



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# Soccer Rules

## AGES 8-16



**YMCA OF GREATER  
HOUSTON**

## Association Soccer Rules

All YMCA of Greater Houston soccer programs will adhere to FIFA Laws of the Game, except where a modification has been listed.

### **Pre-section 101**

#### **Changes from Traditional YMCA Soccer Rules are below:**

- Slide Tackling will be allowed for all age groups.
- Offside will be called at all age groups.
- No time-outs will be administered in the YMCA Champions Soccer League.
- Substitutes must be standing at the halfway line, dressed and ready to play. The player exiting must leave the field by the halfway line.
- Substitutions will be allowed during your team's throw-ins, the opponent's throw-in (if the opponent subs as well), all goal kicks, your team's corner kicks, after a goal, to start a new half/quarter, when an injury occurs and lastly if a child gets yellow carded.
- Coaches and players will sit on the opposite side of the field from the spectators.
- All goalies will need to wear a goalie jersey. The YMCA will provide one, but your child is able to wear their own if it is YMCA appropriate and doesn't conflict with the other team's colors.

## **Rule 1 The Game**

### **Section 1 Definition**

1.1.1 A soccer match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than the specified number of players, one of whom is the goalkeeper. The game is played on a rectangular field with a goal at each end in which the team is attempting to score.

### **Section 2 The ball**

1.2.1 8-9 Year Old Division will use a size 4 ball

1.2.2 10-11 Year Old & Up Old Divisions will use a size 4 ball

1.2.3 12-16 Year Old & Up Old Divisions will use a size 5 ball

\*if ages are combined, use the ball size that applies to a majority of the age divisions, i.e. 11-13 year old would use a size 4 ball since the 10-12 age division use a size 4 and make up two-thirds of the division

### **Section 3 The number of players**

1.3.1 **8-9 Year Old Division** –Each team will play with 5 players plus a goalie. Each player must play the minimum of 50% of the game. **Coaches are not permitted on the field in this division.**

1.3.2 **10-11 Year Old Division** –Each team will play with 7 players plus a goalie. Each player must play the minimum of 50% of the game. **Coaches are not permitted on the field in this division.**

1.3.3 **12-16 Year Old Division** –Each team will play with 7 players plus a goalie. Each player must play the minimum of 50% of the game. **Coaches are not permitted on the field in this division**

## **Section 4 The referee**

1.4.1 The official/referees control the game and their decisions are final.

1.4.2 The Official:

- enforces the RULES of the match
- controls the match
- ensures that any ball used meets the requirements
- ensures that the players' equipment meets the requirements
- acts as timekeeper and keeps a record of the match
- assists the players in the instruction of the game

1.4.3 Any disrespect toward the referee or staff will not be tolerated. Coaches and players are asked to display the five YMCA Core Values at all times: RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, HONESTY, CARING AND FAITH.

Possible consequences for infractions:

- Players – warning, removal from the game for the remainder of the half, removal from the match, suspension from a subsequent match, suspension from the remainder of the season (Players suspended from matches/the remainder of the season will not receive a refund.) Suspensions may only be handed out by the Sports Director and/or his/her designee.
- Coaches – warning, removal from the remainder of the game and expulsion from the game site (parking lot included), suspension from coaching for the remainder of season or longer (Suspensions may only be handed out by the Sports Director and/or his/her designee.)

## **Section 5 The duration of the game**

1.5.1 The duration of the game shall be as follows;

- 8-9 Year Old Division shall play two equal Twenty (20) minute halves with a 4 minute halftime
- 10-11 Year Old Division shall play two equal Twenty-five (25) minute halves with a 4 minute halftime
- 12-16 Year Old Division shall play two equal Thirty (30) minute halves with a 4 minute halftime

1.5.2 Time-outs are not utilized in soccer.

1.5.3 Stoppage time is not utilized in the YMCA Champion Soccer League.

## **Section 6 The start and stop of play**

1.6.1 The HOME team will choose which goal it will attack in the first half or possession of the ball at kickoff.

1.6.2 All games will begin with the YMCA pledge and end with teams and coaches shaking hands.

1.6.3 Teams will alternate kick-off after each half.

1.6.4 Kick-off is a direct kick.

1.6.5 The player kicking off may only touch the ball once until another player has touched the ball.

1.6.6 The ball must go one full rotation forward before another player touches the ball.

1.6.7 All Defensive players must be outside the circle in their own half of the field of play until the ball is touched.

1.6.8 After a team scores a goal, the kick-off is taken by the other team.

1.6.9 If an official/referee stops the game due to an injury, etc. then the game will begin with possession of the ball returning to the team who had it prior to the stop of play. A drop-ball should be administered if neither team has clear possession of the ball prior to the stoppage of play.

