

**VDSA**

## **LAWS FOR MINI-SOCCER**

**U-9 & U-11**



**2025**

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# INTRODUCTION

"The Laws of the Game" in this booklet are based on those published by Soccer Nova Scotia (SNS) in 2005, which in turn are based on those established by the Canadian Soccer Association (CSA). The Valley District Soccer Association (VDSA) has made slight changes to some laws based on input from experienced local coaches. It has also added greater detail to the laws than is expressed in either the CSA or SNS versions. This meets the overall purpose of producing this booklet which is to establish a common set of mini-soccer laws for all players within the VDSA and to help coaches, referees, parents and players to better understand these laws.

It needs to be noted that overall these laws mirror those of the regulation game, however there are instances which are very different (E.g. no direct kicks). These differences reflect a stronger desire for the establishment of fair play and safety, than that of directly matching the larger game.

## THE LAWS OF MINI SOCCER (CSA)

The laws of the game have been established for the benefit and safety of the players. It is the coach's responsibility to teach players the laws.

The Canadian Soccer Association (CSA) has adapted the regulation game and developed Mini-Soccer. It is played on a smaller field, with smaller nets, smaller ball, with fewer players on each side, and with simplified rules. The intent of Mini-Soccer is to introduce players under 11 years of age to the joys and skills of the game. The CSA believes so strongly in the spirit and the laws of Mini Soccer that it does not recognize the regulation (adult) game for children under 11 years of age.

Mini-soccer is soccer for children. It is not merely a set of rules, but also a philosophy or approach that emphasizes participation, action, skill development, effort, cooperation, friendship, fair play, enjoyment, moderate competition, and positive adult behavior. Mini-soccer attempts to put the game in perspective and to make the soccer experience as wholesome as possible for Canadian children.

The rule differences between Mini-Soccer and "regulation" play relate to the number of players, the size of the field, the size of the ball, the size of the goals, the duration of play, the absence of the goal areas, and the elimination of both offside and direct free-kicks.

In no way do these adjustments attempt to change the nature of the game, nor do they. Rather, they promise greater safety, easier understanding of the concepts and the laws of play, increased ball contact, and greater skill development. All in all, children will experience more involvement and enjoyment playing a game designed for children, than playing a game designed by adults for adults.

## ***Law 1: The Field of Play***

### **1. Field Dimensions**

Whenever possible Mini-Soccer should be played on a field designed for that purpose. In many instances, however, games will be played within or across standard soccer fields. Where fields are designed solely for the playing of mini-soccer, the recommended dimensions are:

U-11 → 55 metres long by 40 metres wide.

U-9 → 35 metres long by 30 metres wide

Touchlines (sidelines/lengths) and goal lines (ends/widths) shall be clearly marked. A centre dot is required. A centre circle and centre line are strongly recommended, but not required. The centre circle will have a radius of:

U-11 → 6 metres

U-9 → 4 metres

### **2. Goals**

The size of the goals shall be:

U-11 → 5 metres wide and 2 metres high. (16ft by 6.5 ft)

U-9 → 2.5 metres wide and 1.5 metres high (8 ft by 5 ft)

Measurements are taken from the inside of the posts and the underside of the crossbar.

Whenever possible, goal-nets shall be used.

Where goals are constructed of steel or other materials considered to be dangerous, they must be anchored to the ground.

### **3. Penalty Area**

This shall be rectangular in shape.

U-11 → It will extend 10 metres from each goal post along the goal line and then 10 metres out into the field parallel to the touchlines.

U-9 → It will extend 5 metres from each goal post along the goal line and then 8 metres out into the field parallel to the touchlines.

### **4. Penalty Spot**

The penalty dots will be placed straight out from the goal line midway between the posts. 8 metres for U-11 and 6 metres for U-9

### **5. Corners**

It is recommended that all corners be marked by a corner flag that is at least one metre high and made of a flexible material. Where flags are not present, cones should be used.

Corner arcs are to be made at each corner with a radius of one metre.

