

RA Steen Outdoor Mini Soccer - Game Play Rules and Logistics

Updated May 18, 2023

All Levels

Game Length – At each soccer session, game is played after skills station/practice, to emphasize skill development and maximum ball touches for all players during practice. Game time can be 24 minutes with eight 3-minute shifts or 30 minutes, with ten 3-minute shifts.

Shifts - 3-minute shifts to encourage each player to take their turn on and off the field. All players receive equal playing time. Encourage all players to take their shift. Field manager blows one whistle for multiple simultaneous games or coaches can yell “shift” for staggered games. Players sit on team blanket when not playing. Transition quickly (10 seconds) between shifts to maintain engagement. Each shift begins with a kickoff at center field by the team who last had possession.

Skill Balance – To keep all players engaged in the game and to develop confidence, coaches make best attempt to match lines (advanced vs advanced, developing vs developing) in order to prevent a drastic skill imbalance amongst players from impeding developing players from engaging in the game. If lines do not match well due to roster numbers, and an advanced player is dominating the play, coaches challenge them to pass the ball a certain number of times before shooting on net or ask them to play goalie/defense on occasion.

On Field and Bench Coaches - One coach per team on the field to keep the play moving and act as a referee. Additional coaches can assist on bench (team blanket) and disperse along the side/base lines to keep ball in play.

Score - Coaches do not keep score. Players can keep score if they wish and are able to do so respectfully.

Nets - Mini nets for U4, 5/6 (no goalies) and larger nets for U7/8 (with goalie).

End of Game Cheer – Handshakes/fist bumps or hip hip hooray cheer to recognize opposing team.

U4 and U5/6

Equal Playing Time - All players take their turn on and off the field to allow all players the chance to engage in the game. Coaches decide to play 3 on 3 or 4 on 4 based on attendance.

Positions - Positional awareness is not emphasized. All players are encouraged to engage in the play. No goalies, but players can be encouraged to defend by attacking the ball before it arrives at the net.

Rules – Use continuous play to maximize playing time. No kickoffs, penalties or stoppages to keep the play moving. If a team scores, opposing team retreats to their half of field until ball crosses mid field. Encourage players to “use their feet” if touching ball with hands. If a player is playing unsafely or disrespectfully, a coach can discuss with them.

Side and Base Lines - Parents and coaches use side and base lines to loosely direct players to keep ball in play. If ball is far out of play, an adult will put it back into play. No throw-ins, goalie or corner kicks.

U7/8

Equal Playing Time - All players take their turn on and off the field to allow all players the chance to engage in the game. Coaches decide to play 4 on 4 or 5 on 5 based on attendance.

Positions - Coaches begin giving some instruction on positional awareness (3 forward, 1 defense, 1 goalie). Rotate defense and goalies so all players get a chance to experience playing different positions.

Rules - Some basic soccer rules are followed (throw ins, goal kick, corner kick, free kick) with emphasis on keeping the play moving. On-field coaches act as referees. Avoid penalties or stoppages as much as possible. If a player is playing unsafely or disrespectfully, a coach can discuss with them.

Side and Base Lines - If a ball goes out of play off an opponent on sideline, then it is a throw in. If out of play off an attacking player on the base line, it is a goal kick and if off a defending player, a corner kick.

Kick-Off - The kick-off is taken from the centre spot to begin each shift and after goals. All players, except for the kicker, remain in their own half of the field, and all opposing players must remain at least 5 yards from the ball until the ball is in play. The player taking the kick-off may kick the ball forward or backwards but may not touch it again until it has been touched by another player.