

Alberta Soccer Association



2017 Laws of the Game For U12 8-a-side Soccer

Modified to include EMSA LEAGUE AMENDMENTS



Introduction

U12 Soccer:

Player Development within an 8 a-side environment

In keeping with the Long-Term Player Development Model of Canada's Grassroots Soccer, this booklet deals with U12 soccer and should be considered the next step in the development of Soccer's U10 Mini-Soccer program.

Purpose:

The ASA Board of Directors, ASA Technical Committee and ASA Referee Committee would like to emphasize that the program is designed as a progressive step from the U10 program. We consider it still to be development and learning, therefore requiring some variation from the full FIFA rules.

Player Development:

This program is designed to assist the development of young players. As such the rules reflect this philosophy.

Referee Development:

This program provides an opportunity for the development of young referees.

Coach Development:

This Program provides an opportunity for the development of coaches.

Omissions:

Any incidents or situations not covered expressly by the Rules of the Game for U12 8-a-side Soccer, will default to the current FIFA Laws of the game, wherever possible.

Alberta Soccer Rules of the U12 8-a-side Game

Game Format	Team Size	Game Duration	Ball Size	Field Size Min/Max Width	Field Size Min/max Length	Goal Size Min (H) Max (W)
8 vs 8	EMSA Rule Max 16	EMSA Rule 2 X 35 min	4	42 to 55 meters	60 to 75 meters	Height 6ft Width

Law 1: Field of Play

Whenever possible the ideal field size will be 75 meters (82 yds.) length X 55 meters (60 yds) width.

For practical reasons this may not always be possible and games could be played, for example across the width of a regular soccer pitch. However the internal markings should remain the same.

If the existing field is 109 meters in length, the width of the 8 a-side field is from the center line of the large field to the edge of the penalty area and the length of the field is simply from touchline to touchline.

If the length of the large field is less than 109 meters, then the sideline will need to be extended accordingly beyond the penalty area – toward the full field goal.

The ideal goal size is 1.8 meters / 6 feet (H) x 5.4 meters / 18 feet (w), however; the size of goals could be standard portable goals from manufacturers which tend to be approximately 3.6 meters (12 ft) wide X 1.9 meters (6.5 ft) high. Goal nets should be used, provided that they are properly supported, and do not interfere with the goalkeeper

Field Markings:

Fields should be marked by distinctive lines not more than fifteen (15) centimeters wide.

The field is divided into two halves by the halfway line, which joins the midpoints of the touchlines. A centre mark is marked at the midpoint of the halfway line.

A circle with a radius of 5m (6 yards) may be marked around the center mark; however, this marking is not mandatory.

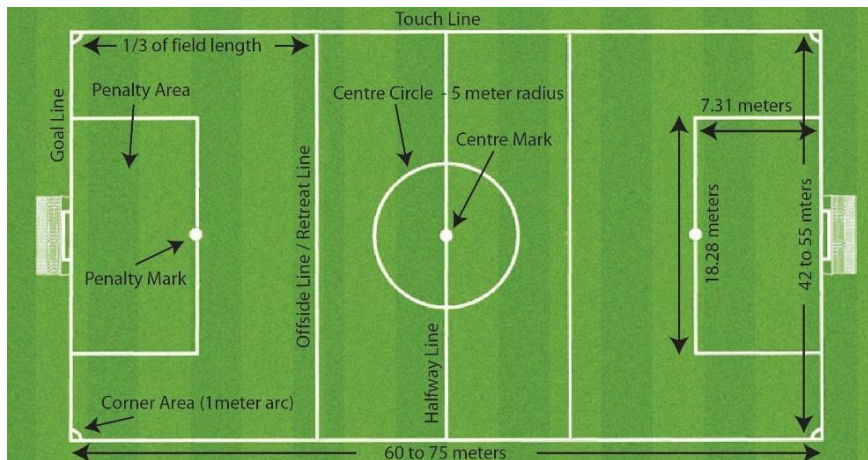
An offside line parallel to the halfway line should be marked from touch line to touch line at the attacking third mark.

An arc with a radius of 1m may be marked at the Corner Area – however this marking is not mandatory.

The Penalty Area is defined at each end of the field as follows:

Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line, 7.31 meters (8 yards) and are joined by a 18.28 meter (20 yard) line drawn parallel with a goal line.

