



**BC SOCCER**

## **BCSA SMALL SIDED RULES OF THE GAME**

*A Component of BC Soccer's Referee Education Framework*

*Updated: Mar 2025*

*This document is interactive - click the text in the Table Of Contents to navigate directly to your desired section.*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>RULE 1: THE FIELD OF PLAY.....</b>	<b>6</b>
Field Surface.....	6
Field Markings.....	6
Retreat Line.....	6
Dimensions.....	6
The Corner Area.....	6
Goal Area.....	7
Penalty Area.....	7
Goals.....	7
<b>RULE 2: THE BALL.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>RULE 3: THE PLAYERS.....</b>	<b>9</b>
Substitutions.....	9
Changing The Goalkeeper.....	9
Offences & Sanctions.....	9
Players & Substitutes Sent Off (U11-U13 ONLY).....	9
Extra Persons On The Field Of Play.....	9
Player Outside The Field Of Play.....	10
Goal Scored With An Extra Person On The Field Of Play.....	10
<b>RULE 4: THE PLAYER'S EQUIPMENT.....</b>	<b>11</b>
Basic Compulsory Equipment Shall Consist Of.....	11
Shin Guards.....	11
Colours.....	11
<b>RULE 5: THE REFEREE.....</b>	<b>12</b>
The Authority Of The Referee.....	12
Powers & Duties.....	12
Disciplinary Action.....	12
Outside Interference.....	12
Referee's Equipment.....	13
Basic Compulsory Equipment Shall Consist Of.....	13
Referee Signals.....	13
<b>RULE 6: OTHER MATCH OFFICIALS.....</b>	<b>14</b>
Assistant Referee.....	14
Volunteer Linesperson.....	14
<b>RULE 7: DURATION OF GAME.....</b>	<b>15</b>
Allowance For Time Lost.....	15
Penalty Kick.....	15

**RULE 8: START AND RESTART OF PLAY..... 16**  
 Definition Of Kick-Off..... 16  
     Procedure..... 16  
 Kick-Off..... 16  
 Offences & Sanctions..... 16  
     U7-U10..... 16  
     U11 - U13..... 16  
     Definition Of Dropped Ball..... 16  
         Procedure..... 17

**RULE 9: BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY..... 18**  
 Ball Out Of Play..... 18  
 Ball In Play..... 18

**RULE 10: DETERMINING THE OUTCOME OF A MATCH..... 19**

**RULE 11: OFFSIDE..... 20**  
 U7 - U10..... 20  
 U11 - U13..... 20  
 Definition Of Offside Position..... 20  
 Offside Offence..... 20  
 No Offence..... 21

**RULE 12: FOULS AND MISCONDUCT.....22**  
 Fouls..... 22  
 Misconduct..... 22  
 Direct Free Kick Offences..... 22  
     U7 - U10..... 22  
     U11 - U13..... 22  
 Indirect Free Kick Offences..... 23  
     U7 - U13..... 23  
 Cautions and Sending Off (Yellow and Red Cards)..... 23  
     U7 - U10..... 23  
     U11 - U13..... 23  
 Cautionable Offences..... 24  
 Sending-Off Offences..... 24  
 Team Officials..... 25  
     Warning..... 25  
     Caution..... 25  
     Sending-off..... 25

**RULE 13: THE FREE KICK.....26**  
     U7 - U10.....26  
     U11 - U13.....26  
         Procedure.....26  
     Direct Free Kicks.....26  
     Indirect Free Kicks.....26  
**RULE 14: THE PENALTY KICK.....27**  
     U7 - U10.....27  
     U11 - U13.....27  
     Position of the Ball and Players.....27  
         Procedure.....27  
     Outcome Of The Penalty Kick.....28  
**RULE 15: KICK IN/THROW IN.....29**  
     U7 - U10 Kick In.....29  
     U11 - U13 Throw-In.....29  
     Failing To Complete The Throw In - U11.....29  
     Failing To Complete The Throw In - U12 & U13.....29  
**RULE 16: THE GOAL KICK.....30**  
     Procedure.....30  
     Encroachment Of Retreat Line.....30  
     U7 - U10.....30  
     U11 - U13.....30  
**RULE 17: THE CORNER KICK.....31**  
     U7 - U10.....31  
     U11 - U13.....31  
**APPENDIX A – FIELD MARKINGS AND DIMENSIONS.....32**  
**APPENDIX B - FIELD LAYOUT - DIMENSIONS BY GAME FORMAT AND AGE GROUP.....32**  
**WORKS CITED.....32**

## INTRODUCTION

This document supports the BC Soccer Small Sided Development Policy as a guideline for the implementation of rules for small-sided games for Under 13 age group and younger

While IFAB's Laws of the Game regulate 11 aside games, BC Soccer's Small Sided Rules regulate and cover the basic rules of play for Small-Sided Games.

These Rules are intended to support player, team and referee development; therefore, have been produced in conjunction with the BC Soccer, Small Sided Soccer Development Policy. These Rules are inspired by IFAB's Laws of the Game with adaptation specifically for Small Sided Game age groups of U13 and below.

The integrity of the Rules, and the referees who apply them, must always be protected and respected. In the absence of an assigned BC Soccer Referee (who has completed the Small Sided or Entry Level Clinic and registered), a nominated person may officiate the game if both teams agree before the kickoff. All those in authority, especially coaches and team captains, have a clear responsibility to the game to respect the officials and their decisions.

## RULE 1: THE FIELD OF PLAY

### Field Surface

The field of play must be a wholly natural, artificial, or combination of artificial and natural (hybrid system) playing surface. Some examples of these playing surfaces include grass, turf, and gravel etc.

### Field Markings

The field of play must be rectangular and marked with distinctive lines, and/or cones. These lines or markers belong to the areas of which they are boundaries. Cones must not be rigid or represent a danger to players.

