



BLAST U9 HANDBOOK

A guide to the rules, procedures and responsibilities of clubs, coaches and managers for U9 teams. This guide will help to grow participation & improve the quality & experience of grassroots soccer in BLAST through the development of the U9 League.

Keeping it fun
Positive
Encouraging
Exciting
Engaging

Balanced teams
Dynamic game days
Power play rule
Accessible and Inclusive



Balancing teams

U9 is an introduction to soccer for most players, parents and even the coaches. Ensuring the best balance of competition is not easy but is fundamental to building joy and retention in youth sport. It also helps kids understand that they're more than just athletes. With more balance and less pressure, kids are more likely to perform at their peak. Ensuring we can provide a FUN and exciting environment for as many as possible is our primary concern.



Balancing teams - club and coach responsibilities



The first games of the year, along with club practices, are used to ensure teams within the club are competitively balanced with no one team being significantly stronger than another.



Coaches are to ensure balanced time for all players. Rotating players to all positions for experience. Using the power play rule when scores permit Same day roster changes to adjust to competition levels



Clubs are required to ensure coaches are aware of the requirement for balanced competition. Provide resources and time to assist in education for coaches to balance teams. Ensure communication to parents on the U9 standards.

Rules for BLAST U9

1. Club teams must be balanced as much as possible to allow consistent competition levels across league play- Clubs will ensure the time is allotted to allow balanced rosters with the first league games internal to the club if they have more than 1 team
2. Non-specified rosters allow players to be moved to adjust - even on game days (properly communicated to parents to allow education of the why, retention, encouragement, equity and inclusion, building success for further development)
3. Player Development – our goal is to teach the players how to play soccer to the best of their ability. To accomplish this all players are to be given equal playing time during games and attention during practice.
4. Games are 40 minutes long (2 x 20 minute halves)
5. 5 v 5 (one of these will be a goalkeeper for each team)
6. Size 3 ball (or 4 light)
7. Net size 5x8ft
8. Field size - Width - 25/30m, Length - 30/36, Goal Box (W=9m, L=5m)
9. All out of bounds balls will be a pass in or dribble in.
10. Retreat line will be at half for all goal kicks and ball in hand with the keeper - Once the ball is played by the keeper, the defending players may advance past the retreat line.
11. Power play rule permits the trailing team to add a player in addition to the 5 on the field if they are down by 4 or more goals. - Note :Power play rule must be used if goal differential is more than 4 goals - Power play rule is rescinded once score differential is below 4 goals
12. All games must have rosters - it is important to have possible line make up and changes prior to game to show you are prepared to play by fair play rules.
13. When a lopsided game is expected, an adjustment to players and rosters can be made on the fly at the field during the games between the club teams. We are free to share players across teams to ensure competition is appropriate specifically, to ensure a team will have enough players for adequate subbing and breaks.

Adaptive Rules Explanation

Why Kick In- Dribble In?

One of the greatest challenges that young players face as they are learning to control the ball is keeping the ball in play. When the ball goes out of play along the sidelines, the traditional method of returning the ball into play is via a throw-in. However, for young players (U7-11), this can be a challenging skill to learn and often results in the ball going back out of play. To facilitate more contact time with the ball at their feet and more time for the ball to be in play, players up to U11 will be permitted to pass or dribble the ball back into play when a restart from the sidelines is required. At this young age, a recent study showed that up to 70% of throw ins are foul throws. This either results in a turnover or requires multiple restarts. Or if the throw does come into play it often goes to a poor location and the player receiving is not yet skilled enough to control the ball. These situations drastically reduce ball rolling time, some studies point to a 30% reduction in dribbling/active play during the game as the ball is stagnant and no real play is happening,

Why Retreat Line?

Before the retreat line, opposition could press their players high, right on top of the goalkeepers box during goal kicks. This results in the goalkeeper being forced to boot the ball as far as they can up the field. As we know players at these young ages often haven't developed the ability to pass accurately over long ranges- this means goal kicks often results in loss of possession.

The Goal of the Retreat Line is to encourage our players to learn to play out from the back. The retreat line encourages our goalkeeper and defenders to pass out from the back by allowing them additional time and space.

Coaches info and tools

Game sheet or RAMP app to include rosters

Monitoring games for proper competition level, tools that can be used

- Move player positions
- Power play rule
- Tasking players who are currently performing with a skill, pass, dribble
- Set a team goal of a number of passes
- Consider moving players from one team to another, inside your club or even with another club

Ensure the retreat line is used - return to half when the keeper has the ball in hand or a goal kick. Proceed when the ball is played.