The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is the penalty area. On the edge of each penalty area a **penalty mark** is made 7.31 meters (8 yards) from the midpoint between the goalposts.



Law 2: The Ball

The size 4 ball shall be spherical and constructed of material which is not dangerous to the players. The ball may not be replaced without the referee's permission.

If the ball becomes defective, it should be replaced, and play will restart with a dropped ball from where the ball was located when it became defective.

Law 3: Number of Players

The game shall be played by two teams, each consisting of 8 players, one of whom shall be a goalkeeper. Teams must dress a minimum of 6 players and a maximum of 20.

Substitution Procedure

- To replace a player with a substitute, the following must be observed: the referee must be informed before any substitution is made
- the player being substituted receives the referee's permission to leave the field of play, unless already off the field
- the player being replaced is not obliged to leave at the halfway line

The substitute only enters:

- during a stoppage in play
- at the halfway line
- after the player being replaced has left
- after receiving a signal from the referee

Extra persons on the field of play

The coach and other officials named on the team list (with the exception of players or substitutes) are team officials. Anyone not named on the team list as a player, substitute or team official is an outside agent.

If a team official, substitute, substituted or sent off player or outside agent enters the field of play the referee must:

- only stop play if there is interference with play
- have the person removed when play stops
- take appropriate disciplinary action

If play is stopped and the interference was by:

- a team official, substitute, substituted or sent off player, play restarts with a direct free kick or penalty kick
- an outside agent, play restarts with a dropped ball. If a ball is going into the goal and the interference does not prevent a defending player playing the ball, the goal is awarded if the ball enters the goal (even if contact was made with the ball) unless the ball enters the opponents' goal.

Goal scored with an extra person on the field of play

If, after a goal is scored, the referee realises, before play restarts, an extra person was on the field of play when the goal was scored:

the referee must disallow the goal if the extra person was:

- a player, substitute, substituted player, sent off player or team official of the team that scored the goal
- an outside agent who interfered with play unless a goal results as outlined above in 'extra persons on the field of play'

Play is restarted with a goal kick, corner kick or dropped ball.

the referee must allow the goal if the extra person was:

- a player, substitute, substituted player, sent off player or team official of the team that conceded the goal
- an outside agent who did not interfere with play

In all cases, the referee must have the extra person removed from the field of play.

If, after a goal is scored and play has restarted, the referee realises an extra person was on the field of play when the goal was scored, the goal cannot be disallowed. If the extra person is still on the field the referee must:

- stop play
- have the extra person removed
- restart with a dropped ball or free kick as appropriate. The referee must report the incident to the appropriate authorities.

Law 4: Player's Equipment

Equipment shall consist of shirt, shorts, socks, shin-guards and footwear.

All jerseys must have sleeves. The players may not roll the sleeves up or tie them at the shoulder level. A player who removes his/her jersey to celebrate a goal will receive a caution for unsporting behavior.

All players MUST wear shin guards of suitable material. The shin guards should be covered completely by the socks.

Running shoes or multi stud soccer shoes may be worn.

Goalkeepers must wear colours that are distinguishable from those of other players and those of the referee. Goalkeepers may wear gloves and tracksuit-type pants.

Additional Guidance on Jewelry and Non-Compulsory Equipment

No item of jewelry of any sort will be allowed on the field of play, even if it is 'taped'. I.E. covered.

Game officials must set an example by removing all personal jewelry before entering the field of play (watches are allowed for game officials).

The rule of thumb should be 'if it can be seen, it's a problem'.

Earrings: no earrings of any kind are acceptable. The practice of taping is no longer acceptable.

Facial Rings: any kind of jewelry around the eyes, nose or any other part of the face must be removed.

Bracelets: all bracelets (including metal, rope, fabric ...) must be removed.

Medic Alert Bracelets: may be worn but must be covered or padded in order to be safe for all players.

Necklaces: all necklaces must be removed.

Body Piercing; any body piercing not visible to the referee is not of concern. Should the piercing become visible the referee will ensure it is removed.

Watches: players are not allowed to wear any kind of watches.

Beaded Hair: if a player is wearing hair beads the hair must be tied in a bun or covered by a hair net. Loose beaded hair is not permitted.

Rings: must be removed.

