



RULES OF PLAY

UNDER 9

Updated: February 2023

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)
- The goal area – 12m 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 players retreat to half on all goal kicks.

2. The Goals & Scoring

- **Must be rectangular in shape** (8ft wide x 5ft tall).
- Goals should be firmly secured to the ground to ensure they do not topple on 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.
- 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 4 ball
- Please ensure that the ball is pumped up to 8.5-15.6psi and not under inflated.

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:

1.1. **Sidelines** – A kick-in from the point the ball left the field (no throw-ins at this age).

1.2. **Goal-line or End-line**

1.2.1. With a goal kick if the attacking team touched the ball last.

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

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

1.2.4. Opposing team must retreat to the halfway line on all goal kicks.

1.3. 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, 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 12-14 players per team to allow for ample playing time throughout the season.
- The keeper is the only player allowed to use their hands in the goal area. Keepers will be distinguished by a different colored shirt/pinnie as their teammates and opponents.

- Substitutions are to be made about every 5-8 minutes (no limit of substitutions). The number of substitutes will depend on the team size. All players on the roster must be included in a substitution rotation. Substitutes occur at centre field when the referee stops play and invites players into the field.
- Players that are changed every 2-3 minutes very seldom touch the ball during that time. With a longer consistent time on the field the players will have more of an opportunity to touch the ball and learn to play the game, enjoying their soccer experience.

NOTE: It is recommended that keepers play a maximum of half the game. 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, 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, *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 20-minute halves (40-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. 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 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. 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**. 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.
- 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.
- At this age, it is recommended that heading techniques be taught utilizing a softer ball (such as a beach ball or volleyball) and limited to no more than 10 touches per session to avoid repetitive contact that can cause injury.

10. Field Diagram

