



Co-ed Rules of Play and the Live Rule

Summary

The Co-ed Rules of Play including the “Live Rule” applies to all co-ed match play.

During play, the ball is either “live” or “not live” (which is also referred to as “over”). This means:

- “Live” – any player may score per the laws of the game
- “Not Live” or “Over” – any score does not count and results in a goal kick restart by the defending team

Any time the ball crosses the halfway line during play, it becomes “not live” for the attacking team.

- At this time, the referee will call “over” to communicate to the players that the ball is “not live.”

As long as one of the following occurs during play the ball will become “live”:

- The ball is played by an attacking female player on her attacking side of the field (not merely touched)
- The ball is played by a defending player on their defending side of the field (not merely touched)
- A goal kick restart
- A corner kick restart
- A throw-in restart (either team)
- A dropped ball restart (all dropped balls must be taken by a female player)
- An indirect free kick
- A direct free kick (all direct free kicks must be taken by a female player or they are considered indirect free kicks)
- A penalty kick (all penalty kicks must be taken by a female player)

When the ball becomes “live” the referee will call “live” to communicate to the players that this has occurred.

- If the referee has not called “live” even if it appears that one of the live conditions was satisfied, players should continue to play as if the ball is “not live”.
- It is possible that the ball becomes live as part of a goal scoring play and the referee did not have an opportunity to call “live” prior to the score. (This could be a shot taken by a female player after an all male player breakaway over the halfway line.) This does not change the fact that the ball was “live” before entering the goal.
- The center referee has the final word on any disputes and the [MDSA Zero Tolerance Policy](#) applies.

Other co-ed play rules

- All dropped ball restarts must be taken by a female player.
- All direct free kicks must be taken by a female player.
- If a team decides to have a male player take a direct free kick, it becomes an indirect free kick.
- All penalty kicks must be taken by a female player.

More Information for Referees and Coaches

1. How does the ball become “not live” or “over”?

During play, when the ball crosses the halfway line it becomes “not live” for goal scoring. At this point the ref will call “over” to communicate to the players that the ball has crossed over the line and is “not live”. This can occur as follows:

- a. The ball is kicked across the halfway line by a female or male player from either team.
- b. The ball is dribbled across the halfway line by a female or male player from either team.
- c. The ball crosses the halfway line in the air or on the ground from a throw-in by either team.
- d. The ball crosses the halfway line by some other play or move caused directly or indirectly by either team.
- e. It does not matter if the ball was previously “live” or “not live” prior to crossing the halfway line. It is always “not live” after crossing the halfway line in either direction.

2. How does the ball become “live”?

The ball becomes “live” for through one of the following actions and remains “live” until it crosses the halfway line again. (At this point the ref will call “live” to communicate to the players that anyone may score.)

- a. The ball is played by an attacking female player on her attacking side of the field (not merely touched)
- b. The ball is played by a defending player on their defending side of the field (not merely touched)
- c. A goal kick restart
- d. A corner kick restart
- e. A throw-in restart (either team)
- f. A dropped ball restart (all dropped balls must be taken by a female player)
- g. An indirect free kick
- h. A direct free kick (all direct free kicks must be taken by a female player or they are considered indirect free kicks)
- i. A penalty kick (all penalty kicks must be taken by a female player)

3. The following actions do NOT change the status of the ball from “not live” to “live”

- a. An attacking male player playing the ball
- b. An additional attacking male player or player(s) playing the ball
- c. Passing the ball between attacking male players
- d. Bouncing the ball off of a female attacking player when she does not possess or play the ball
- e. Bouncing the ball off of a defending player when they do not possess or play the ball
- f. Bouncing the ball off of the goalie when they do not possess or play the ball
- g. Bouncing the ball off of the goal post when it remains in play
- h. Bouncing the ball off of the corner flag when it remains in play
- i. Having the ball come in contact with the referee whether they play the ball or not

Common Situations

1. A male attacking player dribbles the ball across the halfway line executing a breakaway. Before he can take a shot on goal a defending player plays the ball. The male attacking player regains possession, shoots and scores.

The goal counts because when the defending player played the ball it became “live”.

2. A male attacking player dribbles the ball across the halfway line executing a breakaway. He shoots the ball into the goal by bouncing it off of a defender.

The goal does not count because the defending player did not play the ball so it was “not live”. In addition, the ball was not “live” when the attacking player took the shot. The restart is a goal kick for the defending team.

3. A male attacking player dribbles the ball across the halfway line executing a breakaway. He shoots the ball and a defender makes a play on the ball but is unsuccessful in stopping it which results in an “own goal”.

The goal does not count because the ball was “not live” when the male attacking player executed the shot and an unsuccessful defensive save does not result in the ball becoming “live” during the save attempt. The defending team is not penalized if the defender elects to attempt a save rather than standing aside. The restart is a goal kick for the defending team.