The two longer lines are called touch lines. The two shorter lines are called goal lines.

The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line, which joins the midpoints of the two touchlines. The centre mark is at the midpoint of the halfway line. A circle with a radius of 7 metres for U7-U10 Games and 9 metres for U10-U13 Games is marked around it.

### Retreat Line

The retreat line is marked by a line across the field and/or cones placed 1 metre outside the touch line as shown in the Appendix A.

The table below shows where the retreat line should be marked based on the age group of the teams:

Age Group	Retreat Line
U6 & Under	N/A
U7 Through U13	2/3 Line (1/3 of Field)

### Dimensions

Minimum and Maximum field and goal dimensions are dependent on age of players, and game formats (i.e. number of players per side). These dimensions are provided in the Appendix A.

### The Corner Area

The corner area is defined by a quarter circle with a radius of 1 m (1 yd) from each corner flag post drawn inside the field of play. As shown below in Figure 1.

Corner flags may be used but are not mandatory, if used, they must be a minimum of 1.5 m (5ft) high.

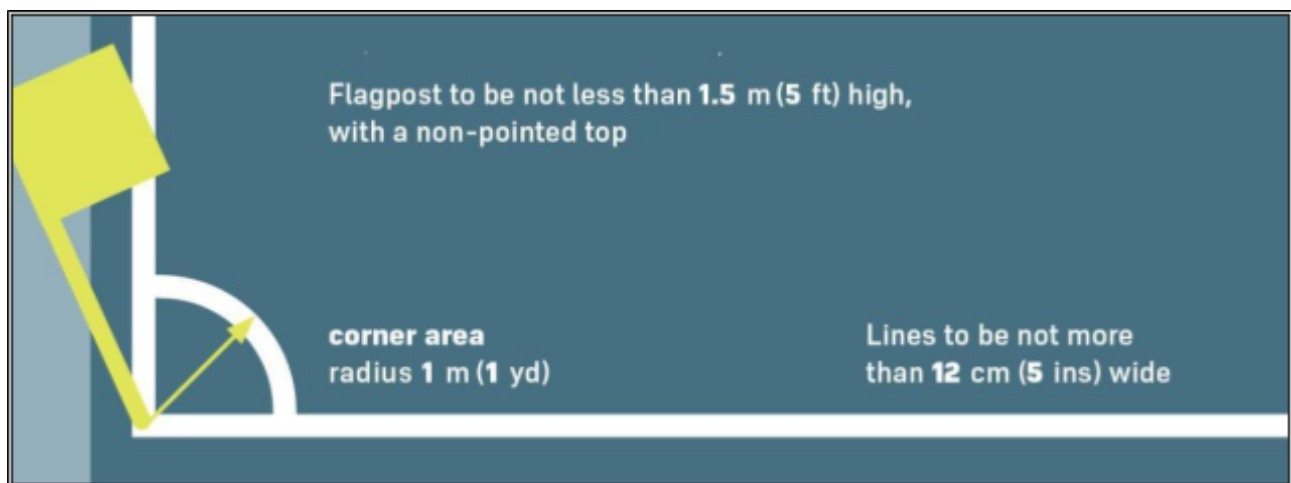


Figure 1. Example of corner area – (modified) from IFAB Laws of the Game

## Goal Area

The goal area is the same as the penalty area.

## Penalty Area

Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line, five (5) meters (or six (6) yards) from the inside of each goal post.

These lines extend into the field of play and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is the penalty area. The dimensions for the goal area or penalty area are provided in the Appendix A table.

The penalty mark is only needed for U11-U13 age groups and is 9 m from the goal line. Cones must not be used to indicate the penalty mark.



**Figure 2.** Diagram of Penalty Area

## Goals

A goal must be placed on the centre of the goal line.

A goal consists of two upright posts joined at the top by a horizontal crossbar, each post is the same distance on each side.

Nets may be attached to the goals and the ground behind the goal; they must be properly supported and must not interfere with the goalkeeper.

**Safety:** Goals including portable goals must be firmly secured to the ground.

## **RULE 2: THE BALL**

Ball sizes for specific age groups are provided in the Appendix B table. The ball must not be torn, water-logged, or in a condition which could endanger players.

If the ball becomes defective while in play (deflated, torn, water-logged or bursts) during the game, the play is stopped until a replacement ball is found. Play is restarted with a dropped ball at the place where the original ball became defective or to the goalkeeper if it happens inside the penalty area.



## RULE 3: THE PLAYERS

The number of players for each age group is listed in the Appendix A and B tables. Variations in the number of players are also listed. An asterisk denotes game formats that do not require goalkeepers.

### Substitutions

Unlimited substitutions may be made throughout the game. All substitutions are only allowed at the discretion of the Referee and the Referee shall be advised of all substitutions.

Substitutions can be made on any stoppage, but only after the referee has given permission. After the referee has given permission, the player being replaced shall leave the field. Once the player has left the field, the substitute may enter the field.

### Changing The Goalkeeper

Any of the players may change places with the goalkeeper if:

- The referee is informed before the change is made
- The change is made during a stoppage in play

### Offences & Sanctions

If a player changes places with the goalkeeper without the referee's permission, the referee:

- Allows play to continue
- Cautions both players when the ball is next out of play but not if the change occurred during half-time (including half-time of extra time) or the period between the end of the match and the start of extra time and/or kicks from the penalty mark

For any other offences:

- The players are cautioned
- Play is restarted with an indirect free kick, from the position of the ball when play was stopped

### Players & Substitutes Sent Off (U11-U13 ONLY)

A player who is sent off after the kick-off cannot be replaced

A substitute who is sent off before or after the kick-off may not be replaced.

### Extra Persons On The Field Of Play

The coach and other officials named on the team list (with the exception of players or substitutes) are team officials. Anyone not named on the team list as a player, substitute or team official is an outside agent.

