U4/U5 Soccer Program:

Modified Laws for
U4/U5
Revised April 2026

emsa north
Mini Community Premier

U4/U5 program

In all cases, the requirement for safety of all players supersedes these rules.

Objectives of the U4/U5 game

- To provide a safe, supportive, challenging environment
- To maximize playing time for each player
- To prepare the players for the 5 vs 5 game
- Develop passing and receiving skills
- Help create a passion for the game

Law I – The Field:

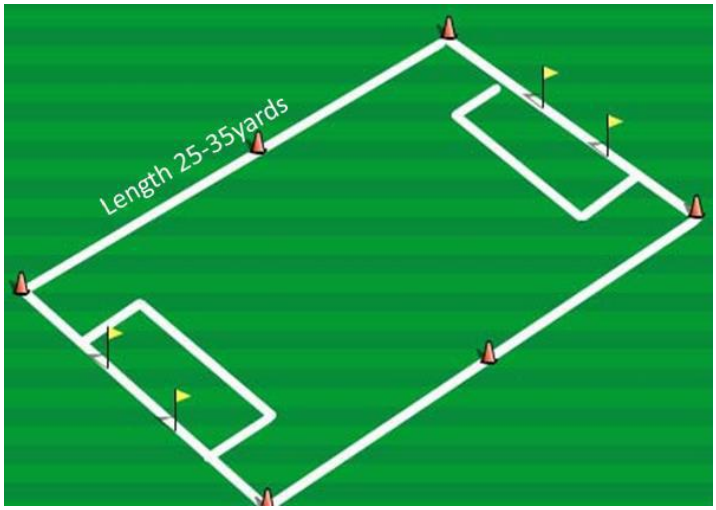
A. Dimensions:
- The field of play should be rectangular. 50ft x 64ft. The field should be close to these dimensions; however, field space may dictate smaller or larger fields. Try to be a close as possible.

B. Markings:
- Sidelines and end-lines with pylons or disks.
- Other marking not necessary for the enjoyment and development at this age group.

C. Goals:
- Please use either a popup net or pylons, goal mouth for both are to be the same width. (approx. 4ft)

U5 teams use Popup Nets.

1. Cones may be used to create a goal area forming a rectangular box 2 meters deep x 4 meters long.
2. If a team is missing their popup net, flags or cones can be used to set a goal. Both sides should follow this format.



Law II- The Ball: Size 3 as indicated on the ball

Law III- Number of Players:

A. Team format is 4 V 4 with at least both teams having a minimum of 3 players each ready to play.

B. Number of players on the field at any time will be 8. Each team with 4.

C. Substitutions: Suggest 2-3 minutes rotating shifts or during any stoppage of play.

D. Playing time: each player SHALL receive equal playing time.

E. Teams and games will be co-ed.

Law IV – Player equipment:

- Footwear: Outdoor running shoes
- MANDATORY. Shin-guards and socks covering the shin-guards.
- Jersey/ T-Shirt: Supplied by community. Numbers on the jerseys are not required
- NO item of jewelry of any sort will be allowed on the field of play. Medic Alert Bracelets if required must be covered or padded in order to be safe for all players.
- Water bottle, players should be discouraged from sharing water bottles

Law V- Referee:

There are no referees at U5 and the players need to be in close contact with the instructional coach, each team should have a representative on the field. Each person (preferably the coach) will take their half a field. Coaches need to demonstrate cooperation, winning is not the objective at this age group.

Law VII- Duration of Game:

A. The first 25 minutes will consist of skills and drills.

B. Short break for snacks

C. Then a 25 minutes game will be played. There are no half times to worry about changing sides.

D. Home team has preference for the side of the field they wish to play on.

Law VIII – The Start of play:

A. The start of play shall consist of the visiting team starting with the ball at center.

B. The defending team shall be 4 meters away from the center at any start from center.

C. The ball may be played in any direction but cannot be touched by the same player twice or before another player has touched it. If this occurs the ball must be restarted.

Law IX – Ball in and out of play:

A. Any ball played out of bounds shall be awarded to the opposite team that put it out of the field of play. A kick-in is awarded, there are no throw-ins for U5 teams.

