

LISA ADMINISTRATION MANUAL

Chapter 2

Rules for Small Sided Soccer Programs (U5 – 12)

Updated January 2016





Chapter 2 – Rules for Small Sided Soccer Programs

Rule 200 Small Sided Program Description and Rules (Introduction)

While clubs that play only “in-house” may modify their programs as they think necessary, all teams that participate within District administered leagues shall comply with the District approved rules.

Some of the reasons for introducing the progressive system include:

1. The number of players on the field is appropriate to the developmental stages of children in each age group as well as meeting the needs of the player’s level of social development.
2. The system creates a comfortable environment for the new youth coach. By starting small and increasing the number of players incrementally each year, the new coach is able to focus on creating developmentally appropriate practice sessions. There is a greater opportunity to place emphasis on teaching individual players rather than managing a large group. Concern for player and team development is given greater emphasis.
3. By increasing the number of players on the field and rosters incrementally, it is easier for the coach to deal with the challenge of new players being added to the team at younger ages. Often times new players added to the team at the younger ages are playing soccer for the first time. The use of small-sided games maximizes player contact time with the ball, which, in turn, speeds skill improvement for the new players. It also allows players to more easily integrate into the team.
4. The 8 versus 8 configuration and introduction of the offside rule provides a final smooth transition to full field soccer.
5. The enabling of small-sided games to take up less field space than the traditional 11 vs 11 full-field.

Rule 201 Number of Players and Roster Size

Age	# of Players on Field	Roster Size
U6	3 versus 3 (no goalkeeper)	Maximum 6
U7/U8	4 versus 4	Maximum 8
U9/U10	6 versus 6	Ideal 8; Maximum 10
U11/U12	8 versus 8	Ideal 11; Maximum 14

Rule 202 Field* and Goal Size**

Age	Width	Length	Goal Size	Field Marking
U6	Min 18m; Max 22m	Min 25m; Max 30m	Mini	Lines/Flags/Cones
U7/U8	Min 20m; Max 25m	Min 30m; Max 36m	Mini	Lines/Flags/Cones
U9/U10	Min 30m; Max 36m	Min 40m; Max 55m	Mini	Lines/Flags/Cones
U11/U12	Min 42m; Max 55m	Min 60m; Max 75m	Mid Sized	Lines/Flags/Cones

* U6 – U12, the field of play shall be rectangular

** Nets are recommended and goals shall be anchored

Rule 203 Game Length and Ball Size



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Age	Game Length	Half-Time Break	Ball Size
U6	2 X 15 minutes	5 minutes	#3 or #4
U7/U8	2 X 20 minutes	5 minutes	#3 or #4
U9/U10	2 X 25 minutes	5 minutes	#3 or #4
U11/U12	2 X 30 minutes	5 minutes	#4

Rule 204 Gender Separation in District Leagues

At the District level, leagues will be gender specific. While females are permitted to compete for and play on an otherwise all-male team, a team on which at least one male is registered shall be designated a “male” team for league scheduling purposes.

Rule 205 General Description of the Small Games Progression

1. **U5:** A few clubs run **Tiny Tots (Toddlers)** soccer for very young players.
2. **U6 (3 v 3):** For 5-year-olds (U6), the team is kept to 6 players and the game is designed to give every player a frequent opportunity to kick the ball and to provide a playing environment that is focused on having fun with the ball. This can lead to a **FUNDamental** understanding of game. With 5 year olds the amount of time spent on “teaching” specific skills is kept to a minimum, as the attention span of a 5-year-old is short. An area considerably less than one-quarter (1/4) the size of a full field is sufficient for games and practices. Cones/flags can be used for sidelines and goals.
3. **U7/U8 (4 v 4):** For 6-year-olds (U7) and 7-year-olds (U8), the team is expanded to include a goalkeeper. This provides an opportunity to develop team play in both the attacking and defensive modes. With a maximum eight (8) players per team, practices and games can be more easily managed. Again, an area less than one-quarter (1/4) full field will provide ample playing space.
4. **U9 – U10 (6 v 6):** In this game for 8 and 9 year olds the playing space is expanded to a smaller half field. Cones may be needed to indicate some sideline markings if less than a full 1/2 field is used. Team rosters in both groups are brought to a maximum of 10 players. At this stage the game is fast changing, presents constant scoring opportunities and requires alert goal keeping and first class individual and collective defending.
5. **U11-U12 (8 v 8):** Super 8’s is the final transition to full field soccer and is a very fast paced game that requires a full sized half field (48 X 70 yards, or as close as possible to that size). In Super 8’s players are introduced to the “offside rule.” The Super 8’s is an adaptation of the 35-yard rule that was so successful in the old North American Soccer League wherein the rule of offside only comes into affect in the final third of the field. When play is in the Attacking Third the offside rule is identical to the FIFA rule regarding offside (players can only be offside in the Attacking Third of the field of play instead of the Attacking Half).

Dividing the soccer field into “thirds”, instead of “halves”, is tactically sound. It enables players to gain a further understanding of their roles within the team when in various parts of the field of play – the Defending 1/3, Midfield 1/3 and the Attacking 1/3.

