



8U Guidelines

The Field:

The field size for 8U games is 50 yards long x 25 yards wide. Distinctive lines recommended. Halfway line the width of the field, marked equidistant between the goal lines.

The Goals:

Maximum four feet high and six yards wide.

The Ball:

A size 3 ball is used for 8U games.

The Players:

- **Numbers:** Seven per team on field, one of which is a goalkeeper. Nine maximum on roster.
- **Substitutions:** Between periods, at halftime and for injuries.
- **Playing Time:** Minimum of two periods per game and no player should play four periods until everyone has played three. Since 8U is still considered a “developmental” age group, and specialization is discouraged, keepers are required to play another position on the field during games.
- **Teams:** Separate girls and boys teams will be promoted at all levels of play.
- **Coach:** The coach must be a certified 8U coach.

Player Equipment:

Shoes and shin guards, covered by the socks are mandatory at all practice and game activities. Soccer shoes, tennis shoes, or similar type athletic shoes are recommended. For safety, no jewelry is allowed including watches, earrings, barrettes, etc. (Medical bracelets are okay).

Duration of Game:

Four 10-minute periods. Halftime break of 5-7 minutes. Quarter breaks of 2-3 minutes.

8U Officials:

Only players should be allowed on the field, with the exception of one adult coach acting as referee (opposing coaches should prearrange to referee one half each). The 8U coach (acting official) should briefly explain any infringements to the player(s) and encourage proper play and sporting behavior. As with all games, every effort should be made to keep the game moving and free from stoppages for doubtful infractions. Let them play and enjoy.

The Start of Play:

The game should be started with a kick-off in the middle of the field. A coin toss is used to determine which team kicks off to start the game and the other team kicks off to start the second half. Opponents must be outside the center circle.

Ball In and Out of Play:

The ball is out of play in all age group games when it *completely crosses* the touch line (side line) or goal line (end line), either on the ground or in the air. The referee will determine when the ball is out of play and should guide the restart, interfering as little as possible.

Method of Scoring:

A goal, in all age groups, is awarded when the ball completely crosses the goal line into the goal.

Fouls:

The opposing team must be at least ten feet from the ball when free kicks are taken in 8U games.

The following, if done deliberately, are the fouls most likely to occur in 8U games: kicking, tripping, pushing, holding, handling the ball and dangerous play. Officials must remember that there is no need to stop play for technical violations that do not interrupt the flow of the game. It's a player's game and not a game of how many infractions can be identified, so keep the fun going and let them play.

Misconduct:

Misconduct should be rare in 8U games. There is no need for the public cautioning and sending off of young players (leave the red and yellow cards at home). Officials should work cooperatively with the coach when a player may need a 'time out'.

Free Kicks:

All free kicks in 8U are indirect kicks. Opponents must be at least ten feet from the ball or on the goal line between the goal posts during free kicks. Free kicks awarded to the attacking team inside the defending teams goal area are to be taken from the nearest point on the goal area line parallel to the goal line.

Offside:

No offside.

Throw-In:

Throw-ins are replaced with kick-ins or dribble-ins at 6U and 8U. Opponents should be ten feet from the ball.

Goal Kick:

A goal kick is awarded to the opposing team, in 8U and older, when the attacking team is last to touch the ball before it crosses the goal line but without scoring a goal. The goal kick may be taken from any point inside the goal area. The opposing team must be at least ten feet away from the ball when the goal kick is taken in 8U games.

Corner Kick:

A corner kick is awarded to the opposing team, in 8U and older, when the defending team is last to touch the ball before it crosses the goal line but not scoring a goal. The opposing team must be at least ten feet from the ball when the corner kick is taken in 8U games.

Hand Ball:

A hand ball infraction occurs when a player *deliberately* handles the ball. A hand ball infraction occurs when a player *deliberately* handles the ball. The 'hand' includes the arm up to the bottom of the armpit. Instinctive, self-protective reactions are not penalized at this young age. Accidental contact (ball striking hand or arm with no intent by the player being struck) is not an offense and should not be penalized.

No Heading:

Consistent with AYSO and US Soccer mandates, heading is banned for all division 12U and below in both practices and matches. An indirect free kick will be awarded to the opposing team if a player deliberately touches the ball with his/her head during a match (taken where the player touched the ball with his/her head).