



Program Handbook *for Recreational Teams, Coaches & Participants*

EXCERPTS From The LAWS Of The GAME

Revised for Spring 2017

Seventeen Laws of the Game

Soccer consists of seventeen rules known as the Laws of the Game. Along with these rules are Decisions of the International Football Association Board. This is the governing body for world soccer rules (FIFA, the Fédération Internationale de Football Association, is a member of this board). Together, these constitute the rules and guidelines referees use to officiate soccer. Many modifications are made to suit local needs and specific age groups.

Advantage clause

The feature that distinguishes soccer from most American-made sports is the *Advantage Clause*. Incorporated in *Law 5* (the referee), the *advantage clause* allows play to continue when the team against which an offense has been committed will benefit from such an advantage (play on) and penalizes the original offense if the anticipated advantage does not ensue at that time. Advantage applies only to infringements of *Law 12* (fouls and misconduct).

In brief, you can expect many fouls to be ignored by the referee if calling them would be a disadvantage for the team fouled. Referees will tend not to call trivial fouls or fouls that are not intentional. Whistling for trifling and doubtful offenses is not in the "spirit of the game".

Consistency vs. Fairness

While consistency is important because it helps demonstrate impartiality, it does not imply that every call should be made and treated in the same manner. Many referee decisions are made with a degree of subjectivity as to carelessness, recklessness and excessive force. Determining intent is an important factor.

Intentional or Deliberate Heading the Ball

Intentional, deliberate, heading the ball during games or practices by players in U-12 programs and younger is prohibited by the DSL, in accordance with US Soccer/US Youth Soccer recommendations and/or requirements.

Common Sense

The "unwritten" law – referred to as "*Law 18*", common sense is the ultimate goal of refereeing and applies to the use of all the rules of soccer.



Program Handbook *for Recreational Teams, Coaches & Participants*

The Laws Of The Game

- 1 The Field of Play
- 2 The Ball
- 3 The Players
- 4 The Player's Equipment
- 5 The Referee
- 6 The Other Match Officials
- 7 The Duration of the Match
- 8 The Start and Restart of Play
- 9 The Ball In and Out of Play
- 10 Determining the Outcome of a Match
- 11 Offside
- 12 Fouls and Misconduct
- 13 Free Kicks
- 14 The Penalty Kick
- 15 The Throw-in
- 16 The Goal Kick
- 17 The Corner Kick

Law 1 – The Field of Play

- See description for specific age groups
- Distinctive to soccer – the lines are part of the area which they contain.
- Padding is **not** a standard part of soccer field goal posts.

Law 2 – The Ball

See description for specific age groups.

Law 3 – The Players

- Number of Players and Substitution exceptions
 - See description for specific age groups
- With exceptions noted, “normal” substitutions refer to those made after a goal has been scored, at the end of a time period (half), on goal kicks, your own throw-in and on injuries. Never on corner kicks.
- In addition, If a player for the opposing team is at the mid-field flag waiting to be a substitute when the team that is awarded a throw-in has a substitute to enter the game, the substitute for the opposing team may also enter the game. If the team that has been awarded a throw-in does not have a substitute, then neither team may substitute a player.



Program Handbook *for Recreational Teams, Coaches & Participants*

- Substitutions are to be made from the halfway mark upon approval of the referee.
- Referee is to be informed before a change of goalkeeper.
- A coach may substitute a player receiving a caution.
- On injuries, when a player is replaced, the DSL allows all subs at the halfway mark to substitute for either team.

Law 4 – The Player’s Equipment

- ALL PLAYERS MUST WEAR SHINGUARDS. Shinguards are to be worn completely covered with the socks. They are not to be worn over the sock with the sock pulled over them.
- No jewelry, i.e. earrings, watches, necklaces, sharp rings.
- No sharp, pointed or toe cleats are permitted on shoes.
- No hard brimmed caps such as baseball caps.
- Casts must be well padded as approved by the referee before player can take the field.
- Teams should wear different colored shirts. (Mesh vests are available at south concession stand.) Goalies must be distinguished from field players of both teams.