B. Opposing players are to be moved back at least 6 meters from the player taking the kick-in.

Law X – Method of Scoring:

A. Goals will be awarded when the ball is kicked into the net, or between the goal posts (pylons, flags).

B. For the protection of the sweeper keeper no scoring may occur **inside** the goal area. Coaches should stop play if players are converging on the sweeper keeper inside the goal area.

C. A goal can be scored from anywhere on the field **except** inside the goal area or directly from a kick-off, goal-kick, free-kick or restart of play. All kicks are indirect meaning another player, from either team, must touch the ball before a goal is counted.

D. Goals must be scored no higher than 3 feet. (If there are no nets)

E. **No stats or scores are kept at this age level.**

Law XI – Off-Side: There are no off-sides.

Law XII – Fouls and misconduct:

All fouls are IN-DIRECT: this means the ball must be first passed to another player before a goal can be scored. Most fouls are not intentional, but rather are due to lack of understanding or coordination.

A. No pushing, hitting, kicking, spitting or holding an opponent and no intentional hand balls.

B. All fouls or free kicks will result in an **indirect** free kick with the opponents 6 meters away. Indirect means it must touch another player from any team before a goal can be scored.

Law XIII – Free Kick:

A. All free kicks are **indirect** and the ball must clearly move before it is considered in play. If the balldoes not move the player retakes the kick.

B. A goal shall not be scored until the ball has been played or touched by a second player of either team. (**Indirect**)

C. No free kicks shall be taken by the attacking team within the defending teams' goal area.

D. Coaches should whistle any attacking play that moves inside the defending team goal area to protect the keeper. Play is restarted with a goal kick.

E. Restarts by a goal kick require moving opposing players back 6 meters to create playing space.

F. The ball must touch a teammate of the keeper before the opposing team can attack the ball.

Law XIV – Penalty Kicks: No penalty kicks

Law XV – Throw-in:

At this stage of player development, there are no throw-ins.

When a player kicks the ball beyond the sidelines, a kick-in is awarded to the opposing team.

(Technique)

- Ball is placed on sideline
- Opposing players are moved back 6 meters from the ball
- The ball must be touched by a teammate of the kicking team before opposing players can attach the ball
- If any of the above are not followed the kick-in is retaken and play proceeds.

Law XVI- Goal Kick:

When a player on the attacking side of the ball is the last person to touch the ball causing it to go over the opposing team's goal line and not between the goal posts, a goal kick is awarded.

A. Goal kicks will occur when the attacking team puts the ball across their opponents' goal line.

B. This will result in the goalkeeper kicking the ball from anywhere in the goal area.

C. All opposing players must be 6 meters back from the top of the goal area.

D. The ball must move outside the goal area and **be touched by a teammate of the goalie** before the opposing team can challenge the ball.

Law XVII- Corner Kicks

When a player on the defensive side of the ball is the last person to touch the ball causing it to go over their own goal line and not between the goal posts, a corner kick is awarded to the attacking team.

A. A corner kick will be awarded when the opposing team.

B. The corner kick is taken at the corner closest to where the ball exited the playing area.

C. All corner kicks are indirect; a goal may not be scored directly from a corner kick without the ball touching any other player.

Law XVIII- Goalkeeper

A goalkeeper is not used in the U5 4v4 format. The Sweeper Keeper is used meaning the player closest to the net can use their hands.

Recommendations:

- Both teams shake hands after the game.
- Do not leave any child unattended after the game; ensure all players have a ride home.
- It is a good idea to create a snack schedule so that all parents may contribute. Allergies should be determined, if any, and communicated to all parents.
- Having fun is more important that goal scoring. Use this opportunity to teach players good sportsmanship, safe play and respect for each other, their opponents, and the coaches.
- Respect the other coaches; all of you are involved because you care and want your respective teams to experience maximum enjoyment from the game.
- Write out your practice plan and use shorter skills building activities versus longer, repetitive exercises; keep your drills short, 4 to 6 minutes is optimal to keep interest up.
- Don't worry if an activity doesn't immediately produce desired results, use positive encouragement and the results will come.
- Keep drills simple and use simple language. Explain the activity but keep it simple.
- Have fun, remember that you are an ambassador that leads by example.