Hats: no hats are allowed on the field of play. Goalkeepers may request to wear a soft brimmed hat as an eyeshade. The referee must ensure that it is not dangerous.

Bandanas: no bandanas are allowed.

Sweatbands: no sweatbands are allowed.

Head Protectors: only those permitted by FIFA are allowed.

Spectacles: are allowed if they are sports spectacles and / or regular glasses and are safe for the players themselves and for other players.

Pro Wrap: Single strand of Pro Wrap is permitted with no metal hair clips or bobby pins.

Orthopedic Supports: FIFA Circular 863 states that the vast majority of commercially manufactured supports are safe to use. These items pose less of a hazard than players accidentally banging heads, for instance.

The major concern is not the 'hardness' of the equipment alone, rather it should be whether any part of it could cut or wound another player.

Any support must be safe for all players, and adequately padded if necessary.

Casts: Players wearing a hard cast are NOT permitted to play, even if it is padded.

Players wearing a soft cast may be permitted to play if the cast does not present a danger to him/herself or any other player. The soft cast must not contain any hard material.

The referee (or a Supervisor of Officials if one has been appointed to the match or competition) will make the final decision as to the acceptability of any soft cast.

Law 5: Referees

As per the FIFA Laws of the Game.

Law 6: Assistant Referees

If Provided, As per the FIFA Laws of the Game.

Law 7: Duration of the Game

The game shall be divided into two equal halves. Each half shall be 35 minutes in length. The length of halftime will be a minimum of 5 minutes and for a maximum of 10 minutes. The referee or competition rules will determine the length of the half time break.

Law 8: Start & Restart of Play Kick off

A kick-off starts both halves of a match, both halves of extra time and restarts play after a goal has been scored.

- the team that wins the toss of a coin decides which goal it will attack in the first half
- their opponents take the kick-off
- the team that wins the toss takes the kick-off to start the second half
- for the second half, the teams change ends and attack the opposite goals
- after a team scores a goal, the kick-off is taken by their opponents
- For every kick-off:
 - all players must be in their own half of the field of play
 - the opponents of the team taking the kick-off must be at least 5 m (6 yds) from the ball until it is in play
 - the ball must be stationary on the centre mark
 - the referee gives a signal
 - the ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves in any direction
 - a goal may be scored directly against the opponents from the kick-off

Dropped Ball

For any stoppage not mentioned in these rules, the referee shall restart the game by dropping the ball at the place where it was when play stopped, unless play was stopped in the penalty area. In this case, the ball shall be dropped on that part of the penalty area line which runs parallel to the goal line, at the point nearest to where the ball was when play stopped. The ball is in play when it touches the ground.

A goal may not be scored directly from a dropped ball.

Retreat Line (New for 2017)

The **Retreat Line** will come into effect in two situations during the game:

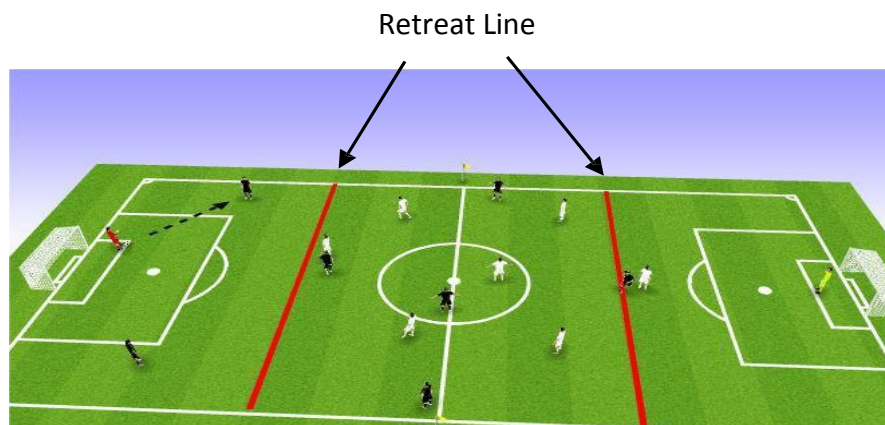
- Goal Kick
- Free Kick to the defending team within it's own goal area

At these two restarts, the opposing team is required to move beyond the Retreat Line. The player taking the kick can then pass the ball to one of his team-mates without the pressure of an opposing player nearby. When the ball is touched by a 2nd player, the play will resume as normal and the "opposing" team can move inside the Retreat Line.

