
LAWS OF THE GAME

U-7 DIVISION

Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) Laws of the Game Shall be used to govern all matches for NCSL unless otherwise specified within these NCSL division laws. NCSL division laws incorporate many of the laws and policies as set forth by the Washington State Youth Soccer Association (WSYSA) and the North County Youth Soccer Association (NCYSA) in order to establish uniform procedures and rules applicable to youth soccer consistent with the principles and laws set forth by FIFA, US Youth Soccer, and the United States Soccer Federation (USSF).

LAW 1: FIELD OF PLAY

The field of play is rectangular, measuring 50 yards in length by 30 in width, and marked with lines in accordance with the standards of the game. There are two goals – one at either end of the field – and the corners are marked with flags. The field, lines, goals, and corner flags assigned for play by Northwest Christian Sports League (NCSL) will be considered the official sizes and conditions for all league play.

LAW 2: THE BALL

The ball is spherical, made of leather or other suitable material, and meets the circumference, weight, and pressure measurements for league play. The league will provide the official game ball (Size 3) for play, and the referee shall inspect and approve the ball prior to the match. The ball may not be changed without the authority of the referee.

LAW 3: THE NUMBER OF PLAYERS

A match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than seven players, one of whom is the goalkeeper.

One coach from each team is allowed on the field to assist players with encouragement and direction. Coaches are expected to exercise discretion in this liberty; that is, they may verbally coach and cheer their players, but they must refrain from physically assisting them in any way.

Players may be substituted during the intervals between periods of game play. Coaches are discouraged from substituting players during play, as this slows down the game and reduces the amount of time available for play. However, it is understood that players may become exhausted or injured during play, and given proper notice, the referee will allow a substitution request at the next reasonable stoppage of play.

NCSL U-7 Policy 3.1:

There is no set minimum number of players necessary to participate in a soccer match.

NCSL U-7 Policy 3.2:

The coach is responsible for keeping his sideline away from the touchlines and the goal area.

LAW 4: THE PLAYER'S EQUIPMENT

A player must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous to himself or another player (i.e., any kind of jewelry, watches, earrings and all body piercing, barrettes, buckles, pins, medals, etc.) Tape, adhesive strips or other devices may not be used to cover jewelry. Only Medical ID bracelets may be covered with tape; all other jewelry must be removed. The basic compulsory equipment of a player is a team jersey, shorts, stockings, shinguards, and footwear. The shinguards must be entirely covered by the stockings, be made of a suitable material (rubber, plastic, or similar substance), and provide a reasonable degree of protection. The goalkeeper must wear colors that distinguish him from the other players and the referee.

NCSL U-7 Policy 4.1:

In addition, NCSL has adopted certain policies regarding Law 4 pertaining to youth soccer. The referee must approve of any article of clothing, including hats, gloves, and/or underlayer clothing being worn by the players and has sole discretion to approve or disapprove the use of those articles on the field of play.

- 1) A player wearing a hard cast will not be permitted to play.
- 2) The goalkeeper is allowed to wear rubberized gloves (goalie gloves) and a cap with a soft visor to shield against the sun.
- 3) All or any member(s) of a team may wear extra protective clothing against the cold, including gloves, without dangerous, protruding or hard objects, under the following provisions:

Gloves may be worn by players other than the goal keeper provided that:

- a. They are not rubberized gloves (goalie gloves) nor made of other materials as to create an unfair advantage for the player wearing those gloves.
- b. The referee is assured that no jewelry or other object is concealed by the gloves.

