



SMALL SIDED RULES

APPROVED 07 MAY 2016
REVISED 14 JUNE 2017
REVISED 06 AUGUST 2018
REVISED 01 JUNE 2019
APPROVED 02 SEPTEMBER 2019
APPROVED 18 AUGUST 2025

Summary of changes made to NSYSA Small-Sided Rules: 08/01/2025

Article 4

Section B3: New: Registered RCL or Select players are not allowed to be rostered.

Section D3a: Added: Designated board member

Section E3a: Added: Member Club Registrar may over roster by one as needed and to accommodate a player that hasn't been assigned to a team. For more than one player needing to be added, approval from NSYSA Director of Recreation is required.

Article 7

Section A5: New: Goals are considered for score when the whole of the ball has passed over the goal line between the goal posts and under the top of the crossbar.

a. A goal cannot be scored directly from kick-off. The ball must be touched by another player before a goal can be considered.

Section A6: New: Mercy Rule

1. If the score differential reaches five (5) goals, then the coach of the team with fewer goals may add one (1) player to the field. If the goal differential returns to three (3) goals, then the coach must remove the one (1) additional player.
2. If the score differential reaches eight (8) goals, then coach of the team with the fewer goals may add a second additional player to the field. If the goal differential returns to six (6) goals, then the second additional player must be removed from the field.

Section A7: New: All restarts are for player development and player safety. Restarts can be used as part of instructional learning and at the discretion of the Referee. This can include re-takes on play

Section A10: New: Goal Kicks are awarded when the ball crosses the goal line when last touch by the opposing team.

Section A11: New: Corner Kicks are awarded when the ball crosses the goal line when last touched by the defending team.

1. Offensive team is awarded the kick.
2. Defensive team must be at least 5 yards away before kick is allowed
3. Corner flags cannot be moved.

Section A12b: New

Section A13: New

Section B: **Separated out U09-U10 as its own section.** Carried over rules of play applicable to all small sided.

Section B4a: New: If the field does not have a build out line, then the midfield line will default as the build out line.

Section B8c: New: Indirect kick is awarded to the defending team.

Section B10: New: If the goalkeeper punts or drop kicks the ball, play will be stopped and the ball will be given back to the goalkeeper and they will be instructed to either throw or roll the ball onto the field.

Section B11: New: For goal kicks, once the ball is kicked and clearly moves; it does not need to leave the penalty area. Players from the team in possession of the ball (the offensive team) may be inside of or enter the penalty area during the kick. The players not in possession of the ball (the defensive team) must remain behind the build out line until the ball is put in play. Until the ball clearly moves.

Section B13: Added definition: Dropped ball: When the ball is put back into play by the referee for reasons other than a foul or normal stoppage of play.

Section B15: New: Handball is defined as the fingertips to the bottom of the armpit and is considered an offense which will result in a direct free kick when a player:

Section B18: New: The keeper has 8 seconds to release the ball or it can result in the opposing team awarded a corner kick

Section B19: Added definition: Throw In: A method to restart play when the entire ball crosses over the touchline (sideline) and is considered out of bounds.

Article 8

Section A3: Added verbiage Field Marshall

Section A4: Added verbiage Field Marshall

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QUICK REFERENCE FOR FIELD SIZE & MATCH LENGTHS

Age	Field Size (LxW)	Goal Box	Goal Size	Penalty Area	Penalty Mark	Center Circle	Corner Arc	Ball Size	Build Out Line	Game Length
U05-U06	30x20 yds	2x10 yds	6x6ft 4x6ft	NA	NA	5 yds	1	3	Yes	4x10 min qtr
U07-U08	30x20 yds	2x10 yds	6x6ft 4x6ft	NA	NA	5 yds	1	3	Yes	4x10 min qtr
U09-U10	55-65 x 35-45 yds	4x8 yds	6x12 ft	12x24 yds	NA	8 yds	1	4	Yes	2x25 min halves

***Note: Build out line for U09 – U10 is to be halfway between the top of the penalty area and the midfield line.**

TABLE 1

I. GENERAL RULES

ARTICLE 1. GOVERNING LEAGUES

The organization of leagues and competition for Northwest Sound Youth Soccer Association (NSYSA) sponsored Leagues will be governed by the Operating Procedures set forth herein, unless rules of a specific competition determine otherwise.

ARTICLE 2. SEASON

Section A. Seasonal Year

1. The seasonal year of NSYSA will be defined by Washington Youth Soccer (WYS). Seasonal Year will be defined as 01 August through 31 July.
2. Seasonal year will define the period of time a team is part of a single roster and eligible to enter competitive play.

Section B. Playing Season

1. Fall League season will begin the first Saturday after Labor Day and continue for ten weeks ending in November.
2. Other League seasons will be determined and defined as needed.

Article 3. DISTRIBUTION / CHANGES TO OPERATING PROCEDURES

Section A. Approving Changes

1. The NSYSA Operating Procedures will be reviewed as needed for required changes or updates in accordance with USSF and WYS mandates.

Section B. Changes Effective

1. No changes to these Operating Procedures will be made retroactive.
2. Changes are effective immediately, unless otherwise noted on the revision.

Section C. Publishing & Distribution of Changes

1. The Operating Procedures Committee will prepare the corrected/updated version of the Operating Procedures and submit them to the NSYSA Website Administrator who will publish the corrected/updated version on the NSYSA Website. (www.nsysasoccer.org) within seven days of Board approval.
2. Copies of Operating Procedures will be made available via the NSYSA Website (www.nsysasoccer.org) to each Club participating in NSYSA play and the applicable Referee Association.
Each Club will be responsible for distributing current NSYSA Operating Procedures to each coach and Club Officers.

II. PLAYERS / TEAMS/ LEAGUES

ARTICLE 4. REGISTRATION

Section A. Definitions

1. Youth Players
 - a. The term “Youth” as applied to the NSYSA will be defined as an amateur player who has not attained their 19th birthday before the first day of January of the seasonal year in which they apply for registration.
2. Youth Teams-Small Sided
 - a. Recreation. The practice of using tryouts, invitations, recruiting, or any like process to roster players selectively to any team on the basis of talent or ability **is strictly prohibited** as defined by WYS.