The Retreat Line in 8-a-side Soccer will be the closest offside line to the restart.

If a member of the opposing team comes inside the Retreat Line before the ball has been touched by a 2nd player, and interferes with play, the Referee will stop play and the restart will be retaken.

Players can choose to play the ball long if they wish.



Law 9: Ball in and out of Play

The ball is out of play:

- When the whole of the ball has crossed the goal-line or touch line, whether on the ground or in the air.
- When the game has been stopped by the referee. The ball is in play at all other times.

Law 10: Method of Scoring

A goal is scored when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, between the goalposts and under the crossbar, provided that no offence or infringement of the Laws of the Game has been committed by the team scoring the goal.

If a referee signals a goal before the ball has passed wholly over the goal line, play is restarted with a dropped ball.

Law 11: Offside

Alberta Soccer would like to emphasize that the program is designed as a progressive step from the U10 program. We consider it still to be development and learning, therefore requiring some variation from the full FIFA rules; i.e. the offside line at the attacking 3rd of the field encourages players to spread out

The offside rule is in effect in the attacking 3rd of the field. This line may be marked as a dotted line, and solid line or single cones or flags on the touch line. Coaches from both teams should bring cones to mark this line in the event that the attacking 3rd line is not clearly marked on the field.

Offside Position:

It is not an offence in itself to be in an offside position. A player is in an offside position if:

- He or she is nearer to their opponents' goal line than both the ball and the second-last opponent

A player is not in an offside position if:

- He or she is not in the attacking third of the field of play
- He or she is level with the second-last opponent or
- He or she is level with the last two opponents

Offence:

A player in an offside position is only penalized if, at the moment the ball touches or is played by one of his team, he is, in the opinion of the referee, involved in active play by:

- Interfering with play or
- Interfering with an opponent or
- Gaining an advantage by being in that position

No Offence:

There is no offside offence if a player receives the ball directly from:

- A goal kick
- A throw-in
- A corner kick

Infringements and Sanctions:

In the event of an offside offence, the referee awards an indirect free kick to the opposing team to be taken from the place where the offside offence occurred.

Law 12: Fouls and Misconduct

Fouls and misconduct are penalized as per the FIFA Laws of the Game:

A direct free kick is awarded if a player commits any of the following offences against an opponent in a manner considered by the referee to be careless, reckless or using excessive force:

- Charges
- Jumps at
- Kicks or attempts to kick
- Pushes
- Strikes or attempts to strike (including head-butt)
- Tackles or challenges
- Trips or attempts to trip
- Impedes with contact

A direct free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following offenses:

- Handles the ball deliberately (except for the goalkeeper within their own penalty area)
- Holds an opponent
- Impedes an opponent with contact
- Spits at an opponent

A direct free kick is taken from the place where the offence occurred.

A penalty kick is awarded if any of the above ten offences is committed by a player inside his own penalty area, irrespective of the position of the ball, provided it is in play.

An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a goalkeeper commits any of the following offenses:

- controls the ball with the hands for more than six seconds before releasing it
- touches the ball with the hands after:
- releasing it and before it has touched another player
- it has been deliberately kicked to the goalkeeper by a team-mate
- receiving it directly from a throw-in taken by a team-mate

An indirect free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if, in the opinion of the referees, a player:

- Plays in a dangerous manner
- Impedes the progress of an opponent (without any contact being made)
- Prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from the hands
- Puts the ball in play through a direct, indirect, goal or corner kick, and kicks the ball again before it has been touched by another player
- Commits any other infringement not previously mentioned in Law 12, for which play is stopped to caution or dismiss a player

An indirect free kick is taken from the place where the offence occurred

Disciplinary Sanctions:

The yellow card is used to communicate that a player or substitute has been cautioned.

The red card is used to communicate that a player or substitute has been sent off. Any player receiving a red card may not play for the remainder of the game. The offending player may be substituted for another eligible player; both teams continue to play 8 vs 8.

Only a player, substitute or substituted player may be shown the red or yellow card. The referee has the authority to take disciplinary sanctions from the moment he enters the field of play until he leaves the field of play after the final whistle.

A player who commits a cautionable or sending-off offence, either on or off the field of play, whether directed towards an opponent, a team-mate, the referee, an assistant referee or any other person, is disciplined according to the nature of the offence committed.

