

**FAIRFIELD SPORTS**  
**SOCCER RULES: 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Divisions**  
**August 2025**  
**Adapted from the US Soccer Policy: Rules of the Game**  
**April 2022**

**INTRODUCTION**

All players, coaches, and parents will adhere to the Fairfield Sports Association Soccer Code of Conduct. Any violations of the Code of Conduct may result in removal from fields for the parent and potentially the player.

**1) THE FIELD OF PLAY.**

- a) The field of play shall be 90 by 120 feet.
- b) The team is allowed to have one coach and one assistant coach on the same sideline as the players.
- c) All parents should be on the opposite side of the players. No parents or coaches are allowed near the goals.
- d) There are **3 new areas** added to the field of play for the 1<sup>st</sup> grade divisions.
  - i) **Goalkeeper Semi-Circle**
    - (1) Smaller of the two semi-circles closest to the defending team's goal.
    - (2) This area is for the goalkeeper only. If the opposing (attacking) team attempts to play the ball or does play the ball, it will be a spot foul for the defensive team, giving them a free kick from the spot of the foul. We are trying to limit injuries to goalkeepers while allowing them the ability to learn how to go after the ball when a potential scoring opportunity for the other team presents itself. This "safe" area will hopefully give them the confidence to go after the ball without feeling like they may get hurt.
  - ii) **Penalty Area Semi-circle**
    - (1) This is the larger of the two semi-circles. This is the area where the goalkeeper can play the ball with his hands to make a save. The opposing (attacking) team is allowed in this area and is allowed to challenge for the ball unless...
      - (a) The goalkeeper has his hand on the ball.
      - (b) The attacking player is offside.
      - (c) Or the ball is being brought back into play from an out of bounds situation.
  - iii) **Yellow Line – (build up line)**
    - (1) This is the area where the opposing (attacking) team needs to retreat to when the following happens.
      - (a) The ball goes out of bounds for a goal kick.
      - (b) The defensive team's goalkeeper has the ball and is attempting to put the ball back into play.
    - (2) If the opposing (attacking) team does not retreat to behind the yellow line, play will be stopped and not resumed until all attacking players are behind the yellow line.

## 2) THE BALL.

- a) Use size 3 ball. If both coaches are in agreement, a size 4 ball may be used towards the end of the season.
- b) The ball must be properly inflated (~10 psi) and be firm to the touch.

## 3) PLAYERS.

- a) Teams will play 6 v 6, inclusive of the goalkeeper.
- b) Roster permitting, each child will play the equivalent of 1 full half.
  - i) Goalkeepers are only allowed to play 1 half in goal.
- c) A game may not start unless each team has at least four (4) players on the field. The minimum number on the field shall be four (4) players including the goalkeeper. Players who arrive late may enter the game when the ball is not in play and approved by the referee.
- d) Substitutions are unlimited.
  - i) They can be made at any natural stoppage of play. Substitutions need to be cleared by the referee before play resumes. Oncoming players can only enter the field when the player coming off the field is out of play. Any endline or sideline is acceptable for being out of play.
- e) Only players on the league's roster shall represent that team on the field. Under no circumstances will un-registered players be allowed to play in any games.
- f) One player from each team must be designated as a goalkeeper. The goalkeeper's attire shall be such that they are easily distinguishable from their teammates.
- g) If a team has two too few players to start a game, they will forfeit the game with a losing score of 1-0.

#### 4) PLAYERS' EQUIPMENT.

- a) Coaches are responsible for checking their players' equipment before each game.
- b) Shorts, socks, a team jersey, cleats, and shin guards are required.
  - i) The league will provide team shirts and shorts.
  - ii) Socks MUST be worn OVER the shin guards. This is for the protection of all players.
  - iii) A goal keeper's jersey will be provided by the league. It will be bright in color and contrast to all the other players jerseys.
  - iv) Shin guards shall be made of suitable material (rubber, plastic, polyurethane, or similar substance) and shall afford a reasonable degree of protection.
  - v) Cleats are required, they must be soccer cleats. No stud in the front center of the cleat like used in baseball and football. If a player does not have cleats, that child may play, but the coach should strongly advise the parents to have cleats for safety purposes.
- c) Players are not allowed to wear items that could cause harm to themselves or other players. Think of watches, rings, or shiny things. (e.g., rings, necklaces, bracelets, earrings, hair clips...etc.)
- d) **Earrings are not allowed during game play.** Covering the earring with tape is not acceptable as a cover-up. The backing of the earring can push through the tape and become a hazard.
- e) Long hair must be tied up and back with a safe, elastic-type band.

