

## **RULES OF PLAY UNDER 9**

**Updated April 2026**

### **5-A-SIDE MINI SOCCER**

#### **1. The Field (required field markings)**

- Field length – 30-36 meters (98-118 feet)
- Field width – 25-30 meters (82-98 feet) (Please Note that FIFA Law dictates that a playing field must be a rectangular shape, so a 30x30 square is unacceptable.)
- The goal area – 9m x 5.5m (40ft x 18ft)
- Centre line and circle – The radius will be 7-8 meters (25ft)
- When possible, all fields shall have the length of the field running North to South. No penalty area required as all fouls are indirect, and opposition players must retreat to half on all goal kicks.

#### **2. The Goals & Scoring**

- The goals must be rectangular in shape (8ft wide x 5ft tall).
- Goals should be firmly secured to the ground to ensure they do not topple onto players.
- Goals can be portables, 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, or directly from a kick in. There are no off-sides in mini soccer.
- There is no official score keeping. Game sheets are not required by the league.

#### **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 4 ball
- Please ensure that the ball is pumped up to 8.5-15.6psi, not under inflated, irregularly shaped, or unsafe in any way.
- At this age, under no circumstances should coaches encourage their players to head the ball, or reward them when they do so in a game or practice.

#### **5. Corner, Goal, Throw-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 methods depending on where the ball left play:
- 1. Sidelines – A kick-in from the point the ball left the field (no throw-ins at this age).
  - Ball must be placed on the side line, and stationary.
  - The player that is taking the kick-in can either pass the ball to a team mate or dribble the ball into play.
  - Defenders must be 3 yards away from the player taking the kick-in when it happens.

- A goal cannot be scored directly from a kick in unless the ball touches another player before crossing the goal line.
- A goal can be scored if the player dribbles the ball in from the kick in and then shoots the ball.
- The player taking the kick in has five seconds to get the ball back into play.

- 2. Goal-line or End-line

- 2.1. With a goal kick if the attacking team touched the ball last. The opposing team must retreat to the halfway line on all goal kicks.

- 2.2. With a corner kick if the defending team touched the ball last.

- 2.3. With a kick-off from centre when a goal is scored.

- 3. At the kick-off to start the game and after a goal is scored, the opposing team will retreat to their own half. Opposing players must be outside the centre circle. All Kick-offs at the start of the game, at halftime and after a goal is scored must be taken at center field.

NOTE: Opponents must be at least 7-8 meters (25ft) away from the ball on all the above.

## 6. Number of Players and Substitution System

- The game is played with 5 players (4 out players + 1 keeper) on the field at a time. It is recommended that teams carry no more than 9-11 players per team to allow for ample playing time throughout the season. The keeper is the only player allowed to use their hands and only in the goal area. Keepers will be distinguished by a different coloured shirt/pinnie from their teammates and opponents.

- All players on the roster must be included in a reasonably equitable substitution rotation.

- Substitutions occur at the halfway line “On the Fly” with a maximum number of two substitutes per team at any one time. The player coming off the field must be 2-3 metres from the sideline before the substitute can come on.

NOTE: It is recommended that keepers play a maximum of half the game, and everyone should be allowed the opportunity to play as a keeper.

## 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, appropriate footwear, 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. If the jewelry is visible, it must be removed.

- Headscarves – Headscarves are permitted if the referee, 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 25-minute halves (50-minute total game time), with a 5-minute half time. At half-time players and keepers shall switch ends and play accordingly for the second half.

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 if you feel that conditions are unsafe to continue. Only the Referee and/or a Town Association may cancel/postpone a game for any reason, including weather; a Coach can choose to not participate in a game for any reason, but that is different than a ref or town association doing so and may have different ramifications.

- 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 cancellation of games.

### 9. Game Rules, Fouls & Off-sides

- The referee has the final say in all situations. No player, coach, or parent at any time is 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. There are no off-sides in mini soccer and no slide tackles. Even though fouls in the game occur, they are almost always unintentional. So, when fouls occur such as tripping, kicking, pushing, handling the ball intentionally, etc. the opposing team is awarded an INDIRECT FREE KICK. This means that the ball must first be touched by another player before a goal can be scored.
- If the foul occurs in the goal area it shall be placed on the line at the top of the goal area closest to where the foul occurred. It is an indirect free kick.