Section B. Player Age Classification for Team Formation

1. All member Clubs will form teams of equal age grouping as follows for all competitions unless otherwise approved by the Board of Directors. Age groupings on teams will be comprised of players who, on the first day of January of the current seasonal year are:

Age	Roster Size (Max)	# Field Players	Goal Keeper	# Field Players minimum
U05-08	8	4	NA	3
U09-10	12	6	1	5

TABLE 2

2. Prior to the beginning of the playing season (Fall, Spring, etc.), at the scheduling meeting, Member Clubs will determine the age groups for competition during that playing season.

Section C. Player Registration

1. All players must register annually through member Clubs in accordance with WYS. NSYSA and applicable Association Rules and Guidelines to participate in all activities of NSYSA.
2. No team may allow unregistered players to practice or play with a team.
3. Registered RCL or Select players are not allowed to be rostered.
4. Member Clubs will provide rosters and any other supporting documents to NSYSA as requested.

Section D. Player Eligibility

- 4.**Play Down:** All players requesting to play down for an age group less than defined in Law III-B; and must make an application through WYS and receive approval.
 - a. The Application and form may be accessed on the WYS website, search for “Play Down”.
 - b. The approved application must be presented to the Club Registrar before the player will be allowed to register.
- 5.**Play Up (1 Year):** Players may request and register to play up one age group greater than defined in in Law III-B.
- 6.**Play Up (Greater than 1 Year):** Players may not request or register to play up greater than one age group, as defined in Law III-B; without the following condition being met:
 - a. Requesting Member Club’s designated board member must evaluate the player for the following criteria:
 - i. Will the playing skill of the individual being evaluated provide an opportunity to play competitively at the higher level?

- ii. Will the player receive an opportunity for playing time based on skills?
- iii. Will the physical size of the player place the individual in jeopardy of harm/ injury due to differences of stature with other team members?
- iv. Written evaluation results must be presented to the Club's Board of Directors and the request must be approved by the Club's Board.

Section E. Number of Players

- 1. No team will have more than the following maximum number of players rostered to it.
 - a. U05-U08 soccer teams may have a maximum of 8 players.
 - b. U09-U10 soccer teams may have a maximum of 12 players.
- 2. No team will have less than the following minimum number of players rostered to it.
 - a. U05-U08 soccer teams will have a minimum of 3 players.
 - b. U09-U10 soccer teams will have a minimum of 5 players.
- 3. Exception to the original roster, may be made only by the Member Club Registrar, in accordance with WYS and NSYSA procedures.
 - a. Member Club Registrar may over roster by one as needed and to accommodate a player that hasn't been assigned to a team. For more than one player needing to be added, approval from NSYSA Director of Recreation is required.

Section F. Player Fees

- 1. Player Fees per individual player
 - a. Small-sided Player Under 10 and younger \$12.00

III. RULES OF COMPETITION

ARTICLE 5. SCHEDULING

Section A. Governing / Pertaining To

- 1. All teams participating in leagues governed by NSYSA will be subject to these rules.
- 2. The NSYSA Scheduler will perform all league scheduling functions under the direction of the Director of Recreational Soccer in accordance with the NSYSA rules and regulations.

Section B. Playing of Scheduled Matches / Tournaments

- 1. All league matches must be played on the day at the time scheduled by the NSYSA Scheduler under the direction of the NSYSA Director of Recreational Soccer.
 - a. Request for rescheduling of any home match must be in writing and submitted by the Member Club Scheduler to the NSYSA Scheduler, a minimum of fourteen (14) days before the regularly scheduled match time. All schedule changes must be approved in advance of the request for schedule change by both the home and away team.
 - b. Failure of a team to appear for or have a sufficient number of players to legally start a regularly scheduled match will result in the following:
 - i. Forfeiture of the match, as a result of team failing to appear or having an insufficient number of players (see Table #1 for numbers for each age group).
 - ii. During league play any team having a forfeited game, as determined by the NSYSA Board will be assessed a \$100.00 fine.
 - iii. Should either team fail to appear or have an insufficient number of players to start and / or fail to have an RMA certified rostered coaching staff member available.
- 2. Reschedule at an agreed upon date/time.
- 3. If no reschedule can be agreed upon or insufficient time remains in the season, the game is considered to have the game not played within the league standings.
- 4. Fined according to ARTICLE 8 Section B.b.ii above.
- 5. The NSYSA Scheduler may notify a team, the team's Member Club Scheduler, and the NSYSA Director of Recreational Soccer that their match will not be played as scheduled and therefore, they

will not need to show up for that match. This is the only acceptable reason for a team to be granted prior permission not to show for a scheduled match.

6. **Rescheduling Games.** The home and away teams must agree upon a date and time for a rescheduled game. The home team then notifies their Member Club Scheduler who then notifies the NSYSA Scheduler. It will be the NSYSA Scheduler's responsibility for contacting the applicable Referee Assignor. Marking of the field and any other business necessary for the completion of the rescheduled match will be the responsibility of the home team club.
 - a. Rescheduling of matches should be limited and be used only when no other choices can be found. It is strongly preferred that all rescheduled matches are submitted within a fourteen (14) day window of match day.
 - b. Reschedules for the purpose of accommodating coaches with multiple teams will be mitigated by the Member Club. Alternate resources should be used by the Member Club to eliminate the need of rescheduling. Repetitive rescheduling of a team will result in the assessment of a \$25.00 fine should one or more of the conditions below are met:
 - i. Reschedules for other than "Acts of Nature", "Field Closure", or circumstances beyond the control of a team.
 - ii. Request for schedule change within seventy-two (72) hours of game day.
 - iii. The third such request by a team for schedule change.
7. Any Member Club teams wishing to participate in tournaments during the NSYSA scheduled season need to ensure that the tournament games are scheduled around league matches.
 - a. League matches have priority over tournament matches.
 - b. If a league game must be rescheduled, follow the procedures as outlines in Article 8 section 3.
 - c. Teams may participate in any tournament as long as they are sanctioned by WYS, or US Club Soccer.