#### 5) Game Play Infractions

- a) Coaches will referee games in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade division.
- b) Penalties
- c) There are many ways to commit a penalty during the game. Some result in a "Direct Free Kick" or in an "In-Direct Free Kick". If a penalty is committed in the penalty area and is deemed a direct free kick, a shot from the penalty spot will be awarded. It is the referee's discretion to award a direct or in-direct free kick.
- d) A penalty will result if any of the following acts are committed during game play.
  - i) Kicking an opponent
  - ii) Tripping
  - iii) Charging into an opponent
  - iv) Pushing
  - v) Tackling from behind
  - vi) Tackling an opponent and you contact the player prior to making contact with the ball.
  - vii) Holding
  - viii) Touching the ball with your hands (if you are not the goalkeeper)

**6) DURATION OF THE GAME. USYSA Rule 303 Section 1**

- a) The games shall be divided into 4 equal quarters of 10 minutes each.
- b) Substitutions may be made any time the ball is not in play, or a player has been injured. All substitutions need the referee's approval.
- c) Halftime shall last no more than 5 minutes.

**7) START AND RESTART OF PLAY.**

- a) **Kick-off**. A kick-off is taken at the center mark to start a game, to restart play after a goal is scored, and to start the second half.
  - i) The designated home team may elect to kick-off to start the game, elect to start the second half kickoff, or pick the side of the field they want to defend. If the home team elects to pick which side they defend, the away team can elect what half to start the ball with.
  - ii) **The higher seed in the tournament will be considered the home team.**
  - iii) During kick-offs, all players must be in their own halves of the field and defenders must be outside the center circle.
  - iv) The player kicking off may not play the ball again until it touches another player of either team.
  - v) The ball is in play once it is kicked and moves either forward, backward, or sideways.
  - vi) **Goals may not be scored directly from a kick-off in the 1ST GRADE divisions.**
- b) **Goal Kicks**. A goal kick is taken by any player to restart the game after the ball goes out of play past the goal line (unless a goal is scored) when the ball is last touched by an attacking player. A ball is out of play when all of it has completely crossed the outside edge of the goal line, either on the ground or in the air.
  - i) A goal kick may be taken anywhere within the goalkeeper area, the smaller semi-circle closest to the goal.
  - ii) Opposing players must stay behind the yellow line or midfield if there is no yellow line on the side of the field closest to where the goal kick is being taken. Only after the defensive player strikes the ball and it comes out of the penalty area (second semi-circle) can the offensive team cross the yellow line and attack the ball.
  - iii) The ball is in play once it leaves the penalty area. If the ball does not leave the penalty area it must be kicked again. No attacking player may play the ball until it has completely left the penalty area.
  - iv) A goal may be scored directly from a goal kick.
- c) **Corner Kicks**. A corner kick is taken by any attacking player to restart the game after the ball goes out of play past the goal line (unless it is a valid goal) when the ball last touched a defending player.
  - i) To go out of play, the ball must completely cross the outside edge of the goal line, either on the ground or in the air.
  - ii) The ball is placed in the corner arc nearest to where the ball went out of play.
  - iii) The ball may be dribbled in by the offensive team or passed, as long as the ball was fully stopped on the sideline after being retrieved from out of bounds. Opponents must be at least 3 yards away from the ball when it is kicked.

- iv) A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick.
- v) The ball is in play once it is kicked or dribbled out.
- d) **Goalkeeper.**
  - i) In the 1<sup>st</sup> grade age group the goalkeeper is not allowed to punt or throw the ball. The goalkeeper must either roll the ball to a teammate or put the ball at his/her feet and pass the ball out of the area.
  - ii) Opposing players must stay behind the yellow line or midfield if there is no yellow line on the side of the field closest to where the goalkeeper has the ball. Only after the defensive player touches the ball and it comes out of the penalty area (second semi-circle) can the offensive team cross the yellow line and attack the ball.
  - iii) The goalkeeper may not play the ball with their hands if it is passed back to them by **foot** from a teammate.
    - (1) Example: Team A defensive player deliberately passes the ball to the goalkeeper. The goalkeeper then picks the ball up to play the ball. This is an indirect kick from the spot of the foul for the attacking team.
    - (2) Example: Team A defensive player deflects the ball to the goalkeeper as an attempt to block the shot or pass from the opposing team. The goalkeeper then picks the ball up to play the ball. This is not a foul.
    - (3) Example: Team A goalkeeper has possession of the ball and places it onto the ground to play the ball by foot. The goalkeeper then picks the ball up to play the ball before any other player has touch the ball. This is an indirect kick from the spot of the foul for the attacking team.