EMSA LEAGUE AMENDMENTS

U12 Yellow and Red Card Infractions

Cards will be given out as consequences for infractions; however, there will be an emphasis on teaching and learning as opposed to punishment. These rules are also in the ASA rules with the exception that the player does not need to leave the area of play in EMSA rules. Players are allowed to remain with the team.

To aid in player development the following process applies:

- The referee shall explain all infractions.
- Players receiving a yellow card will be substituted for another player while serving a 5 minute "timeout".
- If a red card is warranted the player will be substituted off for another player and will not be allowed to play for the remainder of the game.

- Two yellow cards to the same player in the same game will also result in a red card and the player cannot return to the game. The coach will explain the call to the player, there will be no further suspensions and the player may remain with their teammates on the bench.
- The team will not play shorthanded at any time for yellow or red card offences.
- Yellow and red cards will be noted on the game sheet for recording purposes.

A player is cautioned if guilty of:

- Unsporting behaviour
- Dissent by word or action
- Persistent infringement of the Laws of the Game
- Delaying the restart of play
- Failure to respect the required distance when play is restarted with a corner kick, free kick or throw-in
- Entering, re-entering or deliberately leaving the field of play without the referee's permission

A substitute or substituted player is cautioned if guilty of:

- Unsporting behaviour
- Dissent by word or action
- Delaying the restart of play
- Entering or re-entering the field of play without the referee's permission.

A player, substitute or substituted player who commits any of the following offences is sent off:

- denying the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by deliberately handling the ball (except a goalkeeper within their penalty area)
- denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity to an opponent moving towards the opponents' goal by an offence punishable by a free kick (unless as outlined below)
- serious foul play
- spitting at an opponent or any other person
- violent conduct
- using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures
- receiving a second caution in the same match

Denying a goal or obvious goal scoring opportunity

Where a player denies the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by a deliberate handball offence the player is sent off wherever the offence occurs.

Where a player commits an offence against an opponent within their own penalty area which denies an opponent an obvious goal-scoring opportunity and the referee awards a penalty kick, the offending player is cautioned unless:

- The offence is holding, pulling or pushing - or
- The offending player does not attempt to play the ball or there is no possibility for the player making the challenge to play the ball - or
- The offence is one which is punishable by a red card wherever it occurs on the field of play (e.g. serious foul play, violent conduct etc.)

In all the above circumstances the player is sent off.

The following must be considered in the case of Denying an Obvious Goal scoring Opportunity:

- distance between the offence and the goal
- general direction of the play
- likelihood of keeping or gaining control of the ball
- location and number of defenders

Law 13: Free Kick

Direct and indirect free kicks are awarded to the opposing team of a player guilty of an offence. Free kicks are taken from where the offence occurred, with the following exceptions:

- indirect free kicks to the attacking team for an offence inside the opponents' penalty area are taken from the nearest point on the penalty area line which runs parallel to the goal line
- free kicks to the defending team in their goal area may be taken from anywhere in that area

The ball must be stationary, and is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves, except for a free kick to the defending team in their penalty area where the ball is in play when it is kicked directly out of the penalty area.

Until the ball is in play, all opponents must remain:

- 5 meters (6 yards from the ball)
- Outside the Retreat Line for all free kicks inside the opponents' penalty area.

Indirect free kick signal

The referee indicates an indirect free kick by raising the arm above the head; this signal is maintained until the kick has been taken and the ball touches another player or goes out of play.

An indirect free kick must be retaken if the referee fails to signal that the kick is indirect and the ball is kicked directly into the goal.

- if a direct free kick is kicked directly into the opponents' goal, a goal is awarded
- if an indirect free kick is kicked directly into the opponents' goal, a goal kick is awarded
- if a direct or indirect free kick is kicked directly into the team's own goal, a corner kick is awarded

Law 14: Penalty Kick

A penalty kick shall be taken from the penalty mark. All players, with the exception of the defending goalkeeper and the player taking the kick, shall be outside the penalty area but within the field of play, and not less than 6 yards from the ball (and behind the ball) until it has been kicked.

The goalkeeper remains on his/her goal line, facing the kicker, between the goalposts until the ball has been kicked.

The player taking the penalty kick must not touch the ball a second time until it has been played or touched by another player.

