



U11 Retreat Line Guide (Effective 2026)

This document explains the purpose and procedure of the **Retreat Line** for the Under-11 (U11) age category. The retreat line is introduced to support the development of possession-based play and comfortable ball handling for all players.

Note: The retreat line does not apply to the U13 age category, starting in 2026.

Purpose

The retreat line facilitates controlled, precise build-up play starting with the goalkeeper. This encourages:

- **Possession-Based Play:** Promoting an approach where controlled possession and passing are prioritized over immediate counter-attacks.
- **Player Comfort in Possession:** Ensuring all players on the field, including the goalkeeper, become comfortable and effective when handling the ball under game pressure.
- **Playing Through the Thirds:** Allowing youth players the time and space needed to practice building play from the defensive third and progressing through the field.

Procedure

The retreat line is active in the following situations:

1. Goal Kick
2. Free Kick inside the penalty box
3. Goalkeeper has possession of the ball in their hands

Opponent Action

When the retreat line is in effect, all opponents **must** retreat behind the retreat line and cannot cross it until one of the following occurs:

- The goalkeeper has played the ball from the goal kick **OR**
- The goalkeeper has released the ball from their hands when in possession.

U11 Field Dimensions – Retreat line 24 yards from end line