Hats:

- a. Any hat should be without peak, bill or dangling or protruding object of any kind; however, the goalkeeper may wear a soft-billed hat;

Cold weather or foul weather gear may be worn provided that:

- a. The whole of the team jersey uniform must be worn outside of all layers and are completely visible to the referee.
 - b. Approved shin guards and stockings are worn appropriately.
 - c. Underlayers should ideally be of the same color as the team's shorts and jersey and must clearly distinguish the player from the goalkeeper, the referees or the opponent's team players or the opponent's goalkeeper.
 - d. Layers underneath, if worn, should not conceal otherwise forbidden articles such as jewelry, hard casts, or other items deemed unsafe or inappropriate by the referee. Deceptive practices in this regard are cautionable offenses. Players needing to fix their equipment will not return to the FOP until permitted to do so by the referee.
 - e. Loose clothing could be deemed "unsafe" and not permitted onto the FOP by the referee or match official.
 - f. The referee of each match has full discretion in determining if layers underneath meet the above criteria.
 - g. Referee discretion may be used to determine if an item of protective clothing is considered to go beyond the purpose of providing a means of retaining body heat.
- 4) All players must wear studded shoes (cleats) meeting the following requirements:
 - a. There must be a minimum of ten cleats on each shoe,
 - b. The cleats must be molded as part of the shoe (no metal / screw-in cleats),
 - c. The cleats must be rounded on the ends and be made of rubber or another soft material,
 - d. The cleats must be at least one-half inch in diameter and no longer than three-quarters inch in length,
 - e. The cleats must not possess a ridged toe cleat (baseball-style cleats).

Infringements / Sanctions:

For any infringement of this Law, the player at fault will be instructed by the referee to leave the field of play immediately to correct his equipment. Any player required to do so may only re-enter the field of play with the referee's permission.

LAW 5: THE REFEREE

There are no referees assigned by the league for U7 soccer. The coaches may use the following options:

- 1) One person – designated prior to the game, and agreed upon by both coaches – shall serve as a volunteer referee for the entire game.
- 2) Two persons – designated prior to the game, and agreed upon by both coaches – shall serve as volunteer referees with each doing the first 2 or last 2 quarters of the game.

The referee shall be equipped with a whistle – so that when play needs to stop, all the players can hear the whistle blow! The referee shall ensure that everyone is playing fairly and safely – and shall stop play when someone is not.

The referee also makes sure that teams are awarded free kicks when fouls are committed against one of their number, and shall determine when the ball has completely crossed out of play (over the goal line or touchline), and award a throw-in, goal kick, or corner kick to the appropriate team.

The referee also acts as the official scorekeeper. The referee is also empowered to keep the coaches who are on the field and spectators away from the goal area. Spectators are not allowed to stand behind the goal or stand on the sidelines by the penalty box area.

Advantage Clause:

The referee shall employ the advantage clause at their discretion; that is, they shall allow play to continue when the team against which an offense has been committed will benefit from such an advantage and penalizes the original offense if the anticipated advantage does not occur at that time.

Decisions of the Referee:

The decisions of the referee regarding facts connected with play are final. The referee may only change a decision on realizing that it is incorrect provided that he has not restarted play.

LAW 6: THE LINESMAN

Use of a linesman is optional in this division, and usually not needed.

LAW 7: THE DURATION OF THE MATCH

The match lasts four equal periods of 12 minutes each. The players are entitled to a three-minute interval between the first and second periods, and the third and fourth periods. The players are entitled to a five-minute interval at half-time (between the second and third periods). The referee may elect to add additional time at the end of each half to allow for time lost through injury substitutions, penalty kicks, etc. The precise amount of time added is subject to the discretion of the referee.

NCSL U-7 Policy 7.1:

There is no overtime period. A game ending in a tie will be declared a draw.

LAW 8: THE START / RESTART OF PLAY

A coin is tossed and the team that wins the toss decides which goal it will attack in the first half of the match.

The other team takes the kick-off to start both the 1st and 2nd quarters in the first half of the match. The team that won the toss takes the kick-off in both the 3rd and 4th quarters in the second half of the match. At the beginning of the second half, teams shall switch ends and attack the opposite goals for the duration of the game.

The kick-off is a way of starting or re-starting play at the beginning of each quarter and after a goal has been scored. A goal may not be scored directly from a kick-off, as all kicks in this division are indirect.