OFFICIAL STATEMENT / INTERPRETATION TO COLUMBUS AREA REFEREES from the Columbus District Director of Referee Instruction regarding permissible cold weather attire for youth players is:

- Knit toboggan caps (no brims or bills or hard surfaces);
- Sweatshirts under uniform shirts (hoods must be under the shirts for obvious safety reasons);
- Sweatpants or warm-up pants under uniform shorts.

Questions of whether clothing is allowable are determined by the match referee based on whether the clothing item poses a danger to the player or to other players along with the general health considerations of the player.

Law 5 – The Referee

The authority of the referee takes effect from the time he/she is in the vicinity of the field until he/she leaves the area of the field. The DSL may use a two referee system for older age games. See *Referee* section in *Program Handbook* for more information.

Law 6 – The Other Match Officials

None are used in the DSL recreation programs.

Law 7 – Duration of the Match

- See description for specific age groups
- Added time is allowed for taking of a penalty kick (U-9 and above) at the half or end of the game.
- The referee will whistle expiration of time following a natural completion of a play, at their discretion.



Program Handbook

for Recreational Teams, Coaches & Participants

Law 8 – The Start and Restart of Play

- Away team calls the coin toss. Team winning the toss decides goal to defend and kicks-off the second half of the game.
- Second half – teams switch ends of the field.
- Goals may be scored directly from a kick-off (except in U-6 and U-7 groups).
- Ball is in play when it has been kicked and clearly moves in any direction. The distance to be moved is minimal and the 'kick' need only be a movement of the ball with the foot in a kicking motion. Tapping the top of the ball with the foot or stepping on the ball are not sufficient to constitute kicking the ball.
- The kicker is not allowed to touch the ball a second time before it has touched another player. Penalty: Indirect FK.
- A goal can not be awarded if a dropped ball enters the goal without the ball touching at least two players.

Law 9 – The Ball In and Out of Play

- Ball is out of play if it has WHOLLY (COMPLETELY) crossed the goal line or touch (side) line.
- Rebounds from goal posts, crossbar, corner flags or referee (when on the field) do not make the ball out of play unless the referee stops the game.
- On a drop ball, the ball is in play only if it has touched the ground before being played. Otherwise, redo the drop ball.

Law 10 – Determining the Outcome of a Match

A goal is scored when the ball WHOLLY (COMPLETELY) crosses the goal line, between the goal posts and under the crossbar.

Law 11 – Offside

A player is in an OFFSIDE POSITION if any part of the head, body or feet is in the opponent's half; and is nearer to his opponent's goal line than both the ball and the second-to-last opponent. (Some younger age groups do not have an offside rule. See specific age group descriptions.)

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

- interfering with play by playing or touching a ball passed or touched by a team-mate 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 to him 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 or



Program Handbook

for Recreational Teams, Coaches & Participants

- gaining an advantage by playing the ball or interfering with an opponent when it has:
 - rebounded or been deflected off the goalpost, crossbar or an opponent or
 - been deliberately saved by an opponent

A player is not offside if he receives the ball directly from a goal kick, corner kick or throw-in.

If an offside offense occurs, an IFK is awarded where the offense occurred, i.e. where the player was determined to have become involved in active play, e.g. where the player touches the ball or interferes with an opponent.

Law 12 - Fouls & Misconduct

Fouls

Fouls are divided into two groups, Direct Free Kick (major) and Indirect Free Kick (minor) fouls. All decisions regarding calls are based on the principle: *If In The Opinion Of The Referee....*

Direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following seven offenses in a manner considered to be CARELESS, RECKLESS or USING EXCESSIVE FORCE:

1. Charges an opponent
2. Jumps at an opponent
3. Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent
4. Pushes an opponent
5. Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent
6. Tackles or challenges an opponent
7. Trips or attempts to trip an opponent

Direct free kick also awarded for the following three offenses:

1. Handles the ball deliberately with either hand or arm
2. Holds an opponent (or their clothes)
3. Impedes an opponent with contact
4. Spits at an opponent

Wide latitude is given the referee in interpreting handling the ball. Did the player play the ball -- or did the ball play the player? Did the player use his shoulder defensively or offensively?