If a team official, substitute, substituted or sent-off player or outside agent enters the field of play, the referee must:

- Only stop play if there is interference with play
- Have the person removed when play stops
- Take appropriate disciplinary action

If play is stopped and the interference was by:

- A team official, substitute, substituted or sent-off player, play restarts with a direct free kick or penalty kick
- An outside agent, play restarts with a dropped ball

If a ball is going into the goal and the interference does not prevent a defending player playing the ball, the goal is awarded if the ball enters the goal (even if contact was made with the ball) unless the interference was by the attacking team.

## Player Outside The Field Of Play

If a player who requires the referee's permission to re-enter the field of play re-enters without the referee's permission, the referee must:

- Stop play (not immediately if the player does not interfere with play or a match official or if the advantage can be applied)
- Caution the player for entering the field of play without permission

If the referee stops play, it must be restarted:

- With a direct free kick from the position of the interference
- With an indirect free kick from the position of the ball when play was stopped if there was no interference

A player who crosses a boundary line as part of a playing movement does not commit an offence.

## Goal Scored With An Extra Person On The Field Of Play

If, after a goal is scored, the referee realizes, before play restarts, that an extra person was on the field of play when the goal was scored:

- The referee must disallow the goal if the extra person was:
  - A player, substitute, substituted player, sent-off player or team official of the team that scored the goal; play is restarted with a direct free kick from the position of the extra person
  - An outside agent who interfered with play unless a goal results as outlined above in 'Extra persons on the field of play'; play is restarted with a dropped ball
- The referee must allow the goal if the extra person was:
  - A player, substitute, substituted player, sent-off player or team official of the team that conceded the goal
  - An outside agent who did not interfere with play

In all cases, the referee must have the extra person removed from the field of play.

If, after a goal is scored and play has restarted, the referee realises an extra person was on the field of play when the goal was scored, the goal cannot be disallowed. If the extra person is still on the field the referee must:

- Stop play
- Have the extra person removed
- Restart with a dropped ball or free kick as appropriate

The referee must report the incident to the appropriate authorities.

## **RULE 4: THE PLAYER'S EQUIPMENT**

Players shall not wear anything which endangers themselves or other players.

### **Basic Compulsory Equipment Shall Consist Of**

- A jersey or shirt with sleeves – pinnies may also be used to distinguish colors
- Shorts
- Socks
- Appropriate footwear (the footwear shall be suitable to the field conditions and player safety) No metal studs are permitted
- Shin Guards

### **Shin Guards**

- Must be completely covered by the socks
- Are to be made of rubber, plastic or a similar suitable material
- Must provide a reasonable degree of protection

### **Colours**

- The two teams must wear colours that distinguish them from each other and also the referee
- Each goalkeeper must wear colours which are distinguishable from all outfield players and the referee

Non-uniform clothing, which does not pose a danger (pants, gloves, toques), are allowed based on weather conditions, but jerseys/pinnies must still distinguish teams.

A player who is asked to leave the field of play because of defective or dangerous equipment may not re-enter the field of play until the referee has checked and is satisfied that the equipment is safe.

A player who enters without permission must be cautioned, and if play is stopped to issue the caution, an indirect free kick is awarded from the position of the ball when play was stopped, unless there was interference, in which case a direct free kick (or penalty kick) is awarded from the position of the interference. Jewelry is not permitted. Using tape to cover jewelry is not permitted. Religious items such as head scarves or turbans are permitted. Medic alert bracelets may be worn if they are tight fitting and taped to prevent insertion of a finger. Non- dangerous protective equipment, for example headgear, facemasks and knee and arm protectors made of soft, lightweight padded material is permitted as are goalkeepers' caps and sports spectacles. Referees have the final say on the safety of equipment.

## RULE 5: THE REFEREE

### The Authority Of The Referee

The referee's role is to enforce the Small Sided Rules, and to help keep players safe. Team officials shall conduct themselves in a responsible manner and are subject to discipline by the referee. The decisions of the referee regarding facts connected with play, including whether or not a goal is scored and the result of the game, are final. The decisions of the referee, and all other game officials, must be respected at all times!

### Powers & Duties

The Referee:

- Enforces the Rules of the Small Sided Game.
- Acts as timekeeper, keeps a record of the game and reports in writing, if required, to the Club or appropriate authority, any misconduct by players, team officials, parents, spectators or other persons which takes place on the field of play or its vicinity at any time during the game or when the referee is present at the field.
- Stops the game immediately if a player appears to be injured and ensures that any player bleeding from a wound leaves the field of play. The player may only return on receiving a signal from the referee, who must be satisfied that the bleeding has stopped.
- Allows play to continue when an offence occurs and the non-offending team will benefit from the advantage, and penalises the offence if the anticipated advantage does not ensue at that time or within a few seconds
- Controls who may enter or leave the field of play.
- Signals to start the game and to restart it after a stoppage, suspends or abandons the game for any offences i.e. Outside interference.
- Decides if the field of play and applicable equipment is safe for play.

### Disciplinary Action

- Punishes the more serious offence, in terms of sanction, restart, physical severity and tactical impact, when more than one offence occurs at the same time
- Has the authority to take disciplinary action from entering the field of play for the pre-match inspection until leaving the field of play after the match ends (including kicks from the penalty mark). If, before entering the field of play at the start of the match, a player commits a sending-off offence, the referee has the authority to prevent the player taking part in the match); the referee will report any other misconduct
- Takes action against team officials who fail to act in a responsible manner and warns or shows a yellow card for a caution or a red card for a sending-off from the field of play and its immediate surrounds, including the technical area; if the offender cannot be identified, the senior coach present in the technical area will receive the sanction.