### **6. Retreat Lines**

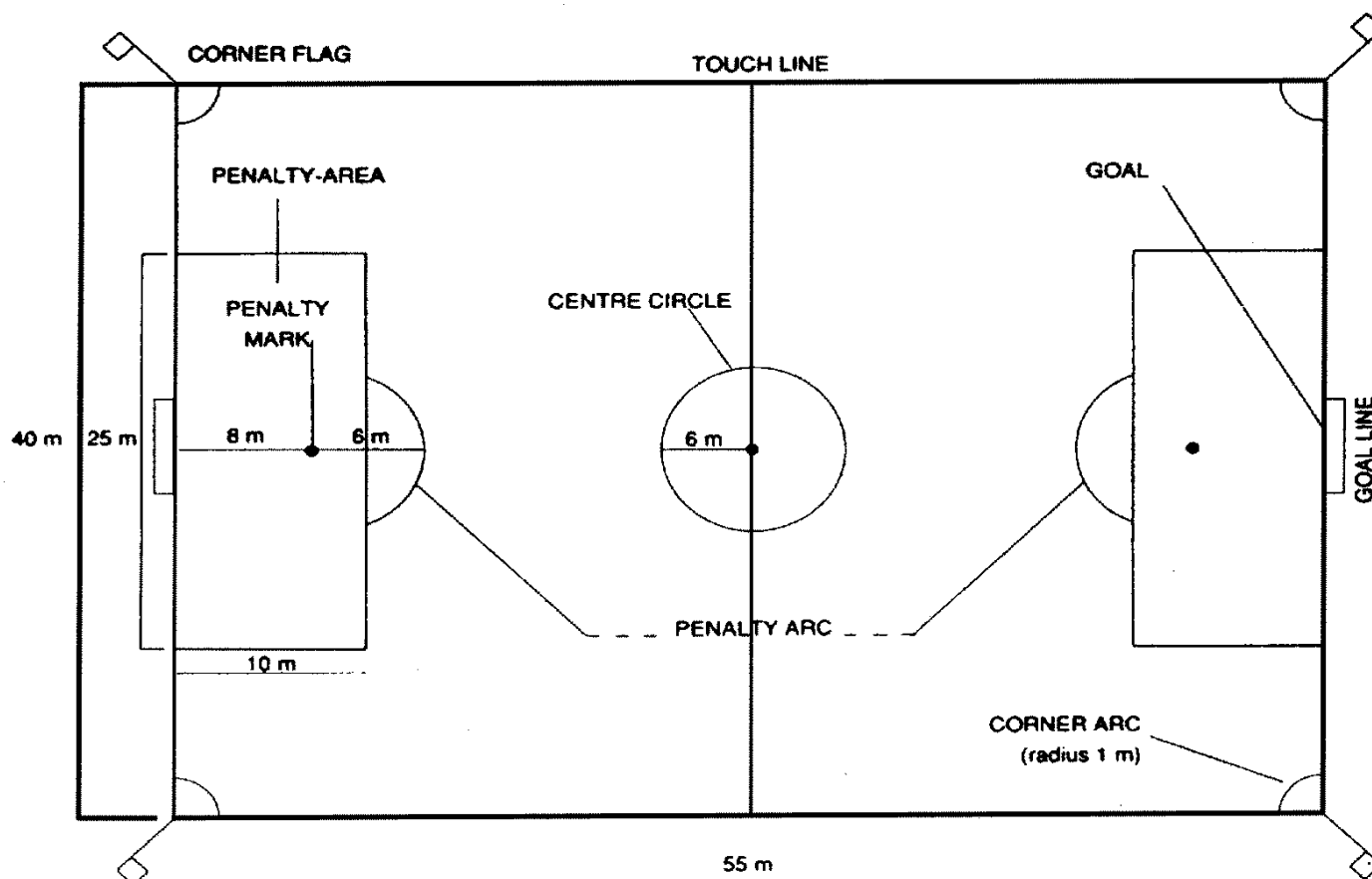
For U-9 the centre line will be used as the retreat line. For U-11, "hash marks" will be placed at the one-third field distances. In the absence of these marks, cones need to be placed prior to the game starting.