## Section 7 The ball in and out of play

1.7.1 The ball is out of play when:

- it has fully crossed the goal line or touch line whether on the ground or in the air
- play has been stopped by the official/referee

1.7.2 The ball is in play at all other times, including when:

- it rebounds off a goalpost, crossbar or corner marking and remains in the field of play
- it rebounds off the official when they are on the field of play

## Section 8 Offside

1.8.1 A player is in an offside position if he/she is nearer to the opponent's goal than the ball and at least one opposing player when the ball is passed to him/her. The goalie does not count as the one opposing player.

1.8.2 If the player is **EVEN** with the last defender at the time that the ball is played, that player is onside.

1.8.3 A player shall only be declared off side and penalized if:

- Interfering with the play of the opponent
- Seeking to gain an advantage by being in that position
- Seeking possession of the ball

1.8.4 No player will be penalized for being in an offside position just for being there or if they receive the ball from a goal kick, corner kick or throw in.

1.8.5 The assistant referee can/should signal when a player is in an off side position, which assists in alerting the official, however the penalty will not be called unless an advantage is gained by the player in that off side position.

1.8.6 If off sides is called, the defensive team will take an indirect kick where the offensive player was off sides.

## Section 9 – Free kicks

1.9.1 A **Direct Free Kick** is given for the following fouls:

- Kick-off
- Kicking or trying to kick an opponent
- Tripping or trying to trip an opponent
- Jumping at an opponent
- Violently or dangerously charging an opponent
- Striking or trying to strike an opponent
- Holding an opponent
- Pushing an opponent
- Handball – intentional or not
- Goalkeeper, touches the ball with his/her hands outside of the penalty box
- Dangerous Play – this includes kicking for a ball above the waist or lowering your head to play a ball below the waist. Dangerous plays are only called when opposing players are close enough to be affected by the dangerous play.

1.9.2 An **Indirect Free Kick** is given for the following fouls:

- Playing in a way the referee considers dangerous. i.e.: *trying to knock the ball away from the goalkeeper.*

- Charging, when the ball is not within playing distance of an opponent.
- Intentionally obstructing a player when not playing the ball
- If the goal keeper carries the ball more than the allotted number of seconds (6)
- Conduct – unsportsmanlike actions, foul language, etc.
- Off Sides
- A player intentionally passes/throws the ball back to his/her own goalkeeper and the goalkeeper uses his/her hands to play the ball (an infraction will not occur if a teammate uses his head, chest and/or knee, everything but the foot to make the pass.)
- Restarting play from an injury when a team had clear possession of the ball – that team will restart play with an indirect kick

1.9.3 Any defensive player lining up too close to the free kick or charging the free kick before the kick is taken will be verbally warned for delaying the re-start of the game. Any further infractions will result in the player being carded.

1.9.4 Any attacking player found to be less than one yard from the wall when a free kick is taken will be penalized and the other team will be rewarded with an indirect free kick.

### **Section 10 The penalty kick**

1.10.1 *A penalty kick is a direct kick taken from the penalty mark.*

- All players except the player taking the kick and the goalie must stay outside the penalty area until the ball is touched by the kicker. Players are not permitted in the arc at the top of the penalty box. Players may not be set up any closer to the goal than the top of the penalty box, which also includes along the sides of the penalty box.
- The Goalkeepers must have at least part of one foot on or in line with the goal-line.

### **Section 11 The throw-in**

1.11.1 Throw-ins are taken after the ball fully passes over the touchlines. The throw-in is made by the opposing team. The ball must be held with 2 hands and when thrown it must come directly from behind the head, both feet must be on the ground and behind the sideline.