Positive comments at all times. Advice is fine but guide them to solve the problems on the field. If we make game decisions for them, they are not really playing or learning the game.

Humble - if your team is well ahead, we do not encourage more goals loudly. Celebrating another goal can simply be a "Well done." Then focus on process actions.

Encourage process actions and efforts over results.

Dribbling Skills

Passing Skills

Teamwork

Taking shots

Taking Chances

Making mistakes and trying again

A focus on process over results allows young players to develop at the rate that suits them. Remember, they are kids, it's a game and every child will progress at their own pace. There are no "Elite" U9 players, only current performers and learners.

If a player is showing to be significantly more advanced than their peers, ensure your club is aware and request assistance on how the player can be challenged to develop. There are always options to help challenge players who are currently performing above their peers.

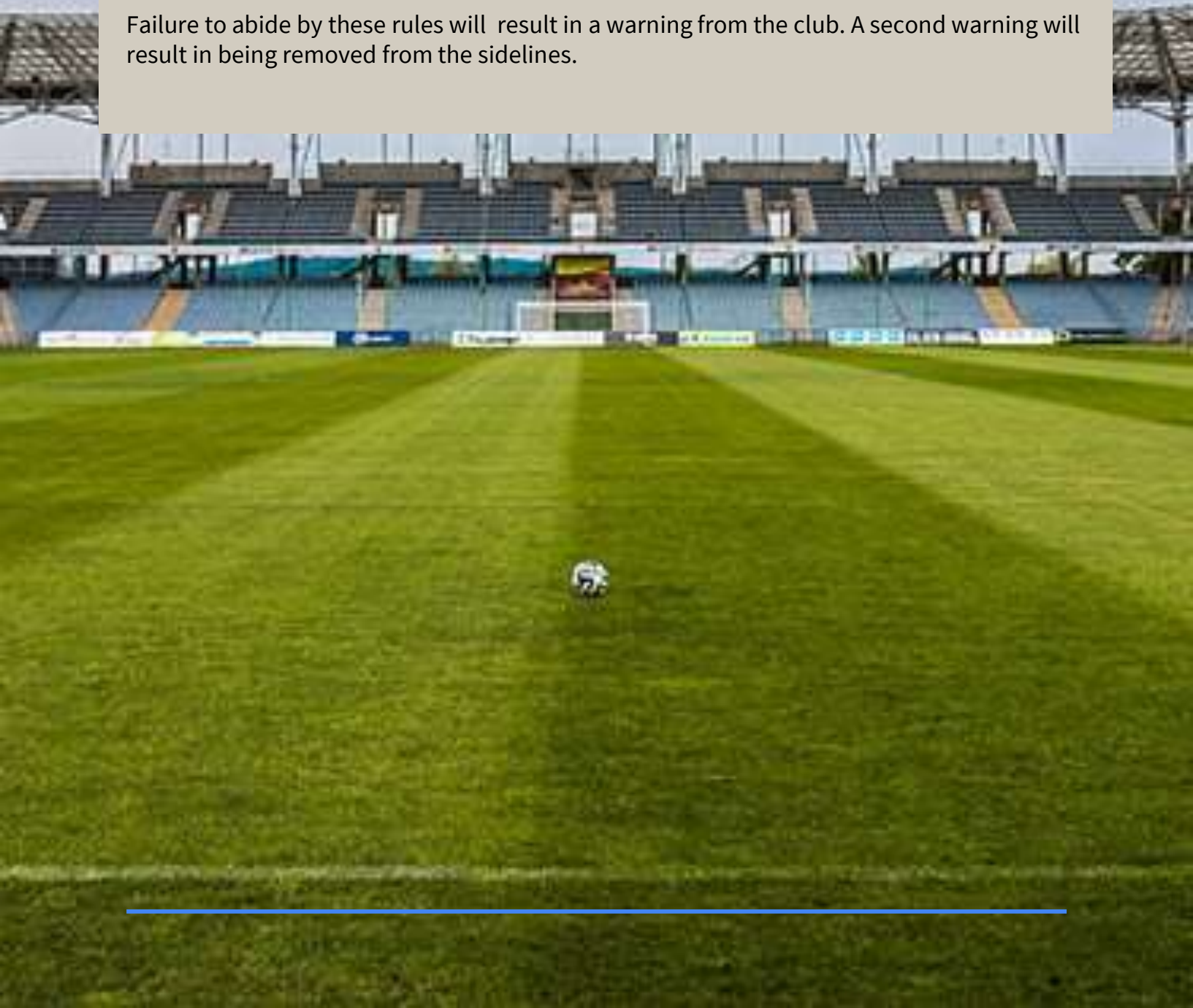
Strategies designed with technical input for the player