Section C. League Format / Formation

1. The following format for scheduled games will be used by the NSYSA Scheduler under the direction of the NSYSA Director of Recreational Soccer. The minimum number of scheduled league games for any team in the season will be ten (10) for Small- Sided games. Any deviations are at NSYSA Board's discretion.
2. Small-Sided League team divisions will be formed based off and at a minimum of, the number of registered teams at the time of the scheduling meeting.
3. Complete game schedules will be compiled and distributed by the NSYSA Scheduler via the NSYSA website.
4. The NSYSA Scheduler will schedule games on Saturdays and Sundays with the League play including mid-season Soccer to the Maxx (STTM) jamboree.

Section D. Game Scheduling Fees

1. Game scheduling fees will be applied for the following.
 - a. Recreational team Under 10 and younger \$10 per home game

Section E. Providing Season Schedule to NSYSA Clubs

1. The NSYSA Scheduler will be responsible for providing the League schedule to each Member Club.

Section F. Responsibility of Marking / Setting up Fields

1. It is the responsibility of each home Member Club to provide for the proper marking of the fields.
2. It is the responsibility of the home Member Club to ensure field safety (i.e. goals, nets, weights, etc.) in accordance with FIFA criteria.
3. Where possible, a "Spectator Line" will be included. This line is to be two (2) yards from the touch line and run the length of the touchline. Spectators may not watch the game from behind the goal line.
4. U9-U11 will have a build out line, and it will be half the distance between the top of the Penalty Area and Midfield Line.
- 5.

Section G. Reporting of Small-Sided Match Results

1. Match results are to be entered by a member of each team's staff (coach, assistant coach, manager) no later than 10:00pm on Sunday evening via the NSYSA Website, www.nsysasoccer.org as specified under **Coach: FAQ – How to Submit Match Reports**.

Section H. Abandoned Matches

1. All ABANDONED matches as determined by the NSYSA Board unless specified otherwise in these rules and regulations will be:
2. A. Rescheduled by Member Clubs to be played in entirety.
3. B. Forfeited.
4. C. the score at abandonment will stand.
5. If a match is abandoned due to the misconduct of one of the teams or a member of one of the teams, that team will not profit by the abandonment.
6. If both teams have been notified of a scheduled match and one team fails to show, following a five (5) minute grace period, the game will be forfeited to the showing team, with a score of 1-0, subject to review by the NSYSA Board. The game referee will count the number of players present and abandon the game. Penalties / Fines will be assigned as specified in ARTICLE 8 Section B.1.b ii.
7. If both teams have been notified of a scheduled match and both fail to show within five (5) minutes of the scheduled match time, the referee will abandon the match and notify the Director of Recreational Soccer. Penalties / fines may be assigned as specified in ARTICLE 8 Section B.1.b.ii.

Section K. Miscellaneous

1. Players wearing prosthetic or orthopedic devices must have written WYS permission to play in such devices before being allowed to compete.
2. No alcoholic beverages will be permitted at any scheduled match or team practice.
3. Dogs/Pets of any kind will not be permitted at NSYSA matches.
4. Service animals will be allowed.
5. Saturday games will not begin before 9:00am.
6. Sunday games will not begin before 10:00am unless requested by both club teams involved. All games will end no later than 10:00pm. Exceptions may be granted by the NSYSA Board.

Section L. Pre – Game and Post – Game Procedures

1. NSYSA Game Roster Sheets will be available on the NSYSA Website www.nsysasoccer.org Coaches or managers may print the PDF document by accessing the website and select the icon adjacent to the game schedule of the team for that day. The ability to print pre – completed rosters is available for each week the team is scheduled to play.
2. Pre – Game Procedures:
 - a. Prior to the start of each game, the coach is to present to the referee two (2) copies of the NSYSA Game Roster Sheet. The Game Sheet is to include the Coach / Staff name, players' names and jersey numbers as well as the basic game information.
3. Post – Game Procedures:
 - a. At the conclusion of the game, the coach is to acquire from the referee a copy of their team and the opponent's Game Roster Sheet. These sheets will be used to report the game results on the NSYSA Website. www.nsysasoccer.org before 10:00pm on Sunday evening.

IV. MATCH PROCEEDINGS

ARTICLE 6. REFEREE AND FIELDS

Section A. Abandoning a Match

1. To declare a field unplayable due to adverse weather/field conditions at the time of the scheduled match, will be the prerogative of the Referee or the agreed upon official. The home Member Club will then notify the Director of Recreational Soccer and NSYSA Scheduler via phone/email within twenty-four (24) hours of the scheduled match.
2. If the Referee or the agreed upon official abandons a match due to disciplinary actions and/or the number of eligible players on a team drops below the minimums allowed, the home Member Club will notify the Director of Recreational Soccer and the NSYSA Scheduler via phone/email within twenty-four (24) hours of the scheduled match.

Section B. No Assigned Referee Present

1. Failure of a scheduled Referee to show up will not be the cause for canceling the match, after a five (5) minute grace period.
2. A substitute official should be chosen upon the agreement by both coaches, and their decision will be final. In any case, both teams should check the “no referee” box when they report the score on the NSYSA home page. It is recommended that each team have a least one licensed referee affiliated with it.
3. In the event a Referee cannot be chosen to the agreement of both coaches, the coaches themselves will referee, each coach will referee one half of the match, the toss of a coin will decide who referees which half.

Section C. Problem with an Official / Referee

1. In the case of a non-licensed official, in addition to reporting the problem in your match report, a detailed report will be written and submitted through your Club and association to the NSYSA Director of Recreational Soccer. The Board will have the right to suspend or bar from officiating in matches under its jurisdiction, any individual who, by word or action, displays an attitude detrimental to the Association’s purposes and principles, or who willfully violates the Constitution, Bylaws, or Operating Procedures of this Association.
2. In the case of a licensed official, in addition to reporting the problem in your match report, a detailed report will be written and submitted through your Club and association to the President of the appropriate Referee Association via the NSYSA Director of Recreational Soccer.

Section D. Suitability of Field

1. Upon his/her arrival at the field, the Referee will inspect the marking to determine suitability for play.
2. If the Referee finds that the field is not adequately marked for play, or does not have goals with secured nets or is hazardous, they may abandon the match, and report the circumstances to the NSYSA Director of Recreational Soccer within twenty-four (24) hours of the scheduled match.
3. The assigned Referee will receive compensation for the abandoned match, and the responsible Club will be assessed an additional fee for the rescheduled match, if played.
4. Referees may, at any time, be called upon by the proper authority to explain the circumstances applicable to abandoning a match due to field conditions.