### Outside Interference

- Stops, suspends or abandons the match for any offences or because of outside interference e.g. if:
  - The floodlights are inadequate
  - An object thrown by a spectator hits a match official, a player or team official, the referee may allow the match to continue, or stop, suspend or abandon it depending on the severity of the incident
  - A spectator blows a whistle which interferes with play - play is stopped and restarted with a dropped ball
  - An extra ball, other object or animal enters the field of play during the match, the referee must:
    - Stop play (and restart with a dropped ball) only if it interferes with play - unless the ball is going into the goal and the interference does not prevent a defending player playing the ball, the goal is awarded if the ball enters the goal (even if contact was made with the ball) unless the interference was by the attacking team.
    - Allow play to continue if it does not interfere with play and have it removed at the earliest possible opportunity
    - Allows no unauthorised persons to enter the field of play.

## Referee's Equipment

### Basic Compulsory Equipment Shall Consist Of

- Shirt
- Shorts
- Socks
- Whistle
- Watch
- Red and Yellow Cards
- Notebook and Pencil (or other means of keeping a record of the game).
- Coin

A Small sided referee badge is to be worn on the left side of the chest.

## Referee Signals

Refer to graphics below for approved IFAB Laws of the Game referee signals.



Penalty kick



Indirect free kick



Direct free kick



Advantage (1)



Corner kick



Goal kick



Red and yellow card

## **RULE 6: OTHER MATCH OFFICIALS**

### **Assistant Referee**

Assistant Referees are not required in small sided soccer; but if used, Assistant Referees indicate when:

- The whole of the ball leaves the field of play and which team is entitled to a corner kick, goal kick or throw-in/kick-in.
- A player in an offside position may be penalized.
- A substitution is requested.
  - The Assistant Referee's assistance also includes monitoring the substitution procedure
- At penalty kicks, if the goalkeeper moves off the goal line before the ball is kicked and if the ball crosses the line.

### **Volunteer Linesperson**

A volunteer linesperson (parents or spectators) can be used to determine when the ball leaves the field of play. A volunteer linesperson may not indicate offside decisions. A head coach may not act as a Volunteer Linesperson.

The referee may ask a volunteer linesperson which player the ball last touched before it left the play. The referee has the authority to change the Volunteer Linesperson at their discretion. The referee's decision is final.

## **RULE 7: DURATION OF GAME**

A game consists of two equal halves, and half time break. The duration of the game must conform to the times in Appendix B.

### **Allowance For Time Lost**

Allowance is made by the referee in each half for all playing time lost in that half through:

- Substitutions
- Assessment and/or removal of injured players
- Wasting time
- Disciplinary sanctions
- Medical stoppages permitted by competition rules e.g. 'drinks' breaks (which should not exceed one minute) and 'cooling' breaks (ninety seconds to three minutes)
- Any other cause, including any significant delay to a restart

### **Penalty Kick**

If a penalty kick has to be taken or retaken, the half is extended until the penalty kick is completed

## RULE 8: START AND RESTART OF PLAY

### Definition Of Kick-Off

A kick-off is a way of starting or restarting play:

- At the start of a game
- After a goal has been score
- At the start of the second half

A goal may be scored directly against the opponents from a kick-off for U11-U13 games only

### Procedure

Before the kickoff to the start of the game:

- The kick-off shall be decided by the toss of a coin.
- The team that wins the toss decides to take the kick-off or decides which goal to attack. The other team selects the kick-off or goal, whichever was not selected by the team that won the toss.

### Kick-Off

- All players must be in their own half of the field of play except the kicker who may stand in the other half to take the kick-off. The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves
- All players opposing the team taking the kick-off shall be at least the following distances from the ball until it is kicked and clearly moves:
  - U7 – U10 - 5 metres
  - U11 - U13 - 9 metres
- The ball must be stationary on the centre mark
- The referee signals the kick-off by blowing the whistle.
- After a goal has been scored, the game shall be restarted by a kick-off taken by the team against which the goal was scored.
- After the first half of play, the teams shall change halves and the kick-off shall be taken by the team that did not take the kick-off to start the game.
- For U 11-U13, a goal may be scored directly against the opponents from the kick-off; if the ball directly enters the kicker's goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opponents
- For U10 and below, a goal may not be scored directly from a Kick-off; if the ball directly enters the opponents' goal, a goal kick is awarded; if the ball directly enters the kicker's goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opponents

## Offences & Sanctions

### U7-U10

Should the player taking the kick-off touch the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player, the team will retake the kick-off.

### U11 - U13

Should the player taking the kick-off touch the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player, an indirect free kick shall be awarded to the opposing team. If the player's second touch is with the hands, a direct free kick shall be awarded.

In the event of any other kick-off procedure offence, the kick-off is retaken.

### Definition Of Dropped Ball

A dropped ball is a method of restarting play when, while the ball is still in play, the referee is required to stop play temporarily for any reason not mentioned elsewhere in the Rules of the Small Sided Game. Some examples of this are an injury, if the ball becomes defective or an interference by an outside agent (i.e. dog runs across the field or another ball enters the field of play).



## Procedure

The referee drops the ball at the place where it was located when play was stopped, unless play was stopped inside the penalty area.

- A drop ball will be awarded if there is an injury, interference by an outside agent, or any other reason that the referee stops play which is not a foul or the ball leaving the field of play. The ball will be dropped to one player of the team that last possessed it; except if play was stopped when the ball was in the penalty area, then the ball is dropped to the goalkeeper. The goalkeeper may pick up the ball so it is dropped.
- All players must be 4 metres away from the player to whom the ball is dropped. Play restarts when the dropped ball touches the ground. If the ball is touched before hitting the ground the ball is re-dropped.
- A goal cannot be score directly from a Drop Ball

## **RULE 9: BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY**

### **Ball Out Of Play**

The ball is OUT of play when the whole of the ball has crossed the goal line, or touchline, whether on the ground or in the air; or play has been stopped by the referee.