Parents & Spectator Info and tools

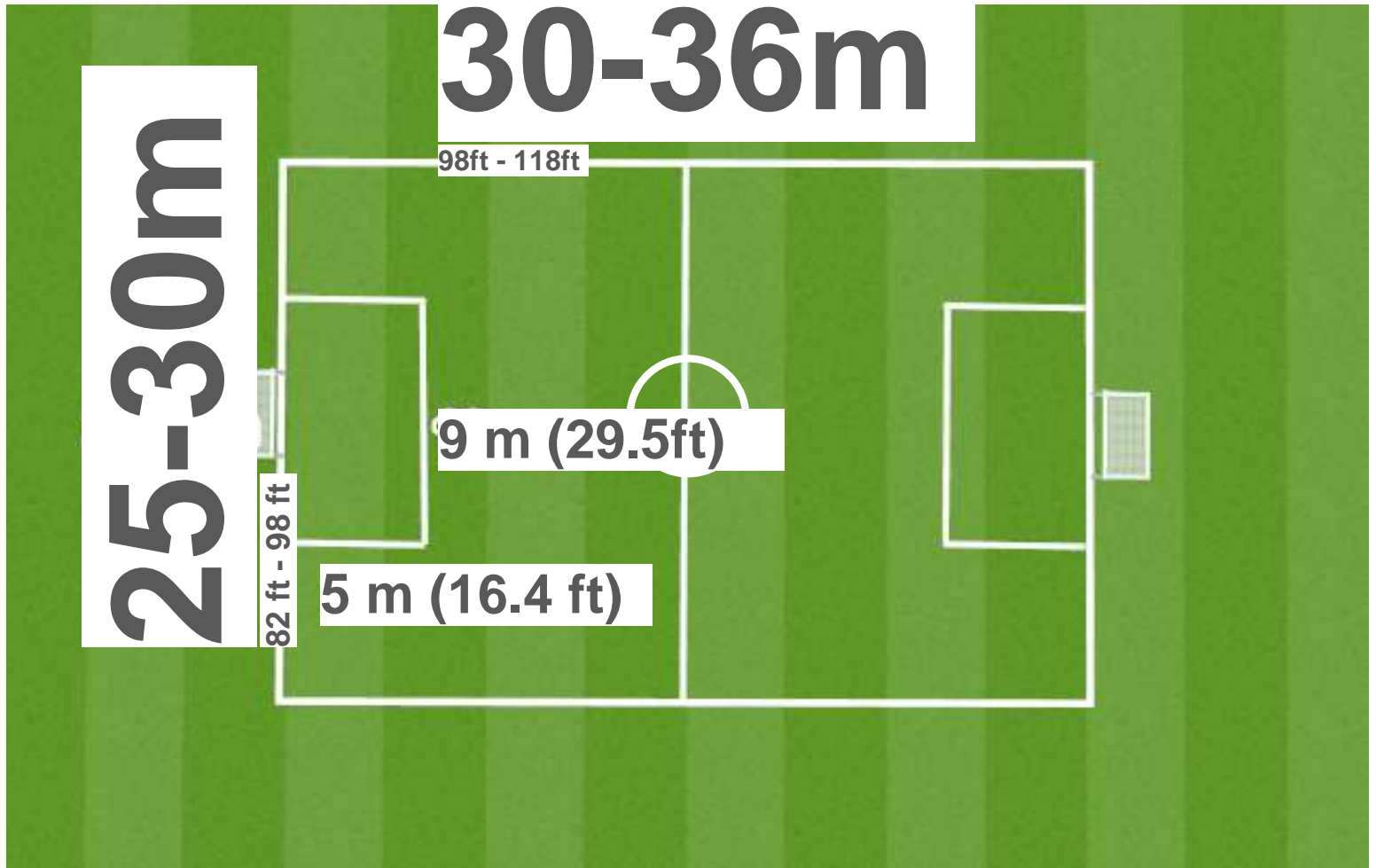
Spectators are to Stay at least 5m from the sidelines at all times. This is to allow players space while playing in from the sidelines.

Spectators are encouraged to cheer, however any sort of coaching or feedback during the game is unacceptable. Our coaches are trained and appropriately qualified and they should be the only voice coaching during the game. Multiple or conflicting voices during the game is distracting and confusing for our young players.

Failure to abide by these rules will result in a warning from the club. A second warning will result in being removed from the sidelines.



U9 field size minimums and maximums



5 v 5 with goalkeeper

Size 3 or 4 light ball

Net size 5x8ft (1.5 m x 4.2m)