If a whistle is heard as the result of spectator action or of activity on a nearby field and if a player, thinking that play had been stopped by the referee, then illegally handles the ball, the referee should treat this as outside interference and restart with a dropped ball. However, watch for unsportsmanlike behavior.

Players are allowed the freedom to protect various parts of their bodies (i.e. boys with crossed hands over their pelvic region and girls with crossed arms over their chests) are not automatic fouls as long as they do not use it as an opportunity to control and direct the ball. This applies to both boys and girls.



Program Handbook

for Recreational Teams, Coaches & Participants

A **penalty kick** is awarded if any of the above is committed in the penalty box by the defending team. It does not matter where the ball is at the time of the foul.

Indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following:

1. Plays in a dangerous manner. (high kick, playing the ball while on the ground may be deemed dangerous). At a young age, possession of the ball by the goalkeeper should be defined broadly to include simply having a hand on the ball (other than purely incidental contact). Once the goalkeeper is in possession of the ball, opponents must cease challenging or otherwise attempting to play the ball
2. Impedes the progress of an opponent without any contact being made (obstructs)
3. Prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his hands
4. Commits any offense for which a caution or dismissal occurs

Indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if the goalkeeper, while in his penalty box, commits any of the following four offenses:

1. Takes more than six seconds while controlling the ball with his hands before releasing it from his possession.
2. Touches the ball again with his hands after it has been released from his possession and has not touched another player. (His teammates count only if they are outside penalty box.) Released from possession is tricky terminology.
3. Touches the ball with his hands after it has been deliberately (in the referee's opinion) kicked to him by a teammate.
4. Touches the ball with his hands after he has received it directly from a throw-in taken by a teammate.

Misconduct

Two types of action for misconduct: caution and send-off.

A player is cautioned and shown the yellow card if he commits any of the following seven offenses:

1. Unsportsmanlike behavior
2. Dissent in word or action of any referee decision
3. Persistently infringes the laws of the game
4. Delays the restart of play
5. Fails to respect the required distance on restart with a corner kick, free kick or throw-in
6. Enters, re-enters or deliberately leaves the field of play without the referee's permission

An indirect free kick is given to the opponent for all cautions except exit/entrance, unless a more serious penalty is applicable.



Program Handbook

for Recreational Teams, Coaches & Participants

A player is sent off and shown the red card if he commits any of the following seven offenses:

1. Serious foul play
2. Violent conduct
3. Spits at an opponent or any other person
4. Denies the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal scoring opportunity by deliberately handling the ball
5. Denies an obvious goal scoring opportunity to an opponent moving towards the player's goal by an offense punishable by a free kick or a penalty kick
6. Uses offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures
7. Receives a second caution in the same match

Any player given a red card including for a second caution is sent out of the game without a substitute going in (play short).

Law 13 – Free Kicks

Free kicks are either direct or indirect.

On a **Direct Free Kick**:

- A goal may be scored directly from a direct kick on an opponent's goal
- If a direct free kick is kicked directly into the teams' own goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opposing team

Direct kicks are not applicable to all age groups. Consult DSL age group rules.

On an **Indirect Free Kick**:

- When kicked, an indirect free kick can score a goal ONLY if the ball 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 opponent
- If an indirect free kick is kicked directly into the teams' own goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opposing team
- The referee should indicate an indirect free kick by raising an arm straight up until the ball has been touched by another player

In both types of kicks:

- The ball must be stationary when the ball is kicked
- The kicker cannot touch the ball a second time until it has touched another player
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves
- All opponents are at least 10 yards (may vary by age group) from the ball until kicked
- The ball is placed where the infraction occurred



Program Handbook

for Recreational Teams, Coaches & Participants

Within the penalty area, defending team, direct or indirect kicks:

- All opponents must be 10 yards away AND outside penalty area
- Ball must exit penalty (box) area before it can be played
- Kick within goal area is taken from any point in the goal box
- Goalkeeper cannot receive the ball under this circumstance

Within the penalty area, offensive team, on indirect kicks:

- All opponents must be 10 yards away, unless they are on their goal line between the goalposts
- Kick awarded within goal area is taken from the goal box line that runs parallel to the goal line, nearest to where the infringement occurred

Within the penalty area, a direct kick for the offensive team becomes a penalty kick. See *Law 14*.