4. A male attacking player dribbles the ball across the halfway line executing a breakaway. He shoots the ball into the goalie who tries to make the save but cannot stop the ball from going into the goal.

The goal does not count because the ball was “not live” when the male attacking player executed the shot and an unsuccessful goalie save does not result in the ball becoming “live” during the save attempt. The defending team is not penalized if the goalie elects to attempt a save rather than standing aside. The restart is a goal kick for the defending team.

5. A male attacking player dribbles the ball across the halfway line executing a breakaway. He shoots the ball into the goalie who makes the save but then loses possession of the ball. An attacking male player receives the rebound, shoots and scores.

The goal counts because the ball became “live” after the goalie played it. In this case the goalie’s decision to save the shot and subsequent loss of possession gave the attacking team a rebound opportunity with a “live” ball.

6. A male attacking player dribbles the ball across the halfway line and proceeds to the penalty box. Once there he executes a quick pass to a female player where a single touch puts the ball into the goal.

The goal counts because the female attacking player played the ball which made it “live”.

7. The defending team kicks the ball into their own goal when ball is “not live”.

The goal counts because a defending player played the ball and it became “live” at that time. Note that this example is not in defense of a shot from an attacking player which was covered above.

8. When the ball went out of play it was “not live” and after the throw-in (by either team) a male attacking player receives the ball, shoots and scores in the goal on that side of the field. (The ball did not cross the halfway line as part of or after the throw-in.)

The goal counts because the ball became “live” when the throw-in was executed by either team.

9. A male player on the attacking team steals the ball or intercepts a pass from a defending player that had possession of the ball and shoots it into the goal. At no time after the defending player played the ball did it cross the halfway line. However, at no time since the ball crossed to this side of the field did a female attacking player play the ball.

The goal counts because the defending player playing the ball made it “live”. The ball did not cross the halfway line after that point which would have made it “not live”.

10. The ball was “not live” when it bounced off of a defending player and went out over the end line. A male player takes the resulting corner kick and the ball curves into the goal without being played by a female attacking player or defender.

The goal counts because the ball became “live” because of the corner kick restart.

11. The ball was “not live” and was kicked over the end line by a male attacking player. The resulting restart was a goal kick. A male attacking player received the goal kick and shot it back into the goal without a female attacking player or defender playing the ball.

The goal counts because the ball became “live” because of the goal kick restart.

12. The ball was “not live” and was shot into the goal by a male attacking player. This did not count and the resulting restart was a goal kick. A male attacking player received the goal kick and shot it back into the goal without a female attacking player or defender playing the ball.

The goal counts because the ball became “live” because of the goal kick restart.

13. The ball was “not live” and was kicked over the end line by a male attacking player resulting in a goal kick restart. The goal kick crosses the halfway line and travels all the way into the opposing team’s goal.

The goal does not count because the ball became “not live” when it crossed the halfway line. While this is an incredible play, the ball was not made “live” before travelling into the goal. The restart is a goal kick for the defending team.

14. The ball was “not live” and play is stopped by the center referee resulting in a dropped ball restart. A female player from each team take the dropped ball restart. After the ball hits the ground, a defending female player touches the ball (not necessarily played) and a male attacking player steps in, shoots and scores.

The goal counts because the ball became “live” because of the dropped ball restart and the dropped ball restart was executed with two female players.

15. The ball was “not live” and play is stopped by the center referee resulting in a dropped ball restart. A female player from each team takes the dropped ball restart. After the ball hits the ground, neither female player plays it and a male attacking player steps in, shoots and scores.

The goal does not count because while the ball is “live” at this point due to the dropped ball restart the first touch on a dropped ball cannot result in a goal. Refer to the laws of the game section discussing law 8 “The Start and Restart of Play”. The restart is a goal kick for the defending team. (If a defending player kicked it into their own goal the restart would be a corner kick for the opposing team.)

16. While the ball was “not live”, play is stopped due to a foul which results in an indirect free kick for the defending team. After the defending player executes the restart, a male attacking player receives the kick on the attacking side of the field, shoots, and scores.

The goal counts because the ball became “live” because of the indirect free kick restart.

17. While the ball was “not live”, play is stopped due to a foul which results in an indirect free kick for the attacking team. A male attacking player executes the restart, a second male attacking player receives the kick on the attacking side of the field, shoots and scores. The ball does not cross the halfway line after the indirect free kick.

The goal counts because the ball became “live” because of the indirect free kick restart.

18. While the ball was “not live”, play is stopped due to a foul which results in an direct free kick for the attacking team. A female attacking player executes the restart and scores.

The goal counts because the ball became “live” because of the direct free kick restart.

19. While the ball was “not live”, play is stopped due to a foul which results in an direct free kick for the attacking team. A male attacking player executes the restart and puts the ball into the goal directly off of the kick.