### **Ball In Play**

The ball is IN play when it is within the field of play, including when it rebounds into play from a goalpost, a crossbar, or a corner flag post. The ball is also in play if it hits the referee and the referee does not stop the game.

## **RULE 10: DETERMINING THE OUTCOME OF A MATCH**

A goal is scored when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, between the goalposts and under the crossbar, provided that no offence has been committed by the team scoring the goal. The referee is the sole judge as to whether a goal has been scored.

If the goalkeeper throws the ball directly into the opponents' goal, a goal kick is awarded.

If a referee signals a goal before the ball has passed wholly over the goal line, play is restarted with a dropped ball.

When goalposts are not available and cones are used instead, a goal is scored when, if in the opinion of the referee, the whole of the ball crosses over the goal line between or above the cones, below two (2) meters.

## RULE 11: OFFSIDE

### U7 - U10

Do not play with the offside rules. A player in these age groups cannot be offside.

### U11 - U13

Play with the offside rules in the attacking third of the field. The offside line is the same line as the retreat line.

### Definition Of Offside Position

A player is in an offside position if:

- Any part of the head, body or feet is in the attacking third of the opponents' and
- Any part of the head, body or feet is nearer to the opponents' goal line than both the ball and the second-last opponent.

The hands and arms of all players, including the goalkeepers, are not considered. A player is not in an offside position if level with the:

- Second-last opponent or;
- Last two opponents

### Offside Offence

A player in an offside position at the moment the ball is played or touched by a team-mate is only penalised on becoming involved in active play by:

- Interfering with play by playing or touching a ball passed or touched by a teammate or
- Interfering with an opponent by
  - preventing an opponent from playing or being able to play the ball by clearly obstructing the opponent's line of vision or
  - challenging an opponent for the ball or
  - clearly attempting to play a ball which is close when this action impacts on an opponent or
  - making an obvious action which clearly impacts on the ability of an opponent to play the ball
- Gaining an advantage from being in an offside position

It is not an offence to be in an offside position. When an offside offence occurs, the referee awards an indirect free kick to be taken from the position of the offending player when the ball was last played by one of their teammates.

A player in an offside position receiving the ball from an opponent who deliberately plays the ball, including by deliberate handball, is not considered to have gained an advantage, unless it was a deliberate save by any opponent.

In situations where:

- a player moving from, or standing in, an offside position is in the way of an opponent and interferes with the movement of the opponent towards the ball, this is an offside offence if it impacts on the ability of the opponent to play or challenge for the ball; if the player moves into the way of an opponent and impedes the opponent's progress (e.g. blocks the opponent), the offence should be penalized under Law 12
- a player in an offside position is moving towards the ball with the intention of playing the ball and is fouled before playing or attempting to play the ball, or challenging an opponent for the ball, the foul is penalized as it has occurred before the offside offence
- an offence is committed against a player in an offside position who is already playing or attempting to play the ball, or challenging an opponent for the ball, the offside offence is penalized as it has occurred before the foul challenge

## No Offence

There is no offside offence if a player receives the ball directly from:

- A goal kick
- A throw-in
- A corner kick
- A kick off
- A penalty kick
- A dropped ball

## RULE 12: FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

### Fouls

A foul is an unfair act by a player, deemed by the referee to violate the game's rules and interferes with the active play of the game. Fouls are punished by awarding a free kick (indirect or direct) or a penalty kick if the foul occurred in the penalty area to the opposing team. A list of offences that are fouls are detailed below.

### Misconduct

Any conduct by a player that is deemed by the referee to warrant a disciplinary sanction (caution or dismissal). Misconduct may include acts which are, additionally, fouls. Unlike fouls, misconduct may occur at any time, including when the ball is out of play, during half-time and before and after the game, and both players and substitutes may be sanctioned for misconduct.

Misconduct will result in the player either receiving a caution (indicated by a yellow card) or being dismissed ("sent off") from the field (indicated by a red card).

### Direct Free Kick Offences

#### U7 - U10

There are no direct free kicks awarded for U7-U10. All of the offences listed below that result in a direct free kick for ages U11-U13 result in an indirect free kick for U7-U10

#### U11 - U13

A direct free kick is awarded if, when the ball is in play, a player commits any of the following offences against an opponent in a careless, reckless, or excessive manner:

- A. Charges;
- B. Jumps at;
- C. Kicks or attempts to kick;
- D. Pushes;
- E. Strikes or attempts to strike;
- F. Tackles or challenges; or
- G. Trips or attempts to trip

A direct free kick is also awarded if a player commits any of the following offences:

- H. Handles the ball; deliberately touches the ball with their hand/arm, including moving the hand/arm towards the ball (except for the goalkeeper within their own penalty area);
- I. Holds an opponent;
- J. Impedes an opponent with contact;
- K. Bites or spits at someone; or
- L. Throws an object at the ball, an opponent, or referee.

If any of the offences above occur inside the penalty area, a **penalty kick** is awarded.

## Indirect Free Kick Offences

### U7 - U13

The below offences result in an indirect free kick for all age groups.

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

- M.** Plays in a dangerous manner (without contacting another player);
- N.** Impedes the progress of an opponent (without contact);
- O.** Uses offensive, insulting, or abusive language or is guilty of dissent;
- P.** Prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from the hands; or
- Q.** Challenges the goalkeeper for the ball when the goalkeeper is in control of the ball with the hand(s) including when the ball is between the hand and any surface or the goalkeeper is touching the ball with any part of the hands.

An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a goalkeeper, inside their goal/penalty area commits any of the following offences:

- R.** Handles the ball after it has been deliberately kicked to the goalkeeper by a teammate; or
- S.** Touches the ball with their hands having received it directly from a throw-in taken by a teammate.