If a player leaves the field-of-play as part of play and commits an offense against another player, play is restarted with a free kick (IFK or DFK) on the touchline or the goal line nearest where the offense occurred.

A caution can be awarded to any player who displays unsporting conduct such as distracting motions during the taking of a free kick.

Law 14 – Penalty Kicks

A penalty kick is awarded against a team which commits one of the ten offenses for which a direct free kick is awarded, if the offense occurs inside its own penalty area and while by the ball is in play.

A penalty kick is awarded if a DFK offense occurs off the field as part of play within the confines of the offender's penalty area.

Additional time is added at the end of a time period to take a penalty kick.

For a penalty kick:

- The ball is placed on the penalty spot
- All players except the goalkeeper and the player taking the kick need to be out of the penalty box AND 10 yards from the penalty spot (outside the arc) AND behind the penalty spot (12 yards out from the goal line)
- Performed under direct supervision, coordination and approval of the referee
- When signaled by the referee, the player taking the kick must kick the ball forward and clearly moves, only once
- The kicker does not touch the ball a second time until it has touched another player



Program Handbook

for Recreational Teams, Coaches & Participants

Goalkeeper must stay on his goal line, facing the kicker, between the goalposts until the ball has been kicked. The goalkeeper cannot complete a step off the line until the ball has been kicked. For infraction, retake the kick if goal is not scored.

Consult official rulebook for various infringement/sanction scenarios.

Penalty kicks are not applicable to all age groups. Consult DSL age group rules.

Law 15 – Throw-in

When the WHOLE ball goes completely over a touch (side) line, a throw-in is awarded to the team opposite of the one that last touched it. A throw-in is taken at the point (give or take a yard) where the ball left the field of play.

Opposing players are to be no closer than two-yards from where the throw-in is to be taken.

At the moment of delivering the ball, the thrower:

- Is facing the field of play
- Has part of each foot either on the touch line or on the ground outside the touch line
- Using both hands, delivers the ball from behind and over his head

Thrower cannot touch the ball again until it has touched another player. (An indirect free kick is awarded.)

If the ball is improperly thrown, the opposite team gets to take a throw-in. However, if the ball does not enter the field of play, the throw-in is retaken. Second throw-in is allowed for U-6 and U-7's.

Since the primary function of the throw-in is to put the ball back into play as quickly as possible, minor technical infringements of *Law 15* should be deemed trifling (do not call it).

Law 16 – Goal Kick

When the WHOLE of the ball goes completely over the goal line (and is not a goal scored (see *Law 10*)) last touched by a member of the attacking team, a goal kick is awarded to the defending team.

To perform an acceptable goal kick:

- The ball can be placed anywhere in the goal area by a player of the defending team and kicked directly outside the penalty box. Re-kick if the ball does not go outside penalty box.
- Opponents must be outside the penalty box.
- Goal may be scored directly from a goal kick, but only against the opposing team. An “own” goal will result in a corner kick (assuming the ball left the penalty area – *highly unusual*) for the opposing team.



Program Handbook

for Recreational Teams, Coaches & Participants

- Player taking the kick cannot play the ball a second time without the ball having been touched by another player. An indirect free kick will be awarded.

Law 17 – Corner Kick

When the **WHOLE** ball goes completely over the goal line (and a goal is not scored) and having last touched a player from the defending team, a corner kick is awarded to the opposing team.

To take a corner kick:

- The ball is placed inside the corner arc of corner nearest to where the ball went out of bounds
- The corner flag post is not moved or held
- Opposing players must remain ten yards from the ball. (Distance adjusted for younger ages)
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves

The kicker cannot kick the ball a second time until touched by another player. An indirect free kick is awarded for infraction.

A goal **CAN** be scored direct from a corner kick, but only against the opposing team.