

RECOMMENDED RULES OF PLAY UNDER 5

Updated: **March 2025**

3-A-SIDE MINI SOCCER

1. The Field (required field markings)

- Field length – Recommended 18-27 meters (60-90 feet)
- Field width – Recommended 13-18 meters (45-60 feet)
- The goal area – none at this level
- Centre line marked with kick-off spot at centre of field or a 3-4m (12ft) circle.
- When possible, all fields shall have the length of the field running north to south.
- No penalty area at this level

2. The Goals & Scoring

- Must be rectangular in shape (7ft wide x 5ft tall is recommended) Flags are recommended.
- Goals can be portables, pop-ups, cones, or flags but must always be the appropriate size indicated.
- A goal can be scored from anywhere on the field if it completely crosses the goal line and under the crossbar/flags but cannot be scored directly from a kick off.
- There are no off-sides in mini soccer.
- There is no official score keeping. Game sheets are not required.

3. Corner/Halfway Markers

- Corner flags are required, and halfway markers are optional.
- They should be safe regardless of what they are.

4. Ball

- Size 3 ball
- Please ensure that the ball is pumped up to 8.5-15.6psi and not under inflated.

5. Corner, Goal, Kick-Ins

After the ball goes out of play, which means the entire ball goes over the line; the game is restarted by one of the following 3 methods:

1. Sidelines - A kick-in from the point the ball left the field (no throw-ins at this age)
2. Goal-line or End-line – Restart the play at centre.
3. At the kick-off to start the game and after a goal is scored the opposing team will retreat to their own half and cannot move forward until the kick has been taken. Opposing players must be outside the centre circle. All Kick-offs at the start, at halftime and after a goal is scored must be taken at center field.

NOTE: Opponents must be at least 12' or 4 yards away from the ball on all the above

6. Number of Players and Substitution System

- The game is played with 3 players on the field at a time.

- There are no goalkeepers at U5 which allows all the kids to chase the ball down the field. This allows the kids to further develop primary basic skills as well as soccer specific abilities.
- It is recommended that teams carry no more than 7 players per team to allow for ample playing time throughout the season and team management.
- Substitutions are to be made about every 5 minutes (no limit of substitutions). The number of subs will depend on the team size. All players on the roster must be included in a sub rotation.
- No Goalkeepers – There are no goalkeepers at U5 and that allows all the kids to chase the ball down the field. The action is where the fun is, and fun is where the ball is. This allows kids to further develop primary basic skills (running and jumping) as well as soccer specific abilities. The players will be in contact with the ball a lot more and that will also allow them to experience the decisionmaking process. Frequently playing offense and defense, the players will also slowly begin to understand the concept and role of teammates.

7. Equipment

Players should wear equipment that is safe to both them and others. Each team should try to wear colors that differentiate from each other. In a situation where both teams have the same color jerseys, the home team will be required to change jerseys or wear pinnies of a different color. An official “soccer kit” includes a jersey, shorts, socks, and shin-guards. Socks are required to be pulled up over the shin-guards. This is done in case the shin-guards have edges to them that may hurt their fellow players.

- Jewelry – All items of jewelry (necklaces, rings, bracelets, earrings, leather bands, rubber bands, etc.) are strictly forbidden and must be removed. Using tape to cover jewelry is NOT acceptable.
- Headscarves – Headscarves are permitted if the referee/Coach, as per FIFA Law 4 of the Laws of the Game, ensures that the headscarf is safe and does not pose a danger to the wearer or other participants.

8. Game Time

There are two 15-minute halves (30-minute total game time), with a 5-minute half time.

NOTE: In extreme weather conditions please remember that the safety and well being of the players is the most important thing. In extreme heat ensure plenty of water, allow head wear, find shade, and make sure to communicate with your referee/coach if you feel that conditions are unsafe to continue. Remember, there must be a balance between wanting to play, as the kids will want to do, and being safe. Please see VSA’s weather policy with regards to weather conditions and cancelation of games.

9. Game Rules, Fouls & Off-sides

- The referee/coach has the final say in all situations. Young referees/coaches are encouraged at this age group to mentor and equip them for future development. This also permits coaches to coach and focus on bench management/supervision with these young children.

- No player, coach, or parent is at any time permitted to approach a referee to question a call or ruling. If necessary, a grievance form will be completed and submitted to your town association and VSA.
- Team benches shall be on one side of the field with players and coaches only and spectators on the opposite side of the field. No spectators shall be behind a goal or goal line.
- Coaches are permitted to be on the field to assist in coaching but must not interfere with the game or referee.
- There are no off-sides in mini soccer and no slide tackles.
- Even though fouls in the game occur, they are almost always unintentional. Remember the age of these children in front of you. So, when fouls occur such as tripping, kicking, pushing, handling the ball intentionally, etc. the opposing team is awarded an INDIRECT FREE KICK at the point of the foul. This means that the ball must first be passed to another player before a goal can be scored. Also, an explanation of why the free kick was given should be made to everyone including the player who committed the foul. This will assist in not alienating the player and gives everyone an explanation of what is appropriate behavior on the soccer field. • At this age no headers are permitted
- No hands are permitted, this includes contact with the arm. If a handball occurs an indirect free kick is awarded. This will also be a teaching opportunity to remind all players on the field to not use hands.