Play shall be extended at half-time, or at full-time to allow a penalty kick to be taken. In the event that time is extended, play shall end when the kick is complete.

For offences and sanctions at penalty kicks, please refer to the FIFA Laws of the Game.

Law 15: Throw in

A throw-in is awarded to the opponents of the player who last touched the ball when the whole of the ball passes over the touchline, on the ground or in the air.

Players taking a throw in shall face the field of play and have part of both feet on the ground on or behind the touch line. The thrower shall use both hands to throw the ball from behind and over their head. The ball shall be in play immediately after it enters the field of play.

Players taking a throw in must not touch the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player.

The normal throw-in rule will apply. If not properly taken, one re-throw will be given. If still not properly taken, the game will be restarted by a throw in from the opposing team.

Law 16: Goal Kick

When the whole of the ball has crossed the goal line, either on the ground or in the air, excluding that portion between the goalposts having last been played or touched by a member of the attacking team, a goal kick shall be awarded to the defending team. The ball shall be kicked into play from a point within that half of the penalty area nearest to where the ball crossed the goal line.

At the taking of a goal kick, all opponents shall be outside the penalty area and not less than 6 yards from the ball until it has been kicked into play. The ball is in play when it has directly left the penalty area.

The player taking the goal kick must not play or touch the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player.

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

Law 17: Corner Kick

When the whole of the ball has crossed the goal line, either on the ground or in the air, excluding that portion between the goal posts, having last been played or touched by a member of the defending team, a corner kick shall be awarded to the attacking team.

The corner kick shall be taken within the corner arc nearest to where the ball crossed the goal line. All opponents shall be not less than 6 yards from the ball until it has been kicked.

The player taking the corner-kick must not play or touch the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player.

A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick, but only against the opposing team.

FAQ Retreat Line

Why are we using a Retreat Line?

The Retreat Line has been introduced to allow our young players to learn and gain confidence in how to play the ball out from the back and play forward to attack, as opposed to the goalkeeper “sending it” aimlessly down the field.

At these times, the “attacking” team is required to drop back behind the Retreat Line. The goalkeeper can then pass the ball to one of his team-mates without the pressure of an opposing player nearby.

When the team-mate touches the ball, play will resume as normal and the “attacking” team can move inside the Retreat Line.

When will play be stopped by the Referee?

Should a member of the “attacking” team come inside the Retreat Line too soon (and interfere with play) or touch the ball inside that area before the goal keeper’s team-mate, the Referee will blow their whistle and the initial distribution re-taken.

What if the ball leaves the field of play prior to the teammate touching the ball?

In this case, the play will resume from a throw-in or corner kick as appropriate according to FIFA Law.

What if the goalkeeper lays the ball on the ground after a catch and save?

The ball would still be considered in play as the retreat line only addresses situations involving a Goal Kick or a Free Kick to the defending team from within its own goal area. As the ball is still considered in play any player can challenge the ball once it is placed on the ground.

What if the goal-keeper’s teammate deliberately lets the ball run in order to waste time?

The Retreat line has been introduced to aid in the technical development of players and should not be used as a time wasting tactic. Coaches are strongly encouraged to instruct players in the spirit of the game.

What if the goalkeeper boots the ball over the Retreat Line instead of passing to a teammate?

Goalkeepers may choose not to play out of the back and instead to kick the ball up-field over the Retreat Line. This is not against the rules and the game will not be stopped. Once the ball crosses the Retreat line, it can be touched by any player on the field and can be deemed “live and in play.”

What if the goalkeeper wants to play a quick ball? Do they have to wait for the “attacking” team to retreat?

No, Goalkeepers may choose to play the ball quickly from a goal kick or after making a save. They do not need to wait for the attacking team to retreat past the Retreat Line. This supports the development of players’ decisions making skills.

FAIR PLAY FOR PLAYERS, COACHES & PARENTS

Coaches, managers, team officials and parents shall not criticize game officials at any time and should encourage the same attitude and good sportsmanship amongst all players and supporters. The game official shall endeavor to conduct the game in a proper manner at all times.

Coaches shall coach from their technical area. If not marked, a technical area is defined as extending one (1) yard on either side of the designated seating area and forward up to one (1) yard from the touch line. Coaches, players, and parents may not position themselves behind the goal.