Procedure:

The ball is placed stationary on the center mark for the kick-off. All players are in their own half of the field.

When the referee gives the signal, the ball may be put into play. The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves forward. The opposing team must remain outside the center circle until the ball is put into play; however, the kicking team may have players within the center circle. The kicking player may not touch the ball again until it has been touched by another player.

Infringements / Sanctions:

If the kicker touches the ball a second time before it has touched another player, an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred * (see below). For any other infringement of the kick-off procedure, the kick-off is retaken.

Drop Ball:

In the event the referee temporarily stops the match while the ball is in play, for any reason not mentioned elsewhere in the Laws of the Game, the referee shall restart play with a dropped ball. The referee shall drop the ball at the place where it was located when play was stopped * (see below). Play restarts when the ball touches the ground. The ball is dropped again if it is touched by a player before it makes contact with the ground, or if the ball leaves the field of play after it makes contact with the ground, without a player touching it.

* Special Conditions of Law 8:

* A free kick awarded to the defending team inside its own goal area is taken from any point within the goal area.

* An indirect free kick awarded to the attacking team in its opponents' goal area is taken from the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred.

* A dropped ball to restart the match after play has been temporarily stopped inside the goal area takes place on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the ball was located when play was stopped.

NCSL U-7 Policy – 8.1:

In the case of a temporary suspension due to an injury or any unusual situation not described elsewhere, if one team is clearly in possession of the ball, the game shall be restarted by an indirect free kick by the team in possession of the ball at the point where the ball was when play was suspended. Should there not be clear possession at the time play is suspended due to an injury or any unusual situation not described elsewhere, there will be a drop ball at the spot where the ball was declared dead.

LAW 9: THE BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY

The ball is out of play when it has completely crossed the goal line or touchline, whether in the ground or in the air, or when play has been stopped by the referee. The ball is in play all other times, including when it rebounds from a goal post, crossbar, corner flag post, and remains in the field of play. In addition, the ball is in play when it rebounds from a referee or linesman standing within the field of play.

LAW 10: THE METHOD OF SCORING

A goal is scored when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, between the goal posts and under the crossbar, provided that no infringement of the Laws of the Game has been committed previously by the team scoring the goal. In the event that any player of the defending team (to include the goalkeeper) deflects the ball into his own goal using any part of his body, it is considered an "own goal" and will count as a score for the opposing team.

The team scoring the greater number of goals during a match is the winner. The league wishes to emphasize that the importance of winning should be de-emphasized, while maintaining a good attitude and encouraging players to do their best should remain the principle aim of the match.

LAW 11: OFFSIDE

There is no offside in this division.

LAW 12: FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

Any infraction against the Laws of the Game is known as a foul or misconduct.

In this division, all free kicks are indirect, due to the small size of the field.

Penal Fouls:

An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following six offenses in a manner considered by the referee to be careless, reckless or using excessive force:

- 1) Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent,
- 2) Trips or attempts to trip an opponent,
- 3) Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent
- 4) Jumps at an opponent,
- 5) Charges an opponent,
- 6) Pushes an opponent.

An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following four offenses at any time, regardless of motivation or circumstances:

- 1) Tackles an opponent to win the ball, making contact with the opponent before touching the ball,
- 2) Handles the ball deliberately (except for the goalkeeper within his own penalty area),
- 3) Holds an opponent,
- 4) Spits at an opponent.

An indirect free kick is taken from where the offense occurred * (subject to the special conditions of Law 8).

Technical Fouls:

An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a goalkeeper, inside his own penalty area, commits any of the following five offenses:

- 1) Takes more than six seconds while controlling the ball in his hands before releasing from possession,
- 2) Touches the ball with his hands after he has released it and before being touched by another player,
- 3) Touches the ball with his hands after he has received it directly from a throw-in taken by a teammate,
- 4) Touches the ball with his hands after it has been deliberately kicked to him by a teammate,
- 5) Deliberately wastes time / delays the game.

