

SOCCER DEFINITIONS

THE FOLLOWING ARE GENERAL BASIC DEFINITIONS. YOUR REFEREE SHOULD BE ABLE TO PROVIDE MORE DETAILED EXPLANATIONS IF YOU REQUIRE THEM. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT THE HEAD REFEREE IF YOU FEEL A BETTER EXPLANATION IS REQUIRED.

KICK OFF: Used to start the game, at restarts of quarter or halves and after a goal is scored. The team kicking off must move the ball forward with the first pass. The person kicking off should make a pass to a player lined up to his/her right or left. We strongly discourage players from just kicking or booting the ball straight ahead.

GOAL KICK: When the attacking team kicks the ball out of bounds across the opponent's end line, the ball is brought back into play using a goal kick. Possession of the ball is given to the defending team, and they kick the ball back into play (hopefully they make a pass to a teammate) . Note: Show kids that if they kick the ball across the front of their own goal, they risk giving their opponent an easy opportunity to score and should avoid this if they can.

Kindergarten kicks from any point on the end line

1st grade kicks from the top of the arc in front of the goal.

2nd – 8th grades kick from the front corner of the goal box on the side nearest to where the ball went out of bounds.

CORNER KICKS: A corner kick results when the defending team was the last to touch the ball when it crossed their own end line. Possession is awarded to the attacking team. The ball is kicked into play from the outside corner nearest to where the ball went out. Corner kicks are a good scoring opportunity. Teammates of the player kicking the ball need to learn to get into an “open” position to receive the ball.

FREE KICKS: We don't use many free kicks in K-1st games. Getting used to not touching the ball with their hands is a new thing, and when kids knock each other down it is almost always a genuine accident. If the parent or coach acting as a referee feels a child is not minding instruction and repeatedly uses hands etc., then he/she might consider using a free kick to make the point that continuing to not follow the rules results in the team losing possession of the ball. It is not common, but occasionally we do have a player that is too rough or hits or kicks other players intentionally. If this occurs the player should be corrected, perhaps substituted out for a little while so that the coach can chat with him/her. Soccer at this level should truly define “recreational” soccer. It needs to be a very fun, positive experience for everyone with lots of encouragement for all.

Older players' matches use paid referees who are responsible for awarding free kicks for hand balls, infractions etc. Referees are watching for fouls deemed to be intentional and try to avoid calling fouls for things that are unintentional. When a free kick is awarded, the referee will instruct any defending player standing too close to the ball to back away.

In 4th grade and above, the referee will advise players if a kick is direct or indirect. On a direct free kick a player can score a goal without the ball being touched by another player. On an indirect free kick the ball must touch another player (any player) in order to count if it makes it into the goal.

THROW INS: (not used by K-1st grade, they can just kick the ball in) Throw ins are used to restart play after the ball goes out along the sidelines. The team who last touched the ball before it went out loses possession. A legal throw in requires that the player, using two hands, takes the ball back behind their head and brings the ball forward in one fluid motion as they throw, all the while keeping both feet in contact with the ground. A goal cannot be scored by throwing the ball into the goal; it must touch another body before going into the goal in order to count. As players get older the referees will become increasingly strict in enforcement of legal throw ins. If a player is called for an illegal throw in, the ball changes possession; and the other team gets to make the throw.

OFF SIDES: Offsides is one of the more difficult rules to call and is often misunderstood by coaches, players and spectators who are not familiar with the game. Off sides is only called against an attacking team when they are in the opponent's half of the field. A player is offsides if he receives the ball when he is between the opponent's last defensive player and the goal. The only exception to this rule is on a throw in. On throw ins, a player is allowed to legally receive the ball in what would normally be deemed an off sides position. The purpose of the rule is to protect against an unfair advantage or what we might call "cherry picking." If in doubt about what constitutes off sides, ask the referee to walk through a scenario with you and your players.

SUBSTITUTIONS: For K-5th grade substitutions are allowed any time the ball goes out, after goals, at quarter or half time breaks or to replace injured players.

For our oldest players (Grades 6, 7, 8), teams are only allowed to call for a substitution when they gain possession on a dead ball. For example the ball goes out and your team will get to throw it back in you yell "sub!" to the referee who will suspend play while you rotate out a player or players. Play cannot restart until the referee provides the go-ahead. If your opponent is substituting on his possession you may also substitute since play has been halted by the opponent's choice. The purpose of not allowing random substitutions comes from more competitive levels of soccer where the idea is to prevent a team from manipulating constant substitutions to burn time off the clock. We want the older kids in our program to be used to this since it is a part of the game; and familiarity with the rule will be expected of them in high school.

Substitutions are allowed to replace injured players, if play has been stopped to deal with the injury.