ARTICLE 7. RULES OF PLAY

All matches under the jurisdiction of this Association will be conducted under the rules of F.I.F.A authorized by the International Football Association Board, and modified by USYSA, WYS, NSYSA as specified. [IFAB Laws of the Game 2025-2026](#)

Section A. U05-U08

Age Group	Format	Heading	Punting	Build Out Line	Offside Line
U05-U06	4v4	No	No	Yes	No
U07-08	4v4	No	No	Yes	No

TABLE 3

3. All matches will not continue with fewer than three (3) players per team participating in the match.
4. The duration of matches, ball size, ball dimensions, and for each age group will be as depicted in table #1.
5. Kickoff may go in any direction.
6. Defensive players must be outside the center circle and in their own half, for play to begin.
7. Goals are considered for score when the whole of the ball has passed over the goal line between the goal posts and under the top of the crossbar.

- a. A goal cannot be scored directly from kick-off. The ball must be touched by another player before a goal can be considered.
- 8. Mercy Rule**
- a. If the score differential reaches five (5) goals, then the coach of the team with fewer goals may add one (1) player to the field. If the goal differential returns to three (3) goals, then the coach must remove the one (1) additional player.
 - b. If the score differential reaches eight (8) goals, then coach of the team with the fewer goals may add a second additional player to the field. If the goal differential returns to six (6) goals, then the second additional player must be removed from the field.
- 9.** All restarts are for player development and player safety. Restarts can be used as part of instructional learning and at the discretion of the Referee. This can include re-takes on play.
- 10. Offside**
- a. While not applicable, the intent of the rule will be followed.
 - b. Positioning a player in front of the opponent's goal irrespective of the location of the ball on the field is contrary to the aims of the program.
 - c. If a team is consistently positioning a player at the opponent's goal, the referee will stop play and instruct the player and the coach to stop.
 - d. If the team continues to play while positioning a player in an offside position the referee will award an indirect kick to the opposing team at the location where the offending player is in an offside position.
 - e. If a team continues to position a player at an opponent's goal, the referee may deny any goals scored as a result of this tactic. The referee will award an indirect kick to the offended team at the location where the opposing player is in an offside position.
 - f. If a defending team positions a player inside the goal box area for the purpose of defending the goal and the ball is not in the area, the referee will stop play and inform the defending team that this action is not acceptable; without the ball being in the goal box area.
- 11.** Build out line will be the midfield line.
- 12.** Goal Kicks are awarded when the ball crosses the goal line when last touch by the opposing team.
- a. The ball is to be placed at any point within the goal area.
 - b. Opposition team can cross the build out line as soon as the ball leaves the penalty box / area.
- 13.** Corner Kicks are awarded when the ball crosses the goal line when last touched by the defending team.
- a. Offensive team is awarded the kick.
 - b. Defensive team must be at least 5 yards away before kick is allowed
 - c. Corner flags cannot be moved.
- 14. Free Kicks**
- a. Indirect Kick: Kicks from a dead ball restart from which a goal cannot be scored unless the ball has been played or touched by another player before passing through the goal.
 - i. Dangerous play (high kick, player on the ground).
 - ii. Charging fairly (shoulder to shoulder) when the ball is not within playing distance of the players involved.
 - iii. Unsportsmanlike behavior.
 - b. This is the only type of free kick for this age group.
 - c. A goal scored on a free kick without a second touch will result in a goal kick for the defending team.
- 15.** Throw In: A method to restart play when the entire ball crosses over the touchline (sideline) and is considered out of bounds.
- a. Defending team is awarded the throw in. The player must be behind the touchline with both feet on the ground. The ball must come up and over the head towards the field of play.
 - b. A second attempt may be allowed by the referee if the player fails to properly throw the ball in.
 - c. If on the second attempt, the player fails again, the ball will be awarded to the opposing team as a throw in.

16. Slide tackling/sliding is not allowed.
 - a. Should a slide tackle occur, it will be considered dangerous play. The referee will stop play and instruct the player of their infraction and award an indirect free kick restart.
 - b. If the slide tackle is performed by the attacking team, a restart for the opposing team will be an indirect free kick at the spot of the foul.
 - c. Should the slide tackle occur with the Penalty Box / Goal Box area and performed by the defending team, the restart will be at the point nearest, but outside of the top of the penalty / goal area where foul was committed.
 - d. Should a player slide tackle a second time, they will be removed for the rest of the game.
17. Headers are not allowed in practices or in play.
 - a. When a player intentionally performs a header in an attempt to play the ball, the referee will stop play and instruct the player of the dangers of executing this action.
 - b. The referee will then restart play with an indirect kick to the opposing team.
18. Players which demonstrate the signs of concussion will be removed from the game and may not reenter prior to assessment and cleared by a qualified Health Care Professional (HCP).
 - a. Neither coaches nor referees may allow a player demonstrating signs of concussion to continue to play.
19. Attempts to allow a player demonstrating signs of concussion to continue to play will result in the game being suspended until such time as the player is removed. *(See Appendix A for Concussion Guidelines)*
20. During the match, any player that has any exposed bleeding will immediately be removed from the playing field (substitution is allowed) and cannot reenter the game until the bleeding is stopped and the blood cleaned off of the player.
21. Zero Tolerance regarding verbal/physical abuse and /or assault. Refer to WYS Judicial Process. Violation of this rule will result with an indirect free kick from the original location.
22. Blue Card-used for all small-sided matched in lieu of Red/Yellow cards. This is a tool for youth referees to address and inform players, coaches, and sidelines of unacceptable play or conduct. *(See Appendix B for Blue Card explanation)*

Section B. U9-U10: Rules of Play

Age Group	Format	Heading	Punting	Build Out Line	Offside Line
U09-U10	7v7	No	No	Yes	Yes

TABLE 4

1. All matches will not continue with fewer than five (5) players per team participating in the match.
2. The duration of matches, ball size, ball dimensions, and for each age group will be as depicted in **TABLE #1**.
3. Goals are considered for score when the whole of the ball has passed over the goal line between the goal posts and under the top of the crossbar.
 - a. A goal may be scored directly from kick-off.
4. Build out line is an equidistant between the top of the penalty area and the midfield line.
 - a. If the field does not have a build out line, then the midfield line will default as the build out line.
5. Defensive players must be outside the center circle and in their own half, for play to begin.
6. Mercy Rule
 - a. If the score differential reaches five (5) goals, then the coach of the team with fewer goals may add one (1) player to the field. If the goal differential returns to three (3) goals, then the coach must remove the one (1) additional player.
 - b. If the score differential reaches eight (8) goals, then coach of the team with the fewer goals may add a second additional player to the field. If the goal differential returns to six (6) goals, then the second additional player must be removed from the field.