## 8) BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY.

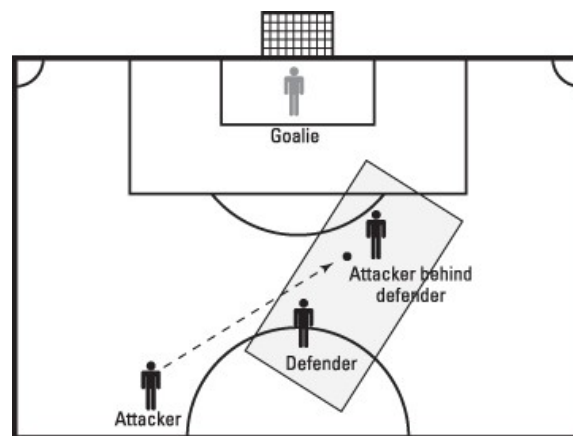
- a) The ball is out of play when the ball is completely outside the outside edge of the touch line or goal line.
  - i) At this age group, it is recommended to use a **kick-in to bring the ball in from out of bounds.**
  - ii) For a kick-in, follow these rules....
    - (1) the ball must be spotted where it went out of bounds.
    - (2) The ball must not be rolling.
    - (3) The player kicking the ball in must pass the ball, not dribble the ball into play.
  - iii) Opponents must be 5 yards away from the Throw-In.
  - iv) There is no offside on a kick-in.
  - v) A coach may not physically line-up a player to ensure the throw goes a particular direction.
  - vi) The ball must completely re-enter the field of play for it to be a legal throw-in. If the ball does not completely re-enter the field of play on a throw, the team in possession has unlimited opportunities to make a legal restart.

## 9) METHOD OF SCORING.

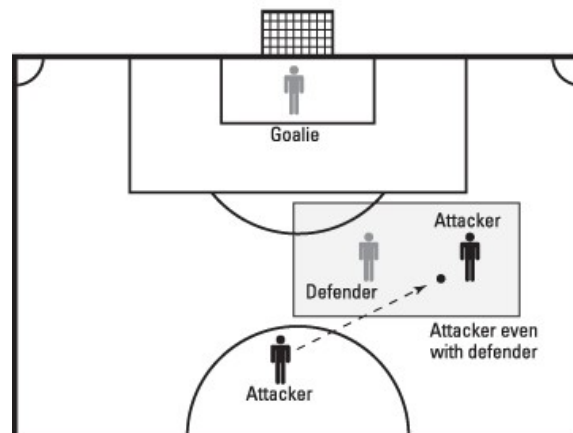
- a) A goal is scored when the entire ball goes completely over the outside edge of the goal line, under the crossbar and between the goalposts, while the ball is legally in play.
- b) Any player on a team may score goals.
- c) A ball played by a player directly into his or her own goal is a score for the opposing team.
- d) A goal may not be scored directly from a kick-off without touching another player before it enters the goal. A goal may not be scored directly from a kick-in without touching another player before it enters the goal.

## 10) OFFSIDES.

- a) Offsides will be called when a player is caught offside if he's closer to the opponent's goal than both the ball and the second-last opponent (including the goalkeeper) when his team-mate plays the ball to him. See Image. (There is no offside on a goal kick, **kick in**, or corner kick).



Offside



Onside

### **11) Heading the Ball.**

- a) **USYSA Rule 305 Section 3.** All Players aged 10 years of age and under shall not head the ball directly from the air in any match or competition, nor shall these players practice heading the ball in any organized team setting. If a player aged 10 or younger deliberately heads the ball in a match, the referee shall award an indirect free kick to the opposing team at the spot of the infraction. If the heading occurs within the penalty area, the referee shall move the ball outside the penalty area and award an indirect free kick to the opposing team.

### **12) Slide Tackles**

- a) **Slide tackles are not permitted for this age group** due to the injuries that it can cause. If a player tries to slide tackle during the game, this infraction will be a spot foul and a free kick will be given to the opposing team.

### **13) TEAM ACTIVITIES.**

- 1) A maximum of 3 activities per week are allowed in this age group. Practice and games are both team activities.