## Cautions and Sending Off (Yellow and Red Cards)

### U7 - U10

- Misconduct: NO cards are shown to players in these age groups. It is recommended that coaches should recognize serious foul play and substitute off an offending player.
- A team official guilty of misconduct may be shown a yellow card (caution) or red card (sending-off).

### U11 - U13

- Misconduct: caution (yellow) and sending off (red) cards are used for players.
- A team official guilty of misconduct will be shown a yellow card (caution) or red card (sending-off)

## Cautionable Offences

A player is cautioned if guilty of:

- Delaying the restart of play
- Dissent by word or action
- Entering, re-entering or deliberately leaving the field of play without the referee's permission
- Failing to respect the required distance when play is restarted with a dropped ball, corner kick, free kick or throw-in
- Persistent offences (no specific number or pattern of offences constitutes 'persistent')
- Unsporting behaviour, including the following:
  - Attempts to deceive the referee, e.g. by feigning injury or pretending to have been fouled (simulation)
  - Changes places with the goalkeeper during play or without the referee's permission (see Law 3)
  - Commits in a reckless manner a direct free kick offence
  - Handles the ball to interfere with or stop a promising attack
  - Commits any other offence which interferes with or stops a promising attack, except where the referee awards a penalty kick for an offence which was an attempt to play the ball
  - Denies an opponent an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by an offence which was an attempt to play the ball and the referee awards a penalty kick
  - Handles the ball in an attempt to score a goal (whether or not the attempt is successful) or in an unsuccessful attempt to prevent a goal
  - Makes unauthorised marks on the field of play
  - Plays the ball when leaving the field of play after being given permission to leave
  - Shows a lack of respect for the game
  - Initiates a deliberate trick for the ball to be passed (including from a free kick or goal kick) to the goalkeeper with the head, chest, knee etc. to circumvent the Law, whether or not the goalkeeper touches the ball with the hands; the goalkeeper is cautioned if responsible for initiating the deliberate trick
  - Verbally distracts an opponent during play or at a restart

A substitute or substituted player is cautioned if guilty of:

- Delaying the restart of play
- Dissent by word or action
- Entering or reentering the field of play without the referee's permission
- Unsporting behaviour

## Sending-Off Offences

Sending-off offences include (but are not limited to):

- Denying the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by committing a deliberate handball offence (except a goalkeeper within their penalty area)
- Denying the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by committing a non-deliberate handball offence outside their own penalty area
- Denying a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity to an opponent whose overall movement is towards the offender's goal by an offence punishable by a free kick (unless as outlined below)
- Serious foul play
- Biting or spitting at someone
- Violent conduct
- Using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or action(s)
- Receiving a second caution in the same match



## Team Officials

### Warning

The following offences should usually result in a warning; repeated or blatant offences should result in a caution or sending-off:

- Entering the field of play in a respectful/non-confrontational manner
- Failing to cooperate with a match official e.g. ignoring an instruction/request from an assistant referee or the fourth official
- Minor/low-level disagreement (by word or action) with a decision
- Occasionally leaving the confines of the technical area without committing another offence

### Caution

Caution offences include (but are not limited to):

- Clearly/persistently not respecting the confines of their team's technical area
- Delaying the restart of play by their team
- Deliberately entering the technical area of the opposing team (non-confrontational)
- Dissent by word or action including:
  - throwing/kicking drinks bottles or other objects
  - action(s) which show(s) a clear lack of respect for the match official(s) e.g. sarcastic clapping
- Entering the referee review area (RRA)
- Excessively/persistently gesturing for a red or yellow card
- Excessively showing the 'TV signal' for a VAR 'review'
- Acting in a provocative or inflammatory manner
- Persistent unacceptable behaviour (including repeated warning offences)
- Showing a lack of respect for the game

### Sending-off

Sending-off offences include (but are not limited to):

- Delaying the restart of play by the opposing team e.g. holding onto the ball, kicking the ball away, obstructing the movement of a player
- Deliberately leaving the technical area to:
  - Show dissent towards, or remonstrate with, a match official
  - Act in a provocative or inflammatory manner
- Entering the opposing technical area in an aggressive or confrontational manner
- Deliberately throwing/kicking an object onto the field of play
- Entering the field of play to:
  - Confront a match official (including at half-time and full-time)
  - Interfere with play, an opposing player or a match official
- Entering the video operation room (VOR)
- Physical or aggressive behaviour (including spitting or biting) towards an opposing player, substitute, team official, match official, spectator or any other person (e.g. ball boy/girl, security or competition official etc.)
- Receiving a second caution in the same match
- Using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or action(s)
- Using unauthorised electronic or communication equipment and/or behaving in an inappropriate manner as a result of using electronic or communication equipment
- Violent conduct

## RULE 13: THE FREE KICK

### U7 - U10

All free kicks are taken as indirect free kicks (even if the offence typically requires a direct free kick); direct free kicks and penalty kicks are not awarded in these age groups.

If the kicker touches the ball a second time before it touches another player, a retake is permitted. Subsequent offences will be penalized with an indirect free kick to the opposing team.

### U11 - U13

Free kicks are taken as direct or indirect free kicks as outlined in Rule 12. If the kicker touches the ball a second time before it touches another player, an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team. If the second touch is a handball, a direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team unless the kicker is a goalkeeper inside the goalkeeper's penalty area in which case an indirect free kick is awarded.

#### Procedure

For all free kicks, the ball must be stationary when the kick is taken, and the kicker must not touch the ball again until it has touched another player. The ball is in play when the ball is kicked and clearly moves.

All opponents shall be not less than the following distances from the ball until it has been kicked and clearly moves:

- U7 - U10 - 7 metres
- U11 - U13 - 9 metres
- For any infringement of this rule, the free kick shall be retaken.
- The ball is in play when it has been kicked and clearly moves.
- A player taking a free kick shall not touch the ball a second time until it has been touched by another player.