7. All restarts are for player development and player safety. Restarts can be used as part of instructional learning and at the discretion of the Referee. This can include re-takes on play.
8. Offside is in effect when the player has crossed the midfield line and
 - a. are nearer to the opponent's goal line than both the ball and the second-to-last opponent at the moment the ball is played to them by a teammate, and
 - b. they become involved in the play by touching the ball, interfering with play, or distracting a defender.
 - c. Indirect kick is awarded to the defending team.
9. No player will make intentional physical contact with the goalkeeper WITHIN THE GOAL AREA, harass the goalkeeper, or attempt to play the ball once the goalkeeper has control of the ball in any manner and to any degree whatsoever. **NOTE: Also included in "having control of the ball" is, if any part of the goalkeeper is in contact with the ball while on the ground it is considered control.**
 - a. If the defending team is found to be obstructing the goalkeeper (preventing the goalkeeper from releasing the ball while inside the penalty area), then an indirect free kick will be awarded to the opposing team.
10. If the goalkeeper punts or drop kicks the ball, play will be stopped and the ball will be given back to the goalkeeper and they will be instructed to either throw or roll the ball onto the field.
11. For goal kicks, once the ball is kicked and clearly moves; it does not need to leave the penalty area. Players from the team in possession of the ball (the offensive team) may be inside of or enter the penalty area during the kick. The players not in possession of the ball (the defensive team) must remain behind the build out line until the ball is put into play. The defending team must not enter the penalty area until the ball leaves the area.
12. Corner Kicks are awarded when the ball crosses the goal line when last touched by the defending team.
 - a. Offensive team is awarded the kick.
 - b. Defensive team must be at least 5 yards away before kick is allowed.
 - c. Corner flags cannot be moved.
13. Dropped ball: When the ball is put back into play by the referee for reasons other than a foul or normal stoppage of play.
 - a. Ball dropped for goalkeeper (if play stopped in penalty area) or for one player of team that last touched the ball at the location of the last touch; all other players (of both teams) must be at least 12 ft (4 yds) away.
 - b. If the ball touches the referee (or other match official) and goes into the goal, possession changes, or an attacking move starts, then play is stopped and a dropped ball is awarded to the team that last had possession unless play is stopped inside of the penalty area and is not the result of a foul, then the ball will be awarded to the keeper.
14. Goalkeeper cannot score by throwing the ball into the opponents' goal.
15. Handball is defined as the fingertips to the bottom of the armpit and is considered an offense which will result in a direct free kick when a player:
 - a. Deliberately touches the ball with their hand/arm, including moving the hand/arm towards the ball.
 - b. gains possession/control of the ball after it has touched their hand/arm and then scores in the opponent's area, creates a goal-scoring opportunity, scores in the opponent's goal directly from their hand/arm even if accidental including by the goalkeeper.
16. Direct Free Kicks are awarded to the opposing team when a player commits a foul that is considered to be attempted or actual kicking, tripping, jumping at, charging in a violent/dangerous manner, charging from behind, striking, or holding of another player.
 - a. For defending team free kicks in their own penalty area, the ball is in play once it is kicked and clearly moves; it does not have to leave the penalty area.
17. Indirect Free Kicks are awarded to the opposing team when a player commits a foul for dangerous play or unsportsmanlike behavior.
 - a. When there is a defensive 'wall' of at least 3 players, all attacking team players must be at least 3ft m from the 'wall'; IDFK is given to the defending team if there is encroachment All defensive players must be 10 yards from the IDFK spot.
18. The keeper has up to 8 seconds to release the ball, once the defense has setup beyond the build-out line. or it will result in a corner kick awarded to the opposing team. However, the keeper may choose to put the ball in play by releasing the ball earlier than 8 seconds and/or prior to the defense retreating

- beyond the build out line (a quick release).
19. Throw In: A method to restart play when the entire ball crosses over the touchline (sideline) and is considered out of bounds.
 - a. Defending team is awarded the throw in. The player must be behind the touchline with both feet on the ground. The ball must come up and over the head towards the field of play.
 - b. A second attempt may be allowed by the referee if the player fails to properly throw the ball in.
 - c. If on the second attempt, the player fails again, the ball will be awarded to the opposing team as a throw in.
 20. Slide tackling/sliding is not allowed.
 - a. Should a slide tackle occur, it will be considered dangerous play. The referee will stop play and instruct the player of their infraction and award an indirect free kick restart.
 - b. If the slide tackle is performed by the attacking team, a restart for the opposing team will be an indirect free kick at the spot of the foul.
 - c. Should the slide tackle occur with the penalty area / goal box and performed by the defending team, the restart will be at the point nearest, but outside of the top of the penalty area / goal box where foul was committed.
 - d. Should a player slide tackle a second time, they will be removed for the rest of the game.
 21. Headers are not allowed in practices or in play.
 - a. When a player intentionally performs a header in an attempt to play the ball, the referee will stop play and instruct the player of the dangers of executing this action.
 - b. The referee will then restart play with an indirect kick to the opposing team.
 22. Players which demonstrate the signs of concussion will be removed from the game and may not reenter prior to assessment and cleared by a qualified Health Care Professional (HCP).
 - a. Neither coaches nor referees may allow a player demonstrating signs of concussion to continue to play.
 23. Attempts to allow a player demonstrating signs of concussion to continue to play will result in the game being suspended until such time as the player is removed. *(See Appendix A for Concussion Guidelines)*
 24. During the match, any player that has any exposed bleeding will immediately be removed from the playing field (substitution is allowed) and cannot reenter the game until the bleeding is stopped and the blood cleaned off of the player.
 25. Zero Tolerance regarding verbal/physical abuse and /or assault. Refer to WYS Judicial Process. Violation of this rule will result with an indirect free kick from the original location.
 26. Blue Card-used for all small-sided matched in lieu of Red/Yellow cards. This is a tool for youth referees to address and inform players, coaches, and sidelines of unacceptable play or conduct. *(See Appendix B for Blue Card explanation)*

