

US YOUTH SOCCER

ADDENDUM

MODIFIED RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GAME FOR U8

Law 1 The Field of Play: dimensions are smaller to accommodate the u8 players and are appropriate for the movement capabilities of six- and seven-year-old children. These adjusted dimensions provide more practical space allowing players to be successful.

Field Markings: the center circle gives the players a concrete marking on where to be for the kick-off. The corner arc gives the young player a concrete place to put the ball to kick it back onto the field of play. While kids this young will execute corner kick plays to a modest degree taking a kick from the corner is a reasonable way for them to put the ball into play and provides continuity with all other age groups. However, the center circle and the corner arc for U8 Small Sided Games are not mandatory field markings.

Law 2 The Ball: must be a size three. The smaller ball is lighter and more easily kicked, received, dribbled and passed.

Law 3 The Number of Players: there are goalkeepers in the U8. It will be 5 field players and one goal keeper. The kids want to be where the action is and at this age it is around the ball. This will provide the opportunity for the children to further develop their running, jumping and kicking coordination. These are valuable traits for all soccer players to develop. The smaller number of players takes into account the egocentrism of this age group and therefore allows each child more opportunities for shooting, passing and dribbling the ball. With fewer players on the field each child has an increased number of contacts with the ball and has more actual playing time. Additionally the players will be required to make more decisions and experience repeated game situations frequently. The involvement of players will be more consistent. While learning both offense and defense, players will become well rounded and will understand more readily the roles and importance of teammates. Children in the U8 age group will intentionally play in pairs. The smaller number of players on the field will make it easier and more likely that passing and receiving will occur.

The rationale for substitutions at any stoppage is to give more playing time as noted. Allowing subs at any stoppage is on the same page as FIFA. The only thing that we need remember is that play must be stopped for all substitutions; we can never allow on-the-fly substitution.

Law 5 The Referee: a referee is not really needed for this age group. Instead a parent or a coach should officiate the game. All rule infringements shall be briefly explained to the offending player. It is strongly recommended that the adult officiating the U8 game attend the Grade 9 referee course. Coaches must be out of the field at the side lines or designated coach area. One coach will be the referee in the first half, and the other coach will be the official in the second half.

Law 6 The Assistant Referees: none are needed.

Law 7 The Duration of the Match: the game **is divided in two halves of 20 minutes** with unlimited substitutions.

Law 10 Goal Scored: shall conform to FIFA.

Law 11 Offside: there shall be no offside called during these games.

Law 12 Fouls and Misconduct: no caution or send off shall be issued to players. If a child is being too rambunctious then the game official will ask the coach to make a substitution of that player to give the child a chance to calm down before returning to play.

Law 13 Free Kicks: all free kicks shall be direct. This will keep the game flowing and keep the attention of the kids.

Law 14 The Penalty Kick: According with FIFA rules. Keeper can't grab the ball out of the penalty box. That will be a free kick.

Law 15 The Throw-In: As recommended by FIFA.

Law 16 The Goal Kick: the kick should be allowed to be taken from anywhere out of the penalty box. Place the ball anywhere inside of the penalty box

Law 17 The Corner Kick: per FIFA. The defending players must stand at least four yards away from the ball until it is in play.

⇒ Playing Time: A minimum of at least 50% playing time is required.

⇒ No score or standings should be kept.

ADVANTAGES OF PLAYING SMALL SIDED GAMES

- ☐ More time with the coach
- ☐ Energetic workouts due to playing both offense and defense
- ☐ More efficient use of field space

- ☐ Matches can be played simultaneously across a full size field
- ☐ Children are physically more efficient in smaller space
- ☐ Children are actively involved for a longer period of time
- ☐ It takes less time to score a goal or advance to goal
- ☐ Greater success rate for the players

US Youth Soccer Recommendations

- ❖ Opposing coaches, players and parents should shake hands after each match.
- ❖ Parent/coaches, non-participating players and spectators should be there to enjoy and encourage the activity of the youngsters.
- ❖ Spectator and team benches should be on opposite sides of the field.
- ❖ No alcoholic beverages or tobacco products will be consumed or allowed near the playing area.
- ❖ No slide tackles to be allowed in this age group.
- ❖ Coaches of U8 teams should attend the U6/U8 Youth Module coaching course and the Grade 9