

AYSO REGION 678
U7 & U8 Rules Summary
And Referee Duties
(updated 8/6/2007)

PURPOSE OF PROGRAM: To begin to develop children as soccer players in a FUN non-competitive environment.

SPECTATORS: The home team is listed first in the schedule and sits on the north or west side of the field. The Visiting Team must sit on the opposite side of the field (no exceptions). No one is to be behind the goal lines unless silently taking pictures.

UNIFORMS: Shin guards must be worn by all players. If there is a color conflict with jerseys, the HOME team is responsible for obtaining and wearing pinnies from the equipment shed.

EQUIPMENT: Inspect the field to be sure there are no holes, exposed sprinkler heads, broken glass or anything that might pose a danger. Fix anything you can. Inspect the players to be sure they have no wristwatches or jewelry (specifically no earrings – not even if they are taped). Players may not participate while wearing a hard cast or splint. No baseball type caps with firm brims. Elastic hair ties and ribbons are okay. Barrettes and metal hair pins are not. Shin guards must be worn under the socks.

GAME LENGTH: 40 minutes consisting of four 10 minute quarters. Quarter breaks shall be 1 minute. Allow 5 minutes for a halftime break and be sure the kids get fluids. A horn will sound at 10 minutes to the hour, and all games should stop at that time. If it is very hot, it is permissible to shorten the games as long as both coaches agree.

BALL: Get a ball from the home team (the first team listed in the schedule). It should say Size 3 on it somewhere. Pick one that is neither too soft nor too hard. Push on it with your thumbs. You should be able to deflect the ball about ¼ inch. Play with the best ball you can find.

PLAYERS: For U7 there are 4 field players plus one goalkeeper (who wears a distinctive shirt). For U8, there are 6 field players plus one goalkeeper. The goalkeeper is the only player permitted to use his/her hands while in their own goal keeper Area. However, the goalkeeper is free to participate anywhere on the field, just can't handle the ball.

At U7 age kids get tired (or bored) easily. Therefore coaches can substitute players at will, ideally at a stoppage in play. Periodically count the players on the field to be sure each team has the correct number and adjust as necessary. At U8 age, coaches can substitute players only at quarter and half time breaks.

KICK OFF: The game begins with a kick off. The home team will kick off to begin the game. The ball is placed in the middle of the center circle. The players from each team must be in their own half of the field. In addition, all the visiting players must be outside the center circle and must wait until the ball is kicked before playing. The second half also begins with a kick off taken this time by the visiting team. A kick off is also used to restart the game after a goal is scored. In this instance, the team scored upon kicks off.

THROW IN: When the ball passes all the way across one of the long sidelines (the touchlines) the game must stop. The team that last touched the ball loses possession and the opposing team puts the ball back

in play with a throw in. The player taking the throw in must face the field standing outside the line (or with one or both feet in contact with the line). The player must start with the ball behind the head, and then throw it in one motion across the top of the head with both hands. Feet must remain in contact with the ground until the ball is released. Don't be too picky about this. Help them to get it right.

GOAL KICK: When the ball passes all the way across one of the goal lines (but not into the goal), last touched by a player from the attacking team the game must stop. The attacking team loses possession, and the opposing team puts the ball back into play with a goal kick.

For U7 place the ball on the ground at about that team's goalkeeper area line. Instruct all the opposing players that they must move back across the halfway line. Teammates of the kicker can be anywhere, but it is best if at least some of them are across the halfway line as well. Instruct the kicker to kick the ball as hard as they can. No player from either side may touch the ball until it crosses the halfway line. You may need to coach them not to touch the ball. If the ball is touched before crossing the halfway line (by either team) or doesn't cross the halfway line then, the kick must be retaken.

For U8, goal kicks will be taken from the goalkeeper line and must cross the penalty area line before another player can touch the ball. If the ball is touched before crossing the penalty area line, or doesn't cross the line at all, the kick must be retaken.