Rule 206 Field Size and Marking (U9 – U12)



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1. Teams in U9-U12 will utilize one-half of a full size field with larger fields being allocated to U11 and U12 teams. Field dimension options are listed in Rule 202. This half field is divided into equal thirds. Markings should include:
 - A. **Thirds:** the field divided into thirds which may vary somewhat depending of the size of the full field. Sideline cones can be used to mark the thirds
 - B. **Penalty Area/Goal Areas:** the *penalty area* is marked 12 yards out from the goal and each goal post (keeper is allowed to handle the ball in this area in accordance with FIFA rules). The *penalty spot* is marked 9 yards out from the centre of the goal. ~~The goal area is 4 yards out from goal and from each goal post.~~ The *sideline cones* can be used to indicate the limit of the 12-yard box if lines are not available.

Rule 207 Offside Rules

1. **U10 and below:** The offside rule will not apply to U10 and below, however, the intent of the rule will be followed. In U9 and U10, the positioning of a player in the opponent's end of the field in anticipation of a long ball, when the ball and the other players are in or near the opposite end of the field is contrary to the aims of player development. The referee shall take appropriate action to prevent this kind of play. An indirect kick will be awarded to the offended team at a location to be determined by the referee. Instructional statements to the violating players and coach would be in order.
2. **U11 – U12:** When a team is on the attack, the FIFA offside rule is in effect in the attacking one-third (1/3) of the field and shall be applied accordingly by the referee. If line-persons are used they only need take reference at the 1/3 field marking.
3. **Cones** on the sideline WILL be needed to mark the 1/3 field limits.

Rule 208 Throw-ins

1. **U8: Kick ins can be used at U8 in an attempt to get the ball back in play as quickly as possible** If an incorrect throw occurs, play will be allowed to continue.
2. **U9:** There will be one re-throw allowed. If improperly throw after the re-throw, the ball will be awarded to the opponents.
3. **U10 – U12:** FIFA laws will be followed (e.g. the throw shall be awarded to the opposing team).

Rule 209 Goal Kicks

1. **U10 and down:** Drop kicking and punting is allowed.
2. **U11 – U12:** FIFA rules apply.
3. **AMENDMENT FOR 2014-15 SEASON and beyond** , for U11 and U12- All players from the opposing team will retreat back behind the existing offside line marked by cones at the 1/3 mark of the field, which will be also known as the retreat line. Players from the opposing team may not pass the retreat line until the ball has been touched by the player receiving the goal



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kick. If the goal kick is kicked passed the retreat line the ball is in deemed in play as soon as it crosses the retreat line.

4. Infringement- If a player passes the retreat line before the ball is deemed in play, then the goal kick will be retaken

Rule 210 Corner Kicks (U8 – U12)

1. Defenders must move back 6 yards.

Rule 211 Penalty Kicks

1. Penalty kicks will only be awarded at U11 and U12. There shall be no penalty kicks at U10 and below.
2. For a penalty kick the ball will be placed on a penalty spot 9 yards out from the goal.
3. Players, other than the player taking the penalty shot, shall remain centre field side of the 12-yard line.

Rule 212 Free Kicks

1. Free kicks shall be classified under two (2) headings:
 - A. Direct: from which a goal can be scored by a direct kick against the offending side
 - B. Indirect: from which a goal cannot be scored unless the ball has been played or touched a player other than the kicker before passing through the goal line.
2. No direct kicks will be allowed at U10 and below. Only indirect kicks will be used.
3. Defending players shall move back 6 yards from the kicker.

Rule 213 Fouls and Misconduct

1. **Role of Referee:** Referees will generally call the game in accordance the FIFA Rules of the Game. Exceptions noted in this document will be outlined in various training and refresher courses. Club referee coordinators should provide of copy of these rules to referees they will be assigning to small-sided games. Consistent with the educational intent of small-sided games, the referee should advise the offending player of the nature of the infraction.
2. **Slide Tackling** will not be allowed at U10 and below.
3. **Red and Yellow Cards:** While red and yellow cards are seldom used in small sided games this does not preclude a referee from issuing a card. It is suggested that when serious infractions occur, the referee should stop the game speak to the offending player(s) and, if necessary, the players coach and advise that further similar conduct may lead to expulsion from the game. A player may be sent from the field of play without a card being issued.



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- A. U10 and below: A player sent from the field of play by a referee may be replaced by another player.
 - B. U11 –U12: A player sent from the field of play may not be replaced by another player (e.g. the team will play shorthanded).
4. **Coaches on Field of Play:** Subject to the exceptions noted in this section, coaches are not allowed on the field of play during the course of the game.
- A. The referee may allow a coach on the field to tend to an injured player. The coach must await approval of the referee to enter the field.
 - B. U8 and below: A member of the coaching staff may enter and remain upon the field of play to provide coaching instructions to the players on his/her team.
 - C. U9 and above: Coaches are only allowed on the field of play as noted in (a).
5. **Ejection from the Game Site:** Referees may send any coach, parent, or other spectator from the area of the field of play if they exhibit behaviour that tends to bring the game into disrepute. It would be usual for the referee to first warn the offending party that to continue with their behavior may result in ejection from the game site.

Rule 214 League and Division Standings:

No league or division standings are maintained in small-sided games. While it is generally accepted that competing teams will keep score in games, coaches, parents and players are discouraged from tracking league win/loss/tie or goals/for against in small-sided games.

Rule 215 Running Up Scores:

When it becomes apparent that goal scoring is mostly in favour of one team, the coach of the winning team should take steps to maintain a balance in the game. Running up the score is not in the interest of player development for either team.