ARTICLE 8. GAME CONDUCT

Section A. Coaching / Coaches (see Appendix B for NSYSA Guidance)

1. Coaching from the sidelines, giving directions to one's own team on points of strategy and positioning, is permitted in all NSYSA play providing the Coaching is
 - a. Done from at least two (2) yards behind the touchlines, between the Penalty Boxes. Coaching may not be accomplished from both touchlines.
 - b. Coaches, players, and spectators must immediately and respectfully move back further than 2 yds if asked by game officials to ensure they can perform their duties safely and without obstruction.
 - c. By not more than two (2) persons, one (1) identifying himself / herself as "Coach" and one (1) as an assistant prior to the commencement of the match.
 - d. No mechanical or electronic device may be used for in game communication with players.
2. Negative or vulgar comments directed at players, coaches, spectators, or officials will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Both teams will be located on the same side of the field with teams on opposite sides of the midfield line. Opposing coaches will not enter the opponents' half of the field.
 - a. A Coach's failure to comply upon request of the Referee may result in their ejection.

- b. All coaching must be done from one side of the field. The coach must confine themselves to their own half of the field at all times. No team may have coaches on both touchlines.
- 3. Coaches/assistants are responsible for helping ensure that anyone who is ejected or asked to leave a match immediately and exits the area completely, out of sight and sound of the field. Failure to leave the area may, at the discretion of the Referee or Field Marshall, become just cause for the abandonment of the match.
- 4. A coach maybe subject to ejection by the Referee or Field Marshall without any warning.
 - a. A named assistant Coach, with RMA certification and listed on the official roster for that team, may then be permitted to continue coaching the team and assume all duties and responsibilities of the coach should the coach be ejected.
 - b. If a coach has been ejected for any reason, the coach will be ineligible to coach until the ejection has been reviewed by the NSYSA Disciplinary Committee. If suspended, they may not be present on the field or sidelines with the team prior to or during the matches or practices.
- 5. Any coach who removes their team from the field prior to the completion of a match, must appear before a NSYSA Hearing Committee appointed by the NSYSA Vice President to explain their actions prior to his / her next scheduled match.
- 6. All coaches must complete all required Association and State paperwork.
 - a. 18 years and older: Must also complete RMA.
 - b. Under 18 years of age.
 - i. Must have an RMA approved adult present
 - ii. at each match / practice or team event.
 - iii. The adult must occupy a place on the sidelines with the players, and will be responsible for that team before, during, and after the match / practice. No team will be allowed to take the field unless this requirement is met.
- 7. Coaches will be responsible for their assistants, players, substitutes, and spectators.
- 8. Upon request, the coach will be required to give their name, the name of any assistant, player, substitute, or spectator to the Referee.
- 9. Prior to the game, each coach will print three copies of the game roster from the NSYSA Website and present the roster to the Referee. The NSYSA Game Roster Sheet should show the following:
 - a. The names of the coaching staff.
 - b. The name of the team.
 - c. The date.
 - d. The game ID number.
 - e. The level / division of the team.
 - f. The name and jersey number of each player.
- 10. At the completion of each game, the Referee will give each coach a completed and signed copy of their opponent's NSYSA Game Roster Sheet.

Section B. Substitutions / Playing Time

- 1. The number of substitutions within a match will be unlimited and be made with the consent of the Referee during any stoppage.
- 2. In any case, a substitute may not enter the field of play until they have been given a signal to do so by the Referee.
- 3. Substitutes will enter and exit at the midfield line.
- 4. Players not on the field of play must remain in an area along one touchline, at least two yards from the touchline and between the penalty areas.
- 5. All players of a small-sided team participating in NSYSA League competition, which are in attendance, in uniform, physically fit, and eligible will be given the opportunity to play 50% of the game.

Section C. Uniforms / Player Equipment

- 1. All uniforms must have a six (6) inch minimum size number on the back of the jersey. Numbers will not be duplicated on the same team and will be legible. Players without numbers will not play. All

jerseys will be the same color with the exception of the goalkeeper.

- a. A proper uniform will consist of shorts, a jersey, socks, shin guards and legal soccer shoes. All players will have their jerseys tucked in and socks pulled up covering the shin guards entirely (shin guards must be under the socks).
 - b. Legal soccer shoes will be those without a single toe stud. Legal shoes are defined by F.I.F.A. Law IV. Exceptions: **NO** metal studs are allowed in NSYSA play. Gym or tennis shoes may be allowed.
 - c. Gloves, tights, pantyhose, long underwear, warm-up or sweatpants, stocking caps, sweatshirts, or similar long-sleeved shirts may be worn providing such items are form fitting. The jersey and shorts will be worn as the outermost garments. Undershirts can be multi-colored/patterned if the undershirts are the same pattern/color as the main shirt.
 - d. Headbands and wristbands may be worn by any player.
 - e. Bandanas will not be worn by any player.
 - f. All items of jewelry (necklaces, ear/facial piercings, rings, bracelets, rubber bands, leather bands, etc.) are not permitted even if taped.
 - g. All hair accessories must be fabric or elastic; no metal or hard plastic.
 - h. Goalkeepers may also wear a soft-billed baseball style cap, kneepads, elbow pads, and sweat pants provided such attire is not potentially hazardous to the game.
 - i. No other player other than the goalkeeper may wear kneepads or elbow pads without NSYSA permission.
 - j. A player who is not in proper uniform will not be allowed to play.
 - k. Shin guards are mandatory for all players in NSYSA League play.
 - l. It is recommended that all male goalkeepers wear a protective cup.
 - m. It is recommended that a mouth guard be worn over braces (Orthodontic).
 - n. It will be the coach's responsibility to see that players are properly attired.
2. In the event of two teams appearing in the same colors, the away team will maintain their colors per the NSYSA Constitution Article 3, Section A. The home team will shift to their alternate color or may wear pinnies at the approval of the Referee that are distinctly different in color than the away team.
 3. If the goalkeeper's jersey is similar to the opposing team's colors, the goalkeeper must change his / her color.
 4. It will be the responsibility of the home team to have a game ball properly inflated at game time.

