



AYSO Region 116 8U Rules & Guidelines



EVERYONE PLAYS: Each player shall play a minimum of one half of each game. Substitutions should be made at every quarter, unless an injury occurs where the player is allowed to substitute at any time.

GAME LENGTH: Matches will be 40 minutes long consisting of four 10 minute quarters. Quarter breaks shall be 1 minute. Allow 5 minutes for halftime. Coaches are responsible for keeping game time.

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. For boy's divisions, protective cups are highly recommended.

REFEREES: One coach from each team is allowed to be on the field at all times to assist their players. One or both coaches can act as a referee - it is common for coaches to split the referee duties by halves (must be agreed upon prior to the game starting). 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. When in doubt, apply common sense, do what's most fair and move on.

PLAYERS: There will be 5 players per team on the field. **Goalkeepers are allowed in 8U, however no player shall be goalie for more than one quarter per game.** **Punting is not allowed in 8U – if the goalie gains possession of the ball, they must either throw to another player or drop the ball and pass with their feet.**

GAME BALL: Get a size 3 ball from the home team (the first team listed in the schedule). 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 1/4 inch. Play with the best ball you can find.



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KICK OFF: The game begins with a kick off. The home team will kick off to begin the game and the away team will kick off at the beginning of the second half. 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. A kick off is also used to restart the game after a goal is scored. In this instance, the team scored upon kicks off.

KICK IN/THROW IN: When the ball passes all the way across the sidelines/touchlines, play stops. The team touching the ball last loses possession and their opponent puts the ball back in play. For throw-ins, teams have the option to either throw-in or kick-in to restart play.

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 so the attacking team can have a free kick at the ball.

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. **The team on defense during a goal kick must be at the half-way line and wait to advance until the opposing team has kicked the goal kick** (also known as a build out line). This is to promote build up play from the team kicking the goal kick and allows them an opportunity to get the ball out of their half.

GOALS: When the ball passes all the way across the goal line and into the goal, a goal is scored. 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 8U.**

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



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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 an indirect kick where the infraction occurred (you cannot score from an indirect free kick) – **the free kick shall not be closer than 10 yards from the goal and no penalties kicks are allowed.** The players on the opposing team must be a minimum of 5 yards away. However, if any child accidentally or inadvertently touches the ball with his hand (or any part of his arm), it should not be considered an infraction and play should not be stopped.

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 the ball on 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.

NO-ONE BEHIND THE GOAL RULE: In the past we have seen players get hurt because they were not paying attention to what was happening on the field, but rather to the person talking to them from behind the goal. If you see a parent or spectator from your team there, please ask them to move a reasonable distance away from the goal line.