An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player, in the opinion of the referee:

- 1) Plays in a dangerous manner,
- 2) Impedes the progress of an opponent,
- 3) Prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his hands,
- 4) Commits any other offense, not previously mentioned in Law 12, for which play is stopped to caution or dismiss a player.

An indirect free kick is taken from where the offense occurred * (subject to the special conditions of Law 8).

Disciplinary Sanctions:

In the U-7 division, players are not cautioned nor sent-off for their actions, and cards shall not be displayed. However, the referee may give a verbal warning, or advise the coach to speak to a player guilty of misconduct.

NCSL U-7 Policy – 12.1:

Charging the Goalkeeper:

- 1) In all Under-11 age groups and below: No player shall make physical contact with the goalkeeper, 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.
- 2) Note: Also included in “having control of the ball” is, if the goalkeeper holds the ball on the ground with one or both hands

NCSL U-7 Policy – 12.2:

Slide tackling is not allowed at the U-10 level and below. If a slide tackle occurs it shall be considered dangerous play. The coach/referee will stop play and instruct the player of his infraction and then award the opposing team an indirect free kick at the spot of the foul.

LAW 13: FREE KICKS

The referee awards a free kick when the opposing team commits an infraction against the Laws of the Game. In this division, all kicks are indirect, due to the small size of the field. The ball must be stationary when the kick is taken, and the kicker must not touch the ball a second time until it has touched another player.

Indirect Kicks:

An infraction of a penal foul or a technical foul warrants an indirect kick. A goal can be scored only if the ball subsequently touches another player before it enters the goal. If an indirect free kick is kicked directly into the opponents' goal, a goal kick is awarded to the opposing team. If an indirect free kick is kicked directly into the team's own goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opposing team.

Free Kicks Inside the Penalty Area:

Indirect – Defending Team

- 1) All opponents shall remain outside the penalty area until the ball is in play,
- 2) All opponents are at least five yards away from the ball,
- 3) The ball is in play when it is kicked directly beyond the penalty area,
- 4) A free kick awarded in the goal area is taken from any point inside that area.

Indirect – Attacking Team

- 1) All opponents are at least five yards away from the ball until it is put into play, unless they are on their own goal line between the goal posts,
- 2) The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves,
- 3) An indirect free kick awarded inside the goal area is taken from that part of the goal area line that runs parallel to the goal line, at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred.

Free Kicks Outside the Penalty Area:

Indirect – Defending / Attacking Teams

- 1) All opponents are at least five yards away from the ball until it is in play, unless they are on their own goal line between the goal posts,
- 2) The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves,
- 3) The free kick is taken from the place where the infringement occurred.

Infringements / Sanctions:

The free kick is retaken when an opponent is closer to the ball than the required distance when the kick is taken, or when a free kick taken by the defending team inside its own penalty area is not kicked directly into play.

If, after the ball is in play, the kicker touches the ball a second time (except with his hands) before it has touched another player, an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team. The kick is taken from the place where the infringement occurred * (subject to the special conditions of Law 8).

If, after the ball is in play, the kicker deliberately handles the ball before it has touched another player, an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred * (subject to the special conditions of Law 8)

If, after the ball is in play, the goalkeeper deliberately handles the ball before it has touched another player:

- 1) An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if the infringement occurred outside the goalkeeper's penalty area. The kick is taken from the place where the infringement occurred * (subject to the special conditions of Law 8).
- 2) An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if the infringement occurred inside the goalkeeper's penalty area. The kick is taken from the place where the infringement occurred * (subject to the special conditions of Law 8).

LAW 14: THE PENALTY KICK

There are no penalty kicks in this division. All free kicks are indirect.