Section D. Spectators

1. Spectators and / or parents, who unduly interfere with the progress of the match, can be warned by the Referee or by a responsible officer of the NSYSA present at the field. Responsible "officer" will mean any elected officer of their member club, NSYSA, or in their absence, the Coach.
2. Spectators will not be allowed behind the goal area, or within two (2) yards of the touchline, or beyond the top of the Penalty Box. Persons desiring to photograph the match from these areas will obtain permission from the appointed Field Marshall before the start of the match. Said person will not coach, cheer, or in any way distract the players or the official.
3. Any spectator violating the Rules of Competition or interfering with the progress of a match will be asked to leave the field.
 - a. The Coach of the team with the spectator in violation is responsible for ensuring their removal.
 - b. Failure to do so may result in an abandoned game.
 - c. The Club will take action to see that the problem does not occur again.
 - d. Spectators and / or parents will be located on the touchline opposite the teams.

Appendix A: Concussion Guidelines

- A. If the referee suspects a participant in their youth game is suffering from a concussion:
 - a. The referee must immediately stop play if the ball is still in play
 - b. The participant must leave the field, with assistance, if necessary, before play can be resumed
 - c. The referee **MUST** advise both coach and player that by Washington Law, future participation in sports requires that they cannot return to play until the athlete has been evaluated by a licensed health care provider and received a written clearance to play
 - d. Once off, the participant is no longer a player, substitute or substituted player; and the athlete is disqualified from further participation in this game
 - e. At the conclusion of the game, the referee must file a report with the appropriate State or Local Association containing all the details of the incident and data to clearly identify the participant involved. The referee must also confirm that both the coach and player have been informed about the return to play requirements of the Washington Law.
 - f. Referees are in no way responsible for events that may have occurred in prior or following games where they are not an assigned official.
- B. No coach shall permit a player who has been removed from a game for a concussion assessment to RTP until cleared to do so by an HCP.
- C. If a coach continues to seek to allow a player, who been removed from a game for a concussion assessment, to re-enter the game; the referee shall allow the player to return to the field but shall:
 - a. Not restart play
 - b. Direct the player to leave the field of play and
 - c. Direct the coach to remove the player and select a substitute.
- D. If a coach seeks to allow a player to re-enter the game, that has been removed from a game for a concussion assessment and who has not been cleared medically by a qualified HCP, the referee shall issue a warning to the coach. If a coach persists in seeking to allow such a player to re-enter the game after having been issued a warning, the referee shall be entitled to take such other disciplinary measures as are permitted. The game will not continue while the player removed for a possible concussion is removed and substituted for.

Appendix B: The Blue Card

The “**Blue Card**” will be used for all ‘small sided’ matches. Neither the red nor yellow cards have application to the Small Side game. The “Blue Card” is a tool to address and inform players, coaches, and sidelines of unacceptable play or conduct for individuals participating in the game, coaches for the game or spectators of the game.

- A. The Small Sided referee often does not feel comfortable with addressing a coach or spectator about their behavior.
 - a. We must accept that our referees are young and just beginning to learn the skills of being a referee. We must accept that mistakes will be made. It is necessary to reinforce that even the best of referees will make mistakes. Coaches and spectators must accept and respect the efforts of our young referees.
 - b. The largest factor for referee retention is the interaction of the referee with players, coaches, and spectators. The courtesies and respect given to the referee will support the retention and growth of our young referees.
 - c. Our young referees are as our young players, learning and maturing with the game of soccer. Please allow them this opportunity through respect and patience.
- B. What is the purpose of the “Blue Card”?
 - a. The “Blue Card” is a tool to address and inform players, coaches, and sidelines of unacceptable play or conduct for individuals participating or spectators of the game.
 - b. Examples of unacceptable conduct include:
 - i. Coaches, spectators, or players loudly express their disagreement with the referee’s call.
 - ii. Coaches, spectators, or players speaking with disrespect toward the opposing players, coaches, or spectators. **Note:** Coaches, Spectators, and players may not address others of the opposing side in any manner other than as supportive and positive comments
 - iii. A Player persistently commits the same foul over and over even after having been instructed to stop such behavior
 - iv. If the referee feels uncomfortable and feels that disrespectful comments are being addressed towards the referee
 - c. The coaches/sidelines may be shown a blue card for the following offenses:
 - i. Abusing or behaving in a threatening manner towards the referee.
 - ii. Abusing or behaving in a threatening manner towards the opposing sidelines.
 - iii. Abusing or behaving in a threatening manner towards the opposing players.
 - d. A player may be shown a blue card for the following offenses:
 - i. Abusing or behaving in a threatening manner towards the referee.
 - ii. Abusing or behaving in a threatening manner towards the opposing sidelines. iii. Abusing or behaving in a threatening manner towards the opposing players.
 - iii. Persistently commits the same foul over and over even after having.
- C. Coaches responsibility:
 - a. Coaches are responsible for their own conduct as well as the conduct of the team’s spectators and players.
 - b. It is expected that the coach will control unacceptable conduct from his spectators and players.
- D. What purpose does the “Blue Card” provide for the young referee?
 - a. A young referee may feel uncomfortable when addressing a coach or spectators about their

conduct. In most cases this is the young referee's first attempt at officiating and does not need the added complexity of addressing angry coaches or spectators. During the learning process, mistakes will be made. These mistakes should be accepted. Rational understanding and comments may be shared with the referee after the game has completed.

