

Sunday Soccer League Rules

The purpose of this document is to provide some guidance for players and referees in our competition, so as to provide clarification of the rules. They are not exhaustive but instead highlight some of the key points of the game, given experience of our competition.

Our competition, although competitive, is intended to be fun, social and non-confrontational. The rules reflect that. Take a few moments to familiarise yourself with them if you don't already know them.

Game format

A game consists of two 25 minute halves (with 5 minutes at half-time). A team consists of 7 players with a maximum of 4 male players. A team must field at least 5 players otherwise they forfeit the game. Substitutions can be rolling (i.e. players roll-on and roll-off at any time during the game). If the keeper is being substituted or is swapping with an outfield player, he/she must inform the referee before doing so.

Kick-off

The referee tosses a coin (or players paper-rock-scissors in the absence of a coin) to determine kick-off! The team who wins the toss chooses playing direction and kicks-off. Kick-off is taken by two players and, upon the referee's whistle, should be taken in a forward direction.

Goal kicks

A goal kick takes place if the ball fully crosses the goal line either side of the goal with the last touch coming from an attacking player. If ball last touches a defending player (including the keeper), a corner kick is awarded to the attacking team (see diagram on next page). The goal kick is taken from the ground (not in hands). It can be taken by any member of a team. If the keeper receives the ball whilst in play, they may throw or kick the ball from their hands if they wish.

Back-pass rule

The back-pass rule is not enforced. Therefore, the keeper can handle the ball after receiving it from their own team mate.

Off-side rule

Due to the lack of assistant referees, the off-side rule is not enforced. You may goal-hang as much as you like but remember that this may leave short at the back!

Fouls

Please keep in mind that this is a friendly, mixed comp and matches should be played in that manner. Therefore, no sliding tackles are permitted. Referees should not refrain from stopping play for a foul. The following fouls are punished by a free-kick (or penalty if in the penalty area). The most commonly committed fouls are:

Tackle without the ball/obstruction/tackle from behind

The tackling player contacts the player, not the ball! The tackling player impedes or obstructs the player. The tackling player tackles from behind.

Over-zealous shoulder-charge/body-check

Opponents can challenge the player with the ball in a shoulder-to-shoulder situation. This usually occurs when a player is running with the ball and is tracked by an opponent. However, an opponent cannot run in at pace and 'charge' or 'body check' a player off the ball, whether they get the ball or not. This is a foul.

Handball

A player is deemed to have a committed handball if, in the opinion of the referee, he/she intentionally moves hand to ball and the ball contacts him/her below the shoulder. This is a very grey area and is open to interpretation (and often is at the highest level) but can be clarified a little through example.

- A close-range shot/pass hits an opponents hand in situ accidentally – NO FOUL
- An opponent raises an arm to protect themselves from a close-range shot/pass – FOUL

Sin bin

When players conduct themselves in a manner that is not in the spirit of a mixed, social competition, the referee should in the first instance warn them that their actions are inappropriate (such as sliding tackles, barging, dangerous play, over-zealous play, etc) and ask them to modify the manner in which they play. On the second offence, the referee is entitled to 'sin bin' the player for 5 minutes (the referee has discretion to sin bin players for a first offence if deemed appropriate).

The player must leave the field and cannot be replaced for the duration of the 'sin bin' penalty. After 5 minutes the referee should call the player back onto the pitch. The purpose of this rule is to promote a style of play that does not deter players from playing in the competition.

Free kicks

The referee should allow a 'wall' to be erected 10 yards from the ball. The free-kick is then taken after the referee blows the whistle. Please note that the referee should advise all players that the free-kick is to be taken only after the whistle.