CORNER KICK: When the ball passes all the way across one of the goal lines (but not into the goal), last touched by a player from the defending team the game must stop. The attacking team puts the ball back into play with a corner kick. Place the ball on the ground inside or on the lines that mark the corner arc on the left or right side of the goal depending where the ball went out. Members of the opposing team must stay back 5 yards (U7) or 10 yards (U8) so the attacking team can have a free kick at the ball.

GOALS: When the ball passes all the way across the goal line and into the goal, a goal is scored. Yes, a team may score upon itself. After a goal is scored, bring the ball back up to the center circle and restart play with a kick off by the team that was scored upon. Make sure all the players are in the proper places according to the kick off description above. We do not keep score in U7 and U8.

FREE KICKS: The only "fouls" players of this age commit are dangerous play and handling the ball. Dangerous play is any kind of play that gives you cause for concern. Some young players are overly aggressive and push, hold or crash into others while trying to play the ball or try to kick at the ball while another child is lying on the ground nearby. This type of play should be stopped. Any child who reaches out to hold, control or deflect the ball with his hands or arms is guilty of handling the ball. If any of these infractions should occur, blow your whistle to stop play. Briefly explain to the player what he/she needs to do differently. Then give the opposing team a direct kick at the ball.

For a direct kick the ball shall be placed at the spot of the foul. For U7, if the foul occurred within the goalkeeper Area, then place the ball on the goalkeeper line. For U8, if the foul occurred within the penalty area, then place the ball on the penalty area line parallel to the goal line. A goal can be scored from a direct kick without any other player touching the ball.

DROPPED BALL: When a player is injured or when players are all in a bunch flailing away at the ball and kicking each other, stop play with your whistle. In the case of an injury call the coach onto the field to care for the child. In the case of the wildly kicking pack, remind the players to be careful about kicking each other. Then after everything has been sorted out, pick up the ball and drop in to the ground from waist height. In the case of the pack, drop it behind them or behind you to help break it up. As soon as the ball hits the ground it is back in play.

EXPLANATION OF NO-ONE BEHIND THE GOAL RULE: I would like to explain why no one should be standing behind or by the side of the goals. It is a safety issue. In the past years we have seen goalkeepers get hurt because they were not paying attention to what was happening on the field, but rather to the person talking to them behind them. Please have the person coaching the goalkeeper on the side line and have that person stand on the side at the point where the child is not looking behind him/herself, but out away to the side so that the child can also see the action on the field. We do not want parents or other children behind the goal either and so if you see someone from your team there, please ask them to move. Board members of Region 678 will also ask those people to go to the sidelines and coach or cheer for their children or team. Please ask your parents and assistant coaches to follow this guideline.

The coach will perform the “referee” function for these divisions. The Referee’s primary role in these games is to ensure that the kids have fun and that the game is played safely. To that end, referees should focus on helping the players when they are confused; teaching the players about the Laws that apply to them and making sure everyone is playing safely. The beauty of the game of soccer is that it avoids a rigid interpretation and application of the rules providing the referee with broad latitude to ensure the game keeps moving. Try to avoid constant stopping or interfering with their play.

DIVISION U7 COACHES AS REFEREES: Please have only two people on the field at a time. This should be either the coach or the assistant coach from each team. If the coach does not want to be on the field or cannot be on the field for some reason, then the coach can ask the assistant to step in. Too many adults on the field are unsafe for the kids, and it does not allow for a lot of running space for them. Also, the kids should really only be paying attention to their coaches and what is happening in the game. For some children, too much going on can be overwhelming for them. Use your assistant to coach the goalkeeper at the side or help those kids on the teams with throw ins, and/or have them coach the kids that need a little extra encouragement or instruction that is by the sideline they are standing on.

DIVISION U8 COACHES AS REFEREES: Please have only one person on the field at a time. This should be decided between the coaches before the game begins. Usually the first half of the game one coach referees the game and at the second half the other coach steps in to referee the game.

When in doubt, apply common sense, do what’s most fair and move on.