## ***LAW 2: THE BALL***

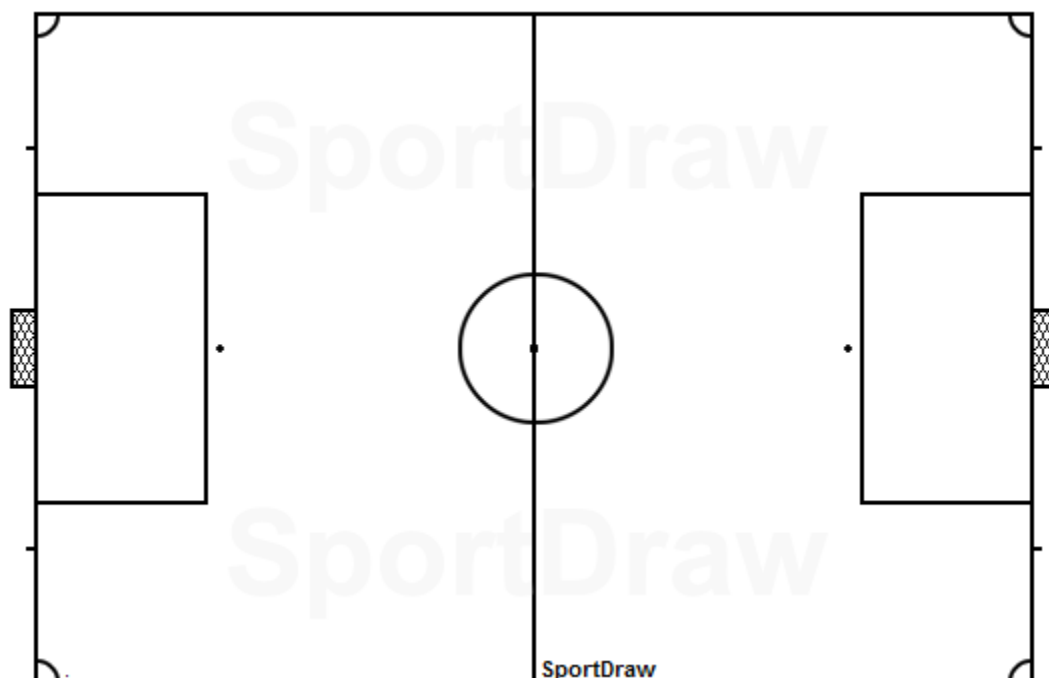
1. The ball should be spherical and shall be constructed of materials that meet the requirements of the game and are not dangerous to the players.

2. Ball Size: Both U-9 and U-11 will use size 4

## U-11 Field



## U-9 Field



### **LAW 3: NUMBER OF PLAYERS**

1. The game shall be played by two teams, each consisting of:

U-11 → 7 players on the field, one of whom shall be designated as the goalkeeper.

U-9 → 5 players on the field, one of whom shall be designated as the goalkeeper

2. Teams must dress a minimum of five players at U-11 and four players at U-9. There is no maximum number of players.

**3. (New 2023) – For U-9, substitutions will be on the fly and may take place during play or at any stoppage. Coaches should do their best to ensure players are in the immediate area of the bench and are in the process of leaving the field before allowing their substitutes to enter. Note the keeper can only be changed during a stoppage in play.**

**(New 2024) – U-11 substitutions will follow the same description as for U-9 above.**

**2025 – Substitutions will continue to be “on the fly” for both U9 and U11.**

4. It is recommended that coaches do their best to ensure fair and equal playing time for all dressed players.

*At the U-9 level, where deemed necessary, one coach per team can be on the field. This coach may not interfere with play in any way and cannot be in the goal areas.*

### **LAW 4: PLAYER'S EQUIPMENT**

1. Player's equipment shall meet the requirements established in the FIFA laws of the game. This equipment will consist of shorts, socks, a shirt, shinpads and appropriate footwear.

- shirts should be numbered
- sneakers may be worn
- shinpads are mandatory and are to be covered by socks
- pinnies may be worn to avoid color clashes

2. Goalkeepers must wear colors that are distinguishable from all players and the referee. They may wear gloves, a hat and/or long athletic pants.

### **LAW 5: THE REFEREE**

Each match will be controlled by a referee who shall enforce the laws of the game.

### **LAW 6: ASSISTANT REFEREES**

Assistant referees are not required in mini-soccer.

### **LAW 7: DURATION OF THE GAME**

Games shall be divided into two equal halves. The interval between halves will be 5 minutes at all levels.

U-11 → 25-minute halves

U-9 → 20-minute halves

The length of halves may be shortened for tournaments

## **LAW 8: THE START AND RESTART OF PLAY**

### **1. Preliminaries:**

- At the beginning of the game, the choice of halves and the kick-off shall be decided by a coin-toss between the captains. The winner of the toss may choose the end or choose to take the kick-off.
- For the second half, teams will change ends and the team that didn't have kick-off at the start of the game will for the second half.