Penalty kicks

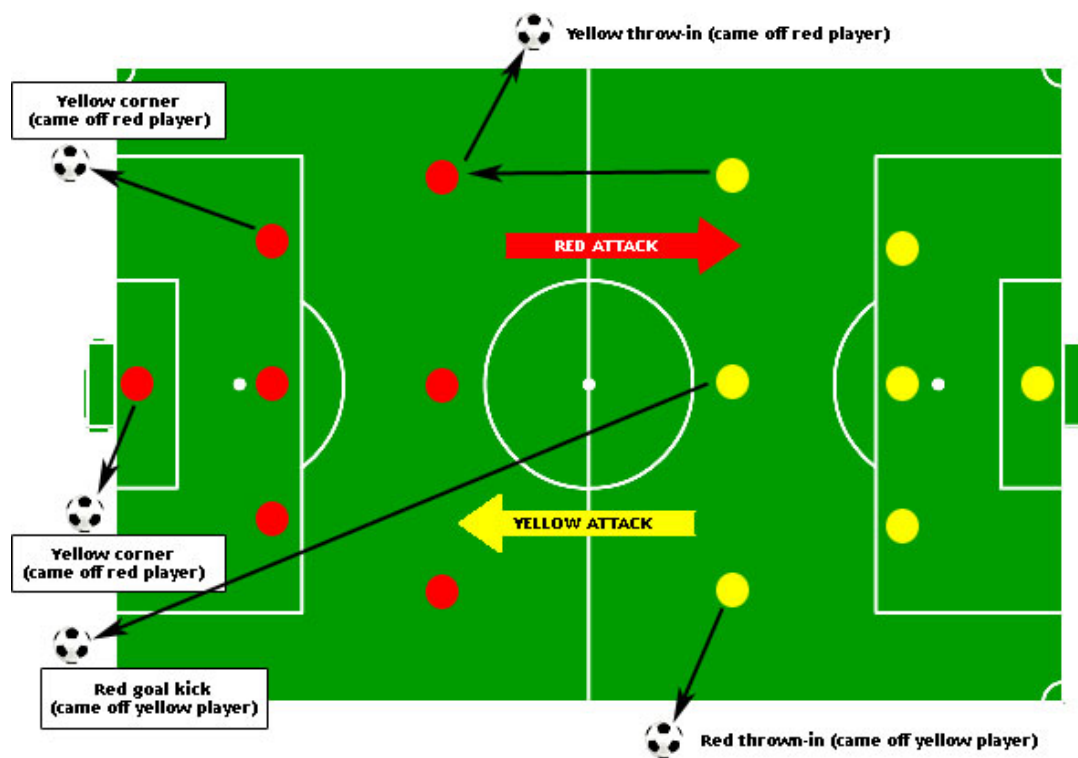
Penalty kicks are awarded for most fouls committed in the penalty area (see fouls above). If the keeper has control of the ball, no player may challenge him/her. Referees should be especially vigilant when corner kicks are taken. The penalty kick can be taken by any member of the team. The only stipulation is that if the keeper is female, the penalty must be taken by another female player. The keeper must not move off their line until the ball has been kicked (otherwise, the penalty should be retaken). No rebounds are allowed.

Throw-ins

The ball is thrown-in by the team who did not last contact the ball before it crossed the side-line (see diagram, below). When throwing-in the ball, both feet should be on the ground and the ball should be released from behind the head with both hands. If a player performs a netball or basketball pass, the referee should instruct them to retake it.

The pitch (throw-ins, goal kicks and corners)

For those of you who haven't played before, here is a crude representation of the pitch and players to indicate who is awarded throw-ins in different situations and the difference between a goal kick and a corner.



Restart after a goal

After a goal is scored, kick-off is taken from the centre circle by the team who conceded the goal.

Minimum players for a result to stand

If for a scheduled match a team cannot field a full 7 players (including a minimum of 3 female players), they may recruit registered players from other teams for the match. However, the team must comprise of at least 4 players from the original team for the result to stand. If the team is not able to field 4 original players the rules for a forfeit apply.

Forfeiting games

If a team cannot field at least 5 players registered in their team for a given match, the match is forfeited. Teams may recruit registered players from other teams but at least 5 players need to be from the original team for the result to stand.

In the event of a forfeit, the winning team will be awarded goals determined by their average goal difference (rounded up) in the season to-date.

e.g. A team with a goal difference of 34 after 10 games will be awarded a score of $4 - 0$ ($34/10$) = 3.4 ~ 4.

That's it!

The full rule book is massive and this document would easily grow if it outlined all of the game's laws. These pointers should get the games going and make them fair and competitive. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to ask the referee.

Enjoy and good luck.

General guidance for referees

As a referee most of the time officiating a match is spent watching where no intervention is required. However, referees are required to make decisions during a match and should not be reluctant to do so. A well officiated match is one where the referee has a strong grasp on the game and makes decisions when required. When referees are apathetic, it often leads to discord as teams resort to making decisions themselves and the element of impartiality is lost.

During a game, the referee does not need to blow their whistle for every event that occurs. Instead, the referee should only blow their whistle when play needs to be started or stopped (e.g. kick-off, foul or free-kick). When other events occur, such as throw-ins, corners and goal-kicks the referee does not need to blow their whistle but instead indicate to players whose play it is (e.g. white team throw-in; black team corner). Usually, the players work this out themselves and no intervention is required. However, the referee should intervene and make a decision when a dispute occurs.