For a free kick taken by the defending team inside their penalty area, the ball may be placed anywhere inside the penalty area. All opponents must be outside the penalty area.

#### Direct Free Kicks

- If a direct free kick is kicked directly into the opponent's goal, a goal is awarded.
- If a direct free kick is kicked directly into a team's own goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opposing team.

#### Indirect Free Kicks

- A goal cannot be scored directly from an indirect free kick. If an indirect free kick is kicked directly into the opponent's goal, no goal is scored and play restarts with a goal kick. If an indirect free kick is kicked directly into the team's own goal, a corner kick is awarded.
- The indirect free kick shall be taken from the place where the offence occurred. If the indirect free kick occurred in the penalty area, the free kick shall be taken from the point where the offence occurred but not closer than 5m from the goal line.

## **RULE 14: THE PENALTY KICK**

A penalty kick is awarded when a player from the defending team commits a direct free kick offence within their own penalty area.

### **U7 - U10**

There are NO penalty kicks awarded.

### **U11 - U13**

Penalty kicks are awarded.

### **Position of the Ball and Players**

The ball must be placed on the penalty mark. Players taking the kick must be properly identified. Defending goalkeeper:

- Must have at least one foot on, or in line with, their goal line, facing the kicker, and between the goalposts until the ball has been kicked.

The players other than the kicker must be located:

- Inside the field of play.
- Outside the penalty area.
- Behind the penalty mark and at least 9 metres from the penalty mark.

### **Procedure**

- After the players have taken positions, the referee signals for the penalty kick to be taken by blowing the whistle.
- The player taking the penalty kick must kick the ball forward.
- The kicker must not play the ball again until it has touched another player.
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves.
- If, after the penalty kick has been taken, the kicker touches the ball again before it has touched another player, an indirect free kick (or direct free kick for a handball offence is awarded)

## Outcome Of The Penalty Kick

Action	Goal	No Goal
Encroachment By Attacker	Penalty Is Retaken	Indirect Free Kick
Encroachment By Defender	Goal	Penalty Is Retaken
Encroachment By Defending & Attacking Player	Penalty Is Retaken	Penalty Is Retaken
Offence By Goalkeeper	Goal	Not Saved: Penalty is not retaken (unless kicker is clearly impacted)  Saved: Penalty is retaken and warning for goalkeeper; caution for any further offence(s)
Goalkeeper & Kicker Offend At The Same Time	Indirect Free Kick & Caution For Kicker	Indirect Free Kick & Caution For Kicker
Ball Kicked Backwards	Indirect Free Kick	Indirect Free Kick
'Illegal' Feinting	Indirect Free Kick & Caution For Kicker	Indirect Free Kick & Caution For Kicker
Wrong Kicker	Indirect Free Kick & Caution For Wrong Kicker	Indirect Free Kick & Caution For Wrong Kicker

## **RULE 15: KICK IN/THROW IN**

A kick-in/ throw-in are methods of restarting play. A kick-in or throw-in is awarded when the whole of the ball has crossed the touch line either on the ground or in the air. These restarts are given to the opponents of the team who last touched the ball before it went out of play.

A goal cannot be scored directly from a Kick-in or Throw-in. A goal kick is awarded if the ball enters the goal directly from a Kick-in or Throw-in

### **U7 - U10 Kick In**

A kick in, replaces the throw-in at this age group. The ball shall be kicked in from the point where it left the field of play.

The player taking the Kick-in shall:

- Face the field of play;
- Kick the ball from on, or behind, the touch line.
- The ball is in play immediately after it enters the field of play.
- If the player taking the kick-in touches the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player, a free kick shall be awarded to the opposing team.
- At the taking of a kick-in, all opponents must be at least 2 metres from the ball

### **U11 - U13 Throw-In**

The player taking the throw-in shall:

- Face the field of play;
- Have part of each foot on the touch line or on the ground outside the touch line;
- Throw the ball using both hands;
- Deliver the ball from behind and over their head.
- The ball is in play immediately after it enters the field of play.
- If the player taking the throw-in touches the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player, an indirect free kick shall be awarded to the opposing team.
- At the taking of a throw-in, all opponents must be at least 2 metres from the location of the throw-in.

### **Failing To Complete The Throw In - U11**

If the player fails to complete the throw-in correctly, their team shall be permitted a second attempt. If the second attempt is unsuccessful, the throw-in shall be awarded to the opposing team.

### **Failing To Complete The Throw In - U12 & U13**

If the player fails to complete the throw-in correctly, the throw-in shall be awarded to the opposing team.

## **RULE 16: THE GOAL KICK**

A goal kick is a method of restarting play.

A goal kick is awarded when the whole of the ball has crossed the goal line either on the ground or in the air, was last touched by the attacking team, and a goal has not been scored.

### **Procedure**

The ball is kicked from any point within the goal area or penalty area by a player of the defending team

- The ball is in play once it has been kicked and clearly moves.
- All opposing players must be on their side of the retreat line and cannot pursue the ball until:
  - The ball is touched by a teammate of the kicker;
  - The ball travels over the retreat line; or
  - The ball leaves the field of play.

### **Encroachment Of Retreat Line**

If the opposing team encroaches across the retreat line before one of the above conditions, the referee shall stop play and allow a retake of the goal kick.

If the opposing team repeatedly commits offences of the retreat line, an indirect free kick shall be awarded at the place where the offence occurred.

### **U7 - U10**

A goal cannot be scored directly from a goal kick. If the ball enters the opponents' goal directly from the goal kick, a goal kick is awarded to the opponents. If the ball enters the goal of the team taking the goal kick, a corner kick is awarded to the opponents.