### **2. Kick-offs:**

- On kick-offs all players (except one on the kick-off team) must be in their own half of the field. All defending players must be at least 6 metres (U-9 → 4 metres) from the ball until it is in play.
- Following a signal from the referee, play begins when the ball is kicked (**in any direction**). The kicker may not touch the ball a second time until it has touched another player.
- If the player taking the kick-off plays the ball a second time before it has been touched by another player, a free kick will be awarded to the other team. All other infractions will result in the kick being retaken.
- After a goal has been scored by a team, the ensuing kick-off will be taken by the other team.
- Goals may not be scored directly from a kick-off in mini-soccer.

### **3. Dropped Balls:**

- For any stoppages not covered elsewhere in these laws (eq. injuries), play will be restarted by a dropped ball. The ball will be dropped to a player of the team that last touched the ball before the whistle blew. This will take place at the spot where the ball was when play was stopped unless it was last touched by a team while the ball was inside their opponent's penalty area. In this case the ball will be dropped on the penalty area line that runs parallel to the goal line at the spot closest to where the ball was when play stopped. The ball is in play when it hits the ground. Players may not touch the ball until it does hit the ground. All players, except the one taking the drop must be 4m away from the drop. For any infringements, the ball will be redropped.

## **LAW 9 : THE BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY**

The ball is out of play when:

- all of the ball has crossed all of the goal-line or touch line whether on the ground or in the air
- play has been stopped by the referee

The ball is in play at all other times.

## **LAW 10: METHOD OF SCORING**

1. A goal is scored when all of the ball has crossed over all of the goal-line, between the goal posts and under the crossbar, provided that no previous infringements of the laws by the scoring team have occurred.

## **LAW 11: OFFSIDE**

The offside law does not apply to mini-soccer, however coaches and referees should discourage all players from remaining deep in the offensive end of the field for extended periods of time while the play is at the other end of the field.

## **LAW 12: FOULS AND MISCONDUCTS**

Free kicks shall be awarded to the opposing team for the following offenses, which have been divided into three groups.

1. A free kick is awarded if a player commits any of the following offenses:

- kicks or attempts to kick an opponent
- trips an opponent
- jumps at an opponent
- charges an opponent
- strikes or attempts to strike an opponent
- holds an opponent
- spits at an opponent
- pushes an opponent
- deliberately handles the ball (except a goalkeeper within his/her own penalty area)
- tackles an opponent to gain possession of the ball but makes contact with the player before touching the ball

2. A free kick will also be awarded if a player:

- plays in a manner deemed to be dangerous
- obstructs the progress of an opponent
- moves with the goaltender to prevent him/her from releasing the ball
- obtains or attempts to obtain the ball with a **slide tackle**
- commits other unsportsmanlike behavior not previously mentioned
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3. A free kick will also be awarded to the opposing team if a goalkeeper commits any of the following offenses.

- takes more than six seconds to release the ball after controlling it with his/her hands (some discretion should be allowed here)
- touches the ball with the hands a second time after having released it from his/her possession and it has not been touched by any other player
- touches the ball with the hands after it has been **intentionally** kicked to him/her by a teammate
- touches the ball with the hands after receiving it directly from a teammate's throw-in

If any of the offenses in the first group occur within the offending team's penalty area, the opposition will be awarded a penalty kick.

For all offenses in the last two groups – if they occur within the offending team's penalty area, the opposing team will be awarded the free kick on the penalty line that runs parallel to the goal line, at the spot closest to where the offense occurred.

If any of the offenses occur within the opposition's penalty area, the free kick will be taken from anywhere within the area.

For all other situations the free-kick will be taken from where the offense occurred.

Except for penalty kicks, **no goals may be scored directly from a free kick.**

Red and yellow cards will not be used in mini-soccer, however the referee has the authority to verbally warn and/or remove players from the field for play that is deemed to be intentionally or continually dangerous or who persist in showing disregard for the intended spirit of the game.

Players who are removed from the game cannot return to that game but may be replaced by another player.



### **LAW 13: FREE KICKS**

Free kicks will be awarded and placed as described in Law 12.

The ball must be stationary when kicked. (if not, the kick will be retaken)

All opponents must be at least 6m (U-9 → 4 metres) from the ball and must remain there until the ball has moved.

For free kicks taken by a team within its own penalty area, the ball will be placed anywhere within the area. All players on the opposition team must be at or moving towards the retreat line. On all free kicks the ball is in play as soon as it is kicked and moves.

The player taking the free kick cannot touch the ball a second time until it has touched another player.

#### ***Infringements:***

If the kick is consecutively touched by the kicker, the opposing team shall be awarded the free kick.