LAW 15: THE THROW-IN

A throw-in is a method of restarting play. A throw-in is awarded when the ball passes completely over the touchline, either on the ground or in the air. The throw-in takes place at the point the ball crossed over the touchline, and is given to the opponents of the player who last touched it. A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw-in.

In this division, players are not expected to have mastered throw-in procedure. The referee may elect to allow a player to re-attempt an improper throw-in, until the player has completed the throw-in to satisfaction, or until the referee awards the throw-in to the opposing team in the interests of time.

Procedure:

At the moment of delivering the ball, the thrower:

- 1) Has part of each foot either on the touchline or on the ground outside the touchline,
- 2) Delivers the ball from behind and over his head,
- 3) Faces the field of play,
- 4) Uses both hands.

Any throw-in that is not put properly back into play must be taken again. The thrower may not touch the ball again until it has touched another player. The ball is in play immediately after it enters the field of play.

Infringements / Sanctions:

If, after the ball is in play, the thrower touches the ball a second time (except with his hands) before it has touched another player, an indirect kick shall be awarded to the opposing team. The kick is taken from the place where the infringement occurred * (subject to the special circumstances of Law 8).

If, after the ball is in play, the thrower deliberately handles the ball before it has touched another player, an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred * (subject to the special conditions of Law 8).

If, after the ball is in play, the goalkeeper deliberately handles the ball before it has touched another player an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team. The kick is taken from the place where the infringement occurred *(subject to the special conditions of Law 8).

If an opponent unfairly distracts or impedes the thrower, he shall be informed of his behavior and asked to refrain from further distraction.

For any other infringement of this Law, the throw-in is taken by a player of the opposing team.

LAW 16: THE GOAL KICK

A goal kick is a method of restarting play. A goal kick is awarded when the whole of the ball, having last touched a player of the attacking team, passes completely over the goal line, either on the ground or in the air, and a goal is not scored in accordance with Law 10. A goal may be scored directly from a goal kick.

Procedure:

The ball shall be kicked from any point within the goal area by a player of the defending team. The opponents shall remain outside the penalty area until the ball is in play. The ball is in play when it is kicked directly beyond the penalty area. The kicker does not play the ball a second time until it has touched another player.

Infringements / Sanctions:

If the ball is not kicked directly into play beyond the penalty area, the kick is retaken.

If, after the ball is in play, the kicker touches the ball a second time (except with his hands) before it has touched another player, an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team. The kick is taken from the place where the infringement occurred * (subject to the special conditions of Law 8).

If, after the ball is in play, the kicker deliberately handles the ball before it has touched another player, an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred * (subject to the special conditions of Law 8)

If, after the ball is in play, the goalkeeper deliberately handles the ball before it has touched another player an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team. The kick is taken from the place where the infringement occurred *(subject to the special conditions of Law 8).

For any other infringement of this Law, the kick is retaken.

LAW 17: THE CORNER KICK

A corner kick is a method of restarting play. A corner kick is awarded when the whole of the ball, having last touched a player of the defending team, passes completely over the goal line, either on the ground or in the air, and a goal is not scored in accordance with Law 10. A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick.

Procedure:

The ball is placed inside the corner arc at the nearest corner flag post (the flag post, if present, must not be moved). The opponents shall remain at least five yards away from the ball until it is in play. The ball is kicked by a player of the attacking team. The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves. The kicker shall not play the ball a second time until it has touched another player.

Infringements / Sanctions:

If, after the ball is in play, the kicker touches the ball a second time (except with his hands) before it has touched another player, an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team. The kick is taken from the place where the infringement occurred * (subject to the special conditions of Law 8).

If, after the ball is in play, the kicker deliberately handles the ball before it has touched another player, an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred *(subject to the special conditions of Law 8).

If, after the ball is in play, the goalkeeper deliberately handles the ball before it has touched another player an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team. The kick is taken from the place where the infringement occurred *(subject to the special conditions of Law 8).

For any other infringement of this Law, the kick is retaken.