- b. Severe concerns regarding referee performance should be forwarded to both Clubs Small Sided Referee Assignor for follow up.
 - c. These concerns regarding referee performance may also be forwarded to both Member Clubs Board.
- E. The presentation of the “Blue Card” by the referee is a non-verbal statement that some condition of the game has become unacceptable and must be corrected.
- a. Coaches or spectators must correct the unacceptable conduct. No further unacceptable actions of this kind will be accepted.
 - b. Cross field comments must be discontinued immediately.
 - c. Coaches are responsible to assist the referee to correct unacceptable play by his players which may be considered disrespectful, dangerous, or persistent.
- F. Coaches are the responsible representative for the team and sideline spectators.
- a. Each individual is responsible to correct any unacceptable conduct.
 - b. Should the referee be unable to affect correction of an unacceptable behavior it then becomes the responsibility of the coach to assist in achieving an acceptable behavior.
 - c. Any further continuance of this unacceptable behavior by coaches or spectators will result in the issue of a 2nd “Blue Card” and abandonment of the game. The circumstances of the event will be communicated to both appropriate Member Club Board and the NSYSA or Small Sided Referee Assignor.
- G. Process for issued “Blue Cards”:
- a. Any “Blue Card” issued must be reported to the Member Club Referee Assignor within 24 hours of the issue.
 - i. The Member Club Board will facilitate discussion and possible administrative discipline within their Club.
 - ii. The Member Club Board will notify the Association VP of Administration no later than the following Monday regarding any and all “Blue Cards: issued to the visiting team(s).
 - b. The Association VP of Administration will notify the visiting Member Club Board regarding any “Blue Cards” being issued to their teams while playing away from their Club area.
 - i. The Member Club Board will facilitate discussion and possible administrative discipline within their Club.
 - c. A complete report must also be submitted by the referee via the Association web site when completing the game report.
 - d. Each Member Club Board will report back to the Association VP of Competition within five days (or before the next scheduled game) with the resolution pertaining to each “Blue Card” offense.
- H. Expectations for teams receiving multiple “Blue Cards” in a single game or accumulated over a season.
- a. The Association Director of Recreation will notify the responsible Member Club Board upon identification of a trend for multiple cards issued.
 - b. The Member Club Board will facilitate discussion and possible administrative discipline within their Club.
 - c. The Member Club Board will consider actions such as removal of coaches or spectators from the sidelines should the situation be warranted.

- d. If the issue is related to player performances, assigning a mentor for the coach may be necessary.
- e. The Member Club Board will report back to the Association Director of Recreation within five days (or before the next scheduled game) with the resolution pertaining to the cause and corrective action associated with the accumulation of multiple “Blue Card” offenses.
- f. Any reported action by a referee or coach, which is of a serious nature or deemed severe, may be brought before the NSYSA Disciplinary Committee. The findings of the Club may be considered, but the decisions of the NSYSA Disciplinary Committee may be added to the findings of the Club or supersede those findings.

Appendix C: General NSYSA Guidelines for the Sidelines

Coaches, parents and spectators should show only good adult behavior on the sidelines and act as role models for the younger players. Help create a positive soccer atmosphere. Influence your youngster's soccer experience by following these "Soccer Sideline Ethics".

- A **The Fun is Playing** – Encourage youngsters in skill development and 100% performance. **Winning is not their motivation.** They want to be having fun. So, lighten up, decrease the competitive pressures, and encourage skills, teamwork, self - esteem, and good sportsmanship. Enjoy this opportunity to be with youngsters on the field.
- B **Know the Game and the Laws** – Soccer looks simple but it is complex to play, coach and officiate. You'll enjoy the game more by understanding soccer skills and tactics, the flow of play, and how the game is played. Soccer is free-flowing with ever- changing situations and constant problem solving by the players. Soccer is physical and demanding. With no timeouts, it is fun to watch. There are only 17 laws in soccer.
 - a Understand the basic laws and increase your enjoyment of the game. **Note** for "Laws of the Game" go to the FIFA Web Site [F.I.F.A. Laws of the Game](#)
- C **Support the Team, not just your Youngster** – Give encouragement to the entire team. Don't yell constantly at a youngster. Avoid giving directions while they are playing. Soccer is above all a player-dominated game and they have to make the decisions on the field. Always be positive, win or lose. Don't get over involved emotionally.
- D **Practice Good Sportsmanship** – Always show sportsmanship and enthusiasm. Young people learn by example. Encourage your players to play by the rules. Cheer good play by both teams. Ask your youngster: "Did you have fun and try your best?" rather than, "Why didn't you win?" Win gracefully, not boastfully. Lose without being negative. Make sure the end-of-the-game rituals (such as the handshakes) reflect good sportsmanship.
- E **Let the Players Play** – Soccer is a players' game. Youngsters participate for their enjoyment, not ours. To children, playing is more important than winning, while winning is more important to parents and coaches. Emphasize player development and having fun over winning.
- F **Let the Coaches Coach** – The coach, volunteer or paid, provides guidance, skill instruction, and supervised fun for your youngsters in soccer. Respect the coaches and their decisions. Their concern is the whole team, not just your player. Don't undermine, second-guess, or criticize a coach in public. Coaching will be allowed only from the sidelines occupied by the team. No coaching is allowed from both sides. Most coaches will listen to parents in private, and may ask parents to help with practice.
- G **Let the Referee Judge the Game** – Soccer referees control the game the moment they enter the grounds. Most are young and are still learning to referee, just as the players are learning to play. They respect fair play, sportsmanship, skill and the spirit of the game. Referee calls are final. No player, coach, or parent may change a ref's decision, but the criticism disrupts the game. Support the referees.
- H **Get involved with Soccer** – Come to the games in the spirit of fun and play. Meet other parents and coaches. Make sure your youngster comes ready to play – with the proper equipment and attitude. Help them develop the skills and tactics for the game. Go to a pro or college game with your kids, or watch a game on television with them.
 - a Kick the ball around with them. Soccer isn't easy to play, so don't criticize your player for losing or making mistakes – applaud good effort.
- I **Be a Supportive Soccer Parent** – Volunteer to help with practices. Soccer teaches discipline and responsibility, so be on time! Support the coach whenever possible. Be more concerned with your player's long-term development of skills and tactics than with short-term winning and losing. Focus on skill accomplishments and effort.
- J **Sideline Conduct** U05 thru U10, parents and spectators **WILL** remain on the opposite side of the field away from the teams.
- K Neither team, parents or spectators may go beyond the top of the goal box when present on the field. Spectators and parents may not gather along the goal lines or behind the nets during the playing of the game.

- L **Pets at the Field** - Pets are not permitted on the fields, at any time. Many of the fields are marked and provided guidance regarding field usage and animal presence. Please abide by this signage. County ordinance and school regulations do not allow for pets to be at the field. The exception to this rule will be service animals.