The goal does not count because a female player is required to take the direct free kick for it to be a direct free kick. If a male player executes this restart, it becomes an indirect free kick and the laws of the game apply. The ball is considered “live” because of the restart, whether the goal counts or not depends on whether it was executed as a direct free kick (female kicker) or indirect free kick (male kicker).

20. While the ball was “not live” a foul was committed against the attacking team in the penalty box resulting in a penalty kick. A female player takes the penalty kick and hits the post. A male attacking player gets the rebound and scores with no other players playing the ball.

The goal counts because the ball became “live” because of the penalty kick restart and was executed within the co-ed rules of play (a direct free kick is to be taken by a female player).

21. The kick-off is taken by a female player and she kicks the ball across the halfway line. A male attacking player is first to touch the ball after it crosses the halfway line and takes the ball all the way into the goal.

The goal does not count because the ball became “not live” due to crossing the halfway line during the kick-off. The ball did not become “live” after it crossed the halfway line by meeting any of the “How does the ball become “live”?” criteria.

22. The kick-off is taken by a female player and she executes a slight forward ball movement to another female attacking player who then executes a back pass to her defending side of the field. A male player from the opposing team intercepts this pass on his attacking side of the field and takes the ball into the goal.

The goal does not count because the ball was “not live” when the male attacking player gained possession. Prior to the ball entering the goal, the ball did not become “live” by meeting any of the “How does the ball become “live”?” criteria. When the female player executed the forward movement of the ball during the first touch of the kick-off, the ball crossed the halfway line and became “not live”. The second attacking female player that played the ball on the attacking side of the field made it “live”. However, the back pass caused the ball to cross the halfway line again making it “not live” prior to the male player on the opposing team gaining possession.

23. A female player shoots the ball and scores from the other half of the field.

The goal does not count because the ball was “not live” due to crossing the halfway line during the shot. The ball did not become “live” after crossing the halfway line by meeting any of the “How does the ball become “live”?” criteria.

24. A female attacking player dribbles the ball across the halfway line into her attacking side of the field, is it “live” or not?

The ball is “live”. The ball will become “not live” when it crosses the halfway line and convert from “not live” to “live” as soon as she plays the ball on her attacking side of the field.

25. A female or male defending player dribbles the ball across the halfway line toward their own goal. A male attacking player steals the ball while it is on his attacking side of the field and takes it into the goal.

The goal counts because the ball became “not live” when the defending player caused it to cross the halfway line but then became “live” when the defending player played the ball of their defending side of the field. The ball did not cross the halfway line again after becoming “live” so any player was allowed to score.

26. A female or male defending player executes a backward pass which carries the ball across the halfway line toward their own goal. A male attacking player intercepts the pass after it crosses the halfway line (while it is on his attacking side of the field) and takes it into the goal.

The goal does not count because the ball became “not live” when it crossed the halfway line due to the defending player’s pass. The ball did not become “live” after crossing the halfway line by meeting any of the “How does the ball become “live”?” criteria.

27. What happens if one team has no female players in the game at some point?

For co-ed play, this situation is to be avoided and the referee should speak to the coach about their substitution strategy. However, this may occur due to few to no female players being in attendance at the match for one of the teams. In this case, the referee should enforce the co-ed rules including the live rule as follows:

- The Live Rule is in full effect and for the ball to become “live” one of the following must occur:
 - The ball is played by an attacking female player on her attacking side of the field (not merely touched). If the attacking team has no female players in the game, this will not be possible.
 - The ball is played by a defending player on their defending side of the field (not merely touched)
 - A goal kick restart
 - A corner kick restart
 - A throw-in restart (either team)
 - A dropped ball restart
 - An indirect free kick
 - A direct free kick (all direct free kicks must be taken by a female player or they are considered indirect free kicks)
 - A penalty kick (all penalty kicks must be taken by a female player)
- If one team has no female players in the game, dropped ball restarts will be taken by two male players
- All direct free kick restarts must be taken by female players, for the team with no female players they must take an indirect free kick
- All penalty kicks must be taken by a female player. For the team with no female players, they will be given an indirect free kick in place of the penalty kick. The position of the indirect free kick will be determined based on Laws of the Game, Law 13 – Position of free kick.

28. What happens if neither team has any female players in the game? What happens if neither team has any male players in the game?

The match would not be considered co-ed and as an option it could be called accordingly.

Because the match is part of a co-ed division, the center referee has the final word on whether the match (or any portion therein) is to not be called under the Co-ed Rules of Play and the Live Rule even if all participating players are of the same gender. The [MDSA Zero Tolerance Policy](#) applies.

Both coaches should be informed prior to the match if it will not be called under the Co-ed Rules of Play and the Live Rule for the entire match or prior to the restart if this applies to part of the match. Coaches are not to orchestrate substitutions to have a portion of the match not be co-ed if either team has active players of each gender at the match.