For all other infractions the kick will be retaken.

A goal cannot be scored directly from a free kick. (Note that if the ball should legally touch any other player before crossing the goal line, a goal shall count)

### **LAW 14: PENALTY KICK**

Penalty kicks shall be awarded as described in Law 12.

The ball will be placed on the penalty mark.

Goals may be scored directly from a penalty kick.

Halves will be extended where necessary, for the taking of a penalty kick.

#### ***Player Positions:***

All players except the kicker and the goalkeeper must be at least 6m (U-9 → 4 metres) from the ball, must be "behind" the ball and must be outside the penalty area. These conditions must remain until the ball has been kicked.

The goalkeeper must remain on the goal line until the ball has been kicked. (but is allowed to move laterally on the line)

#### ***Procedure:***

The referee shall signal for the kick to be taken.

The kicker must kick the ball forward and cannot touch the ball again until it has touched another player.

If a goal is not scored, play immediately continues.

#### ***Infringements:***

Against the defensive team:

If a goal is scored, it shall count.

If a goal is not scored, the kick shall be retaken, unless the kick was not on the net.

Against the offensive team:

If a goal is scored, the kick shall be retaken.

If a goal is not scored, play will be stopped and then resume with a free kick for the defensive team.

## ***LAW 15: THE THROW-IN***

A throw-in is awarded when all of the ball has crossed all of the touch line either on the ground or in the air. It shall be taken by a member of the team opposing that of the player who last touched the ball before it crossed the line. It shall be taken from a spot within one metre of where it crossed the line.

### ***Procedure:***

As the ball is thrown, the thrower must:

- face the field of play
- have all or part of both feet on the ground on or outside the touch line
- use both hands to deliver the ball from behind and over the head

The ball is in play as soon as it enters the field of play

The thrower may not touch the ball again until it has been touched by another player.

### ***Infringements:***

If the thrower touches the ball a second consecutive time, the opposing team will be awarded a free kick.

For any other infringements on the throw, the referee shall stop play, explain the infringement to the thrower and give him/her a second chance. An infringement on the second throw would result in the throw-in being given to the opposing team.

Goals cannot be scored directly from a throw-in. (unless it legally touches another player before it crosses the goal line)

Goalkeepers cannot receive the ball with their hands directly from a throw.

Players on the opposing team shall not attempt to impede or distract the thrower.

## ***LAW 16: GOAL KICK***

A goal kick is awarded to the defending team when all of the ball passes over all of the goal line, on the ground or in the air, is not a goal and was last touched by the attacking team.

The ball will be placed anywhere within the area and must be stationary when kicked.

All opposing players must be at or moving towards the retreat line. They must remain there until the ball has been kicked.

The ball is in play once it has been kicked and moves.

The player taking the kick cannot touch the ball again until it has been touched by another player.

### ***Infringements:***

If the kicker touches the ball twice consecutively, a free kick is awarded to the opposing team. (placement in accordance with Law 13)

For all other infringements, the kick shall be retaken.

A goal kick may be taken by any member of the team that has been awarded the kick.

A goal cannot be scored directly from a goal kick.

## ***LAW 17: CORNER KICK***

A corner kick is awarded to the attacking team when all of the ball passes over all of the goal line on the ground or in the air, is not a goal and was last touched by the defending team.

All defending players must be at least six metres (U-9 → 4 metres) from the ball and must remain there until the ball has been kicked.

The ball will be placed within the corner arc. (within one metre of the corner)

The corner flag cannot be moved or removed.

The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves.

The kicker may not touch the ball a second time until it has touched another player.

***Infringements:***

If the kicker touches the ball twice consecutively a free kick will be awarded to the opposing team.

For all other infringements, the kick shall be retaken.

A goal cannot be scored directly from a corner kick.

## **Special Laws**

**Retreat Lines** - (one third field at U-11 and mid-field at U-9).

This means that for either one of the following two conditions:

- goalkeeper is in possession of the ball

- free kick or goal kick from within the penalty area

all players not on the goalkeeper's team must "retreat" to the designated line and remain there until either the kick has been taken or the ball has been released from the goalkeepers hand.

At this time they may move to attack.

Failure to observe this line or encroachment before the ball has been properly touched will result in the ball being placed for a re-kick or returned to the goalkeepers possession.

*As a referee a good position to take is at the retreat line when one of the above two situations has occurred. It makes it easy for the players to know how far to retreat to and it makes it easier for the referee to enforce.*