

10 point REFEREE REFRESHER for the fall season

1. *Start the game by following these simple procedures.* Ten minutes before the game starts, check the goals for placement and see if the nets have any holes. There should be corner flags at each of the four corners. **If your game field is a different size from the previous game your entire crew should get there even earlier to assist and direct the correct placement of the goals and flags immediately following the earlier game.**

Five minutes before the game check the teams. Players should all have shinguards (they should be inside the socks) and make all players take off all their jewelry and watches (eyeglasses are okay). Goalkeepers **MUST** have a jersey or pinny of a different color. Tell them what your own rules will be about throw-ins and so on. Advise players about faint lines, holes in the nets, and any other field problems. Get a captain from each team to observe the coin toss. The visiting team calls it in the air. The captain that wins the coin toss gets to choose which goal to defend. The other team kicks off (yes, this **IS** the rule!). Count the numbers of players on both teams. Ask goalkeepers if they are ready. Then start your watch and blow the whistle.

2. *Time the Game Properly.* The lengths of games vary. Allow a five minute halftime break. The team that won the coin toss kicks off to start the second half. Games must move along swiftly to allow all succeeding games to start on time. If teams arrive late for their game, cut a few minutes off each half.

3. *Blow your whistle loudly and confidently when you see a penalty or foul.* One of the most common penalties is hand balls, especially in the younger divisions. Call all hand balls if the player's arm or hand was not close to the players' ribs, regardless of whether it was intentional or not. Be lenient if a player was protecting his/her chest. Do not call unintentional hand balls when the player's arm or hand was close to the ribs unless the path of the ball deviated significantly (e.g. a hard kick upward that deflects downward off a player's hand). Consistency is the most important thing. Accidental trips or obstructions, usually when a player accidentally runs into another player, are also common. These are not called nearly often enough by most referees. It doesn't matter if they're unintentional. Call elbowing only if a player is grossly overusing the elbow at a 90-degree angle to push away another player. Shoulder-to-shoulder pushing and jostling is a normal part of the game. Offsides can be difficult to call (there are **NO** offsides called in U8) and, in general, is not that common. The most important thing to bear in mind is that a player cannot be called offsides if the ball has not been kicked to him or her or if the player is not involved in the play. Referees make this mistake **VERY** often and coaches sometimes don't understand the rule. Example: a player is standing in an offside position on one side of the field (i.e. is behind the last defender). A second player on the other side of the field is dribbling toward the goal, gets through the defense, and takes a shot. The first player is **NOT** offsides because the ball was not kicked to him or her.

EXCEPTION: if the ball rebounds off the post or the goalkeeper parries the ball, and the first player then scores, then you should call that player offside, because s/he gained an advantage by being offside. One offside call that must be made is the following: two attacking players have gotten past the last defender and one is dribbling toward the goal. If that player then passes the ball *forward* to his/her teammate and s/he scores, that player is offside and you must blow the whistle. It doesn't matter that both players were behind the defense. If the pass goes *backward* (e.g. a crossing kick) then the receiving player is not offside. A player can only be offside on a forward pass.

4. *All penalties in the penalty box require a penalty kick.* For this reason, you should only call fairly severe trips or fouls or hand balls that affected the path of the ball and took away a potential scoring opportunity. Do not call innocuous or unobvious hand balls in the penalty area. Referees will rarely whistle a penalty for shouldering or elbowing in the penalty area. If you've called for a penalty, walk off 12 yards from the goal mouth to the penalty spot to ensure proper placement. The goalkeeper should be standing on the line of the goal mouth when the ball is kicked. All players, with the exception of the kicker, must be ten yards away from the penalty spot. The ball is in play if the goalkeeper blocks it or if the ball rebounds off a post or crossbar and back into play. Sometimes referees erroneously stop play on a missed penalty kick.

5. *Outside of the penalty area, call for an indirect free kick or a direct free kick.* (All U8 kicks are Indirect) The difference is fairly technical. As a rule of thumb, call a direct free kick if the foul was serious or deliberate or the hand ball was intentional. Otherwise call an indirect free kick. The direct free kick can score directly. The indirect free kick must touch a player besides the kicker before it can score. Example: a player kicks an indirect free kick and the ball goes directly into the goal without touching a defender. It's NOT a goal. You award a goal kick to the defending team. Because this is often misunderstood, announce to the teams CLEARLY which type of kick you've awarded. If in doubt, give an indirect free kick. Defending players must be ten yards away or more from the ball before it is kicked. Step off the ten yards if necessary. The defenders can form a wall.

6. *Play the advantage.* Soccer is totally unlike basketball: if a foul has occurred, but if calling the foul would be a disadvantage to the team whose player was fouled, then "play the advantage." Example: a defender handles the ball, but the attacking player gets it anyway and has a breakaway. In this situation, call "Play on!" and allow play to continue. Soccer, in this regard, is a little bit like American football, which also allows play to go on and won't penalize the attacking team for a foul committed by the defending team.

7. *Stop the game for injuries in most circumstances.* If a player is injured it is policy and common sense to stop the game to help him or her. But do not take away a team's goal on account of a relatively mild injury seconds before a goal was scored. Example: a ball is

ricocheting around in the penalty, strikes a player on the side of the face, drops to the ground, and is kicked in a few seconds later. Allow the goal but immediately stop play. In the older divisions, especially the U-14 and HS Co-ed, you should allow a team to complete a breakaway before whistling an injury stoppage. Use your own judgment. If the injury looks serious, blow your whistle immediately and stop play. *Never stop a game for untied shoelaces.* It's the responsibility of players, parents, and coaches to make sure laces are tied. Players are welcome to stop themselves and tied their own laces. Referees in the U-8 divisions may call for a short shoe-tying pause after the ball has left the field of play.

8. *Do not restart the game with a free kick.* If you've whistled a stoppage for any reason, including an injury or a dog on the field or something, you must restart the game with a drop ball between two opposing players. Do not give a free kick to the team that had possession when you blew the whistle even if that seems fair.

9. *On goal kicks, the ball must leave the penalty area before it can be kicked.* If an attacking or defending players intercepts the ball before it leaves the penalty area, redo the goal kick

10. *Goalkeepers have six seconds to punt or throw the ball once they've grabbed it.* Goalkeepers can run as far as they want in the penalty box but must get rid of the ball within six seconds. Warn all players about this rule at the beginning of the match. If a goalkeeper has held the ball for 7 seconds or more (give them a second break), then blow your whistle and award the other team an indirect free kick from the exact spot where the goalkeeper was standing, even if it is in the goal mouth. Exception: if the goalkeeper seems injured, don't penalize her or him. Also call an indirect free kick if the goalkeeper accidentally ran out of the penalty box before kicking it. Attackers cannot kick the ball once the goalkeeper has possession of it.

These are basic rules that will help you keep control of the game. There are a number of others that are less important or don't often come into play. For example, all slide tackles from behind are considered very serious fouls (there are NO slide tackles allowed in our U8 or U11); players cannot attempt to play the ball if they are on the ground; players cannot slide toward another player with two feet together facing out; players cannot play the ball with their cleats (i.e. the bottom of the foot) if the ball is near another player's leg or foot (this can cause serious injury); players cannot kick at a ball above their waist if it's near another player's head (this is called "high foot"); similarly, a player cannot lower his or her head below the waist to get a ball if another player is about to kick it (this is a reverse sort of dangerous play); a ball must completely cross a touch line or goal line to be in touch or a goal.