or persistently vulgar or abusive conduct.
- ☐ **Penalty:** Immediate Red Card (Ejection) and potential further league suspension.

6. Substitutions & Timeouts

6.1 Substitutions

- ☐ Substitutions are allowed on any dead ball with the referee's permission.
- ☐ In recreational leagues, "unlimited" or "rolling" substitutions are often permitted to ensure equal playing time.
- ☐ Players entering must be legally equipped. If equipment is improper, the player must be replaced until corrected.

6.2 Timeouts

- ☐ Formal timeouts are generally not used in soccer. However, the referee may allow short breaks for water/injury management at their discretion, typically not exceeding 1-2 minutes.
- ☐ Clock stoppages occur naturally for goals, injuries, and card administration.

7. Standings, Scoring & Tiebreakers

7.1 Scoring

Men's & Women's

- ☐ **Goal:** 1 point. A goal is scored when the whole ball passes over the goal line, between the goalposts and under the crossbar.



- ☐ **Own Goal:** Counts as a goal for the opposing team.

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- ☐ **Goal:** 1 point for men. 2 points for women.
- ☐ **Own Goal:** Counts as a single goal for the opposing team.

7.2 Tiebreakers for Standings If two or more teams finish with the same number of league points, ties are broken in this order:

- ☐ Head-to-head match record among tied teams.
- ☐ Total goal differential across all games played.
- ☐ Fewest total goals allowed across all matches.
- ☐ Coin toss or random draw by the league director.

8. Uniforms & Equipment Requirements

8.1 Mandatory Equipment

- ☐ **Jersey:** Unaltered from manufacturer's design, tucked into shorts if loose. Home and away colors must clearly contrast. Numbers are recommended but not always mandatory in rec leagues.
- ☐ **Shorts:** Athletic shorts. No pockets with zippers or hard buttons that could cause injury.
- ☐ **Footwear:** Legal shoes with rubber, nylon, or non-metallic polymer cleats. Metal cleats or hard, unyielding items are prohibited.
- ☐ **Shinguards:** Must be worn under socks and provide adequate protection. Mandatory for all players.

8.2 Illegal Equipment

- ☐ Jewelry, hard casts without soft padding, shoulder pads, and slippery/sticky substances on the body or uniform are prohibited.
- ☐ Hard headwear is not allowed; soft caps or religious head coverings are permitted if they do not pose a risk.

9. Officiating & Match Management

- ☐ Matches are officiated by league referees or assigned officials.
- ☐ The referee has the authority to rule promptly and in the spirit of good sportsmanship.
- ☐ Captains may calmly ask for rule clarifications during dead balls. The referee's decisions on judgment calls (fouls, offside, in/out) are final.
- ☐ Protests of NFHS/FIFA rules are not recognized.

10. Sportsmanship & Conduct

- ☐ Respect opponents, teammates, officials, and staff at all times.



- ☐ No profanity, taunting, harassment, or abusive behavior.
- ☐ Unsportsmanlike conduct results in a Yellow Card (Caution). A second cautionable offence by a player results in a Red Card (Disqualification).
- ☐ Fighting or intentional attempts to injure result in immediate ejection and review by league management.

11. Forfeits

- ☐ A team is considered a forfeit if:
 - Fewer than the minimum number of players are present at the scheduled match time.
 - They are unable to meet mandatory equipment or safety requirements (e.g., no shinguards).
 - They refuse to continue playing.
 - They use ineligible or non-rostered players after a warning.
- ☐ Standard forfeit score may be recorded per league policy (e.g., 1-0 or 2-0).