1.11.2 A goal cannot be scored directly off a throw in.

1.11.3 There is no off side during a throw in.

1.11.4 In the 8-9 Year Old Divisions during the first two weeks of games, each player will have 2 chances, after the second chance, the ball will be awarded to the opposing team. In the 10 Year Old and Up Divisions, the ball will be awarded to the opposing team.

1.11.5 The player must make the throw from within a 1-yard radius of where the ball went out.

### **Section 12 The goal kick**

1.12.1 A goal kick is awarded when the ball completely crosses the goal line (end line) last touched by an offensive player.

1.12.2 The ball is put into play by the defensive team, within the goal box.

1.12.3 All offensive players must remain outside the penalty box.

1.12.4 The ball is in play as soon as it is touched and it can be played inside the 18-yard box.

1.12.5 If any opponents are in the penalty areas because they did not have time to leave, the referee allows play to continue.

### **Section 13 The corner kick**

1.13.1 A corner kick is awarded when the ball crosses the goal line and is last touched by a defensive player.

1.13.2 The ball is put into play from within a 1-yard arc by the corner by the offensive team.

1.13.3 There are no off-sides on a corner kick.

1.13.4 A corner kick is a direct kick (it can go into the goal without anyone touching the ball).

### **Section 14 Handball**

*The term "Hand Ball" is commonly used but is not defined in the official FIFA rules. It is a "direct kick foul" if a player (other than the goalkeeper inside his own penalty area) deliberately handles the ball; meaning to touch the ball with any part of the arm from the finger tips to the top of the shoulder.*

1.14.1 Hand-balls will be called when the ball is intentionally struck with the player's hand, arm and/or advantage is gained. Hand-balls will also be called if the ball strikes a player's hand or arm which is outside of the natural soccer position. If the player handles the ball for the purpose of preventing an opponent from gaining possession, it is a "cautionable offense" and a yellow card should be given. If a player deliberately handles the ball to deny an obvious goal scoring opportunity (e.g., to prevent a breakaway or to deliberately stop a shot), a red card should be given and the player "sent off". Remember, we call "hand to ball" contact.

1.14.2 Handballs will not be called if a player is protecting his/herself from being injured by the ball and is struck on the hand or arm.

1.14.3 If a player has accidentally handled the ball and created an advantage or subsequently scores, they will be penalized with a free kick.

### **Section 15 Goalkeepers**

1.15.1 No contact should be made with the goalkeeper once the goalkeeper leaves their feet to make a save.

1.15.2 Sliding into the goalkeeper is prohibited at all times.

1.15.3 Once possession of the ball is had by the goalkeeper (defined by, at minimum, one hand on the ball while the ball is on the ground), players are not permitted to kick at the ball. If possession is lost, the ball is considered live.

1.15.4 All divisions will utilize a goalie at all times.

### **Section 16 Inclement Weather**

1.16.1 Games will be played unless the YMCA Director and/or officials/referees agree that the conditions have become unsafe to continue play. Games will not be cancelled due to light rain.

1.16.2 In the event a game is in progress and we have completed the first half of play, the game will be considered complete and will not be made up. Games that have not started or played through the first half will be made up on a date and time chosen by the YMCA.

1.16.3 For thunder/lightening, the Sports fields will be cleared for a minimum of thirty minutes. Each occurrence of thunder/lightening will restart the thirty minute window during which thunder/lightening must not be observed.

## Rule 2 The Field

### Section 1 The field of play

2.1.1 The field of play must be rectangular and marked with lines. These lines are the boundaries.

2.1.2 The two longer boundary lines are called touch lines. The two shorter lines are called goal lines.

2.1.3 The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line, which joins the midpoints of the two touch lines.

2.1.4 The center mark is indicated at the midpoint of the halfway line. A circle with a radius proportionate to the size of field is marked around it.

