

## **Basic Soccer Rules for Recreational Play**

The following are the basic rules regarding soccer. This is a good hand out to print and give to the parents on your team. Especially, if you are coaching a younger team (both in terms of experience and age)

### **1. NO HANDS!!!**

Most people can tell you this rule about soccer. Only the goalie is allowed to use their hands. A couple of points to clarify:

- a. The hand ball rule includes any part of your body from the tips of the fingers to the shoulder.
- b. A player can not “handle” the ball. If a ball is kicked and hits a player’s hand or arm, this is not a hand ball. The referee may use his/her own judgment to determine whether or not a hand ball is accidental or intentional contact.

When is the goalie not allowed to use their hand? When the pass came directly from one of their own teammates. This is called the back-pass rule. The goalkeeper must use their feet in this case. An infraction will result in an indirect kick from the point of contact.

### **2. THROW-INS**

A throw-in is taken when the ball crosses a sideline and leaves the field. The two basic soccer rules for a proper throw-in are to have both feet on the ground and to throw the ball with both hands over the head. For instructional reasons, U8 and younger is usually given more than one chance at a throw-in.

### **3. CORNER KICKS & GOAL KICKS**

A corner kick or goal kick is taken when the ball leaves the field across the end line. If the offensive team kicks it out, play is restarted with a goal kick. If the defensive team kicks it out, play is restarted with a corner kick.

The goal kick is taken from anywhere inside the “goalie box” as it is affectionately called. It can be taken by any player, but the goalkeeper.

The corner kick is taken from – yes, you guessed it – the corner nearest to where the ball left the field.

FIFA soccer rules state that the ball is not back “in play” until it leaves the penalty area, the large box outside of the “goalie box”. No one can touch the ball until it leaves the penalty area, and if the ball is not kicked properly to leave the area, the kick must be retaken.

## **4. FOULS**

The common rule of thumb on fouls is “If it looks like a foul, it probably is.” A player cannot kick, trip, jump at, charge, strike, push, hold, or spit at an opponent. Soccer can be a physical, contact sport when two opposing players both want the soccer ball. Bumping and going shoulder to shoulder while competing for the ball is not a foul until the hands or elbow come up. This is a judgment call and not all refs call the same way but the ref is ALWAYS right.

## **5. DIRECT AND INDIRECT KICKS**

A direct kick can be kicked directly into the goal resulting in a chance to score by the kicker. An indirect kick cannot result in a goal by the kicker. The kick MUST be touched by another player before it can go into the goal- the kicker and a second person.

*For an indirect kick, the referee will hold one arm straight up in the air until the second person touches the ball. No arm up, it's a direct kick.*

There are many soccer rules around what causes a direct or indirect kick.

In general, a direct kick comes from a contact foul or hand ball. Everything else is indirect.

U5- U8 play is all indirect kicks.

## **6. PENALTY KICK**

A penalty kick is a type of direct kick. It results from a contact foul or hand ball by the defending team within the penalty area – the large box on either end of the field.

The ball is placed on the penalty spot, 12 yards in front of the center of the goal. All players must remain outside the penalty area and the penalty arc until the ball is kicked. The goalkeeper must have both feet on the goal line until the ball is kicked. If after the ball is kicked, it rebounds off of the goal or the keeper and stays on the field, the ball is “live” and anyone can play it. Penalty Kicks are not called in U5- U8 play.

## **7. TWO-TOUCH RULE**

A player cannot touch the ball twice in a row when putting the ball in play. It occurs frequently on kick-offs or direct and indirect kicks. If a player barely hits the ball and decides to take another swipe at it, that is a two-touch. The two touch rule also applies to throw-ins. A player can not throw the ball in and then kick it.

## **8. YELLOW AND RED CARDS**

This is the way punishment is given in soccer. The FIFA soccer rules give the guidelines for when to give a yellow card to a player and when to give a red card. If a player is given two yellow cards in the same game, that is equal to a red card. A red card can be given at any time without the player first receiving a yellow card. When a player gets a red card, they must leave the game and their team must play short. An ejected player cannot be replaced and the player is suspended from any further play on that day or next game, whichever comes first.

## **9. OFFSIDE**

Offside can not be called on a corner kick, goal kick, or throw-in.

It is not an offense for a player to be in an offside position. The player must be involved in active play as determined by the referee to be called offside.

As quoted from the FIFA soccer rules:

**A player is in an offside position if:** *he is nearer to his opponents' goal line than both the ball and the second last opponent.*

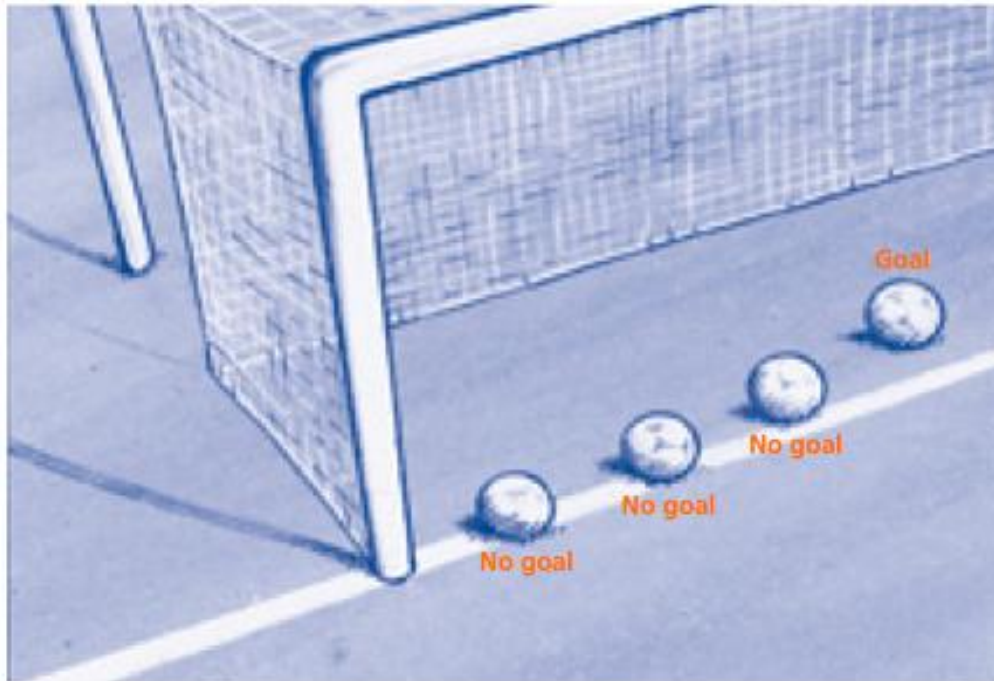
An offensive or attacking player can't be ahead of the ball and involved in the play unless there is a defender between him and the goalkeeper. A player can not hang out at the other team's goal waiting for the ball.

You can't be offside if you are standing on your half of the field. Also, the offside rule applies when the ball is kicked, not when the player receives the ball.

This can be a hard rule to understand. Don't get too hung up on it. Trust the referees... They have good diagrams of what is and isn't considered offside.

## 10. BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY

The ball is in play unless the whole circumference of the ball crosses the touchline. A goal is scored if the whole circumference of the ball crosses the goal line between the goalposts and under the crossbar. Refer to the image.



*You may also refer to U.S. Soccer Federation or STYSA websites for more detailed rules.*