### **U11 - U13**

A goal may be scored directly from a goal kick, but only against the opposing team. if the ball directly enters the kicker's goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opponents.

## **RULE 17: THE CORNER KICK**

A corner kick is awarded when the whole of the ball has crossed the goal line, either on the ground or in the air, having last been touched by a defending player, and a goal has not been scored.

### **U7 - U10**

A goal cannot be scored directly from a corner kick.

### **U11 - U13**

A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick.

- The corner kick shall be taken from inside the corner arc (within one metre of the corner flag on the field of play) nearest to where the ball crossed the goal line.
- All opponents shall be no less than the following from the ball until it has been kicked.
  - U7 - U10 - 7 metres
  - U11 - U13 - 9 metres
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves.
- If the player taking the corner kick touches the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player, an indirect free kick shall be awarded to the opposing team. For U11-U13 games, if the player's second touch is with their hands, a direct free kick shall be awarded (or a penalty kick if the offence occurs in their penalty area).

## APPENDIX A – FIELD MARKINGS AND DIMENSIONS

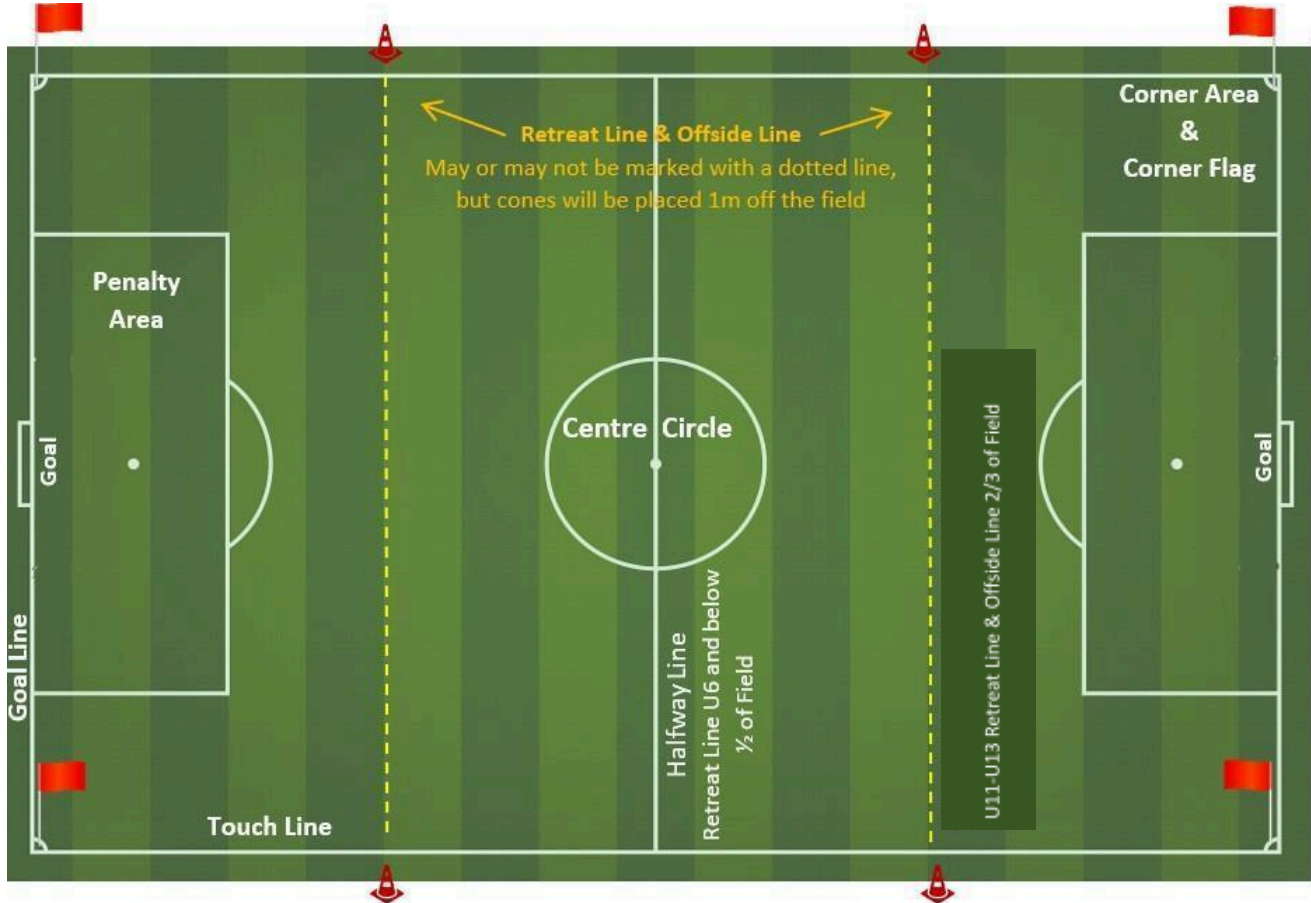


Figure 5. Small Sided Field Layout

## APPENDIX B - FIELD LAYOUT - DIMENSIONS BY GAME FORMAT AND AGE GROUP

Please refer to the [BC Soccer Small Sided Development Policy](#) and see chart below.

Game Format	Goal Area/Penalty Area Dimensions	Center Circle Radius & Free Kick Distance
5v5 6v6	Goal Area: 10m From Post On Goal Line & 10m Into Field	7m
7v7	Goal Area: 10m From Post On Goal Line & 10m Into Field	7m
8v8	Penalty Area: 11m From Post On Goal line & 11m Into Field	9m
9v9	Penalty Area: 11m From Post On Goal Line & 11m Into Field	9m

## WORKS CITED

(2024-25) IFAB. [Laws of the Game](#)

(2024, May). Ontario Soccer. [Small Sided Laws of the Game](#)