2.1.5 Soccer Field & Goal Dimensions (Length must be greater than width in order to avoid square fields)

Age	Field Width	Field Length	Goal Min. Size	Goal Max Size
8-9	35yds to 45yds	50yds to 55yds	6.5' H x 12'W	-
10 & up	45yds to 50yds	60yds to 65yds	6.5' H x 18.5' W	8' H x 24' W

2.1.6 The Goal Area

- Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line, proportionate to the field from the inside of each goalpost. These lines extend into the field of play for a distance proportionate to the field size and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. This area is the goal area.

2.1.7 The Penalty Area

- Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line, from the inside of each goalpost. These lines extend into the field of play and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The area is the penalty area.
- Within each penalty area, a penalty mark is made at a distance proportionate from the midpoint between the goalposts and equidistant to them.
- An arc of a circle with a radius proportionate to the field size is made from the center of each penalty mark is drawn outside the penalty area.

2.1.8 Corners

- A corner is marked with a flag.

2.1.9 The Corner Arc

- A quarter circle with a radius of 1 yard from each corner marking is drawn inside the field of play.

2.1.10 Goals

- A goal must be placed on the center of each goal line.
- A goal consists of two upright posts equidistant from the corner markings and joined at the top by a horizontal crossbar.

2.1.11 Safety

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

2.1.12 Spectators

- All spectators must sit on the side of the field opposite the team benches.
- Spectators are only permitted on the side (touch) lines, not the end lines.
- Spectators will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches and officials at each game.

2.1.13 Coaches

- Only background-check approved coaches are allowed on the team bench. Coaches must stand or sit with their team. Coaches must wear a YMCA coaches' shirt.

## Rule 3 The Game Equipment

### Section 1 The players' equipment

3.1.1 The basic equipment of a player includes:

- Each player will be provided a YMCA jersey, which must be tucked in at the start of the game
- footwear (soft spike cleats or tennis shoes)

3.1.2 No jewelry can be worn during play. All medical bands must be covered or taped to skin. Sports staff will have final say on any medical wraps or soft casts prior to game start. Players wearing hard casts are not allowed to play.

3.1.3 Shin-guards are required by ALL players, and shin guards must be covered by socks. Players without shin guards will not be permitted to participate until shin guards have been provided.

Game locations:

Will be determined by the teams "home" locations, traveling may be involved. There is no guarantee that you will play at your "home field".

## Reference Chart

### Section 1 Reference Chart

Age	8-9 Year Old Division	10-11 Division	12-16 Division
Ball Size	size 4	size 4	size 5
Field Size	refer to rule 2.1.5	refer to rule 2.1.5	refer to rule 2.1.5
Goal Size	refer to rule 2.1.6	refer to rule 2.1.6	refer to rule 2.1.6
Game format	5 v 5 plus goalie	7 v 7 plus goalie	7 v 7 plus goalie
Max. # on field	6	8	8
Goalie	yes	yes	yes
Period Length	(2) 20-minute halves	(2) 25-minute halves	(2) 30-minute halves
Half-time	4 minutes unless ref calls less	4 minutes unless ref calls less	4 minutes unless ref calls less
Free Kicks	yes	yes	yes
Corner Kicks	yes	yes	yes
Penalty Kicks	yes	yes	yes
Off-sides Called	yes	yes	yes
Throw-ins	yes	yes	yes
Substitutions	Refer to pre-section 101	Refer to pre-section 101	Refer to pre-section 101

## **Rule 4 COVID-19 Requirements**

### **Section 1 COVID-19 Requirements**

4.1.1 The safety of our participants, families, and staff is our top priority. In keeping with CDC guidelines and local recommendations the following procedures are in place at our YMCA facilities:

- We ask that families practice social or physical distancing and stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arm's length) from other people who are not from their household during practice and game play.
- Spectators and players will sit separately during games to ensure social distancing.
- Players and staff are not required to wear masks while engaging in physical activity.
- Due to the close proximity of coaches and players, coaches are recommended but not required to wear masks at all times during practices and games.
- Spectators for outdoor soccer do not have to wear masks but are asked to maintain their social distance. When accessing our indoor facilities and not actively exercising, masks are required for ages 10+. This includes indoor restroom breaks for players and families.
- Reduced capacity in group activities
- Enhanced cleaning protocols and sanitization of equipment
- Daily health screenings for all staff