



We build strong **kids**, strong **families**,  
strong **communities**.

# Soccer League Rules of Play Spring 2009



**U-4, U-5, U-6, U-7, U-8**

**CARING**

**HONESTY**

**RESPECT**

**RESPONSIBILITY**

## **OUR MISSION**

A worldwide charitable fellowship united by a common loyalty to Jesus Christ  
for the purpose of helping persons grow in spirit, mind and body

## 1.0 ELIGIBILITY

Participation in the program governed by these rules of play shall be open to all individuals interested in playing soccer. All players will be assigned to teams by the YMCA.

- 1.1 No player may play on more than one YMCA team in this competition.
- 1.2 Division groupings are as follows: Under-4, Under-5, Under-6, Under-7, Under-8. A player's assignment to a particular division is determined by his/her age as of July 31, 2008. For example, a player who was 7 years old on July 31 would be assigned to the Under-8 division.
- 1.3 Players may play in an older age group if they so desire, but not in a younger age group.
- 1.4 Penalties – Responsibility for the player's eligibility within his/her respective division rests with his team organization. In the event that the ineligibility is detected for any reason, his/her team may forfeit all games during which the player was ineligible and the player will be suspended from further play for the remainder of that season.

## 2.0 WELFARE OF THE PLAYER

- 2.1 The team coach, or designated "responsible adult," is responsible for the welfare of the players on his/her team. The Under-4 through Under-8 Boys & Girls leagues will be played with a minor emphasis on soccer league rules or the competitive element stressed in older league divisions. Players should learn the basics of how to play soccer and hopefully develop an appreciation for the game and its fun side.
- 2.2 The coach may stop the game at any time for reasons of injury or player welfare. It is the responsibility of the coach to enforce the laws of the game, and those aspects of these rules designated at his/her responsibility.
- 2.3 All teams will be allowed a maximum of one (1) practice per week during the season. Before the season begins, teams are allowed a maximum of two (2) practices per week, one being their scheduled weeknight practice and the other a Saturday option. These pre season options may not begin until the date prescribed by the YMCA. Any coach that abuses the above rule will be issued a warning in writing by the YMCA Sports Office. Any further abuses will result in suspension of the coach for the rest of the season.

## 3.0 APPAREL

Prior to the commencement of play the coaches shall inspect all players and substitutes for correct apparel.

- 3.1 At the time of inspection, the following equipment is mandatory:
  - A. All players must wear acceptable and nominally identical uniforms, consisting of jersey, socks, shorts, shin guards and suitable footwear (rubber cleats without toe cleats).
  - B. In the U-7 and U-8 divisions, goalkeepers must wear vests/pinnies distinctively different from the other players on both teams.

### 3.2 Illegal or dangerous apparel

- A. Tennis shoes, baseball/softball cleats, football cleats.
- B. Metal cleats of any type.
- C. Sharp or badly worn cleats, or those which are longer than  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch or less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch in diameter at any point.
- D. Any cleats which have unnaturally sharp projections. (No toe cleats allowed).
- E. The coach will direct the removal of any dangerous apparel, defined as:
  - 1. Rings
  - 2. Watches
  - 3. Earrings
  - 4. Necklaces or hair accessories with hard projections
  - 5. Metal clips on sweatband
  - 6. Medallions
  - 7. Caps (except stocking caps) See 3.5
- F. Splints or plaster casts are allowed at the discretion of the coaches if sufficiently padded.
- G. No jeans or pants with zippers are allowed. (Only sweat pants are allowed.)

3.3 Coaches should advise players who wear glasses to wear sports glasses with eye glass straps.

3.4 Protective Padding – Only goalkeepers (in U-7 & U-8) may wear knee pads and elbow pads in addition to regular uniforms. (Goalkeepers are allowed to wear sweat pants.) Shin guards are required, but no other form of padding is allowed on field players. In the event that a player injury demands support of protection, only properly designed support bandages may be used. No form of padding designed for any other type of support may be worn on the field of play.

3.5 Head Gear – Head gear other than sweatbands may not be worn except stocking caps in inclement weather.

### 4.0 REGULATION FIELD MARKINGS AND DIMENSIONS

The field size shall be approximately as follows: Under 4/5/6: 35x25 yds; Under 7/8: 45x30 yds.  
The goal size shall be approximately as follows: Under 4/5/6: 4'x6'; Under 7/8: 6'6"x12'  
Field marking shall be as follows: Under 4/5/6: rectangle, center line, and goal area;  
Under 7/8: rectangle, center line, goal area, and penalty area.

### 5.0 LAWS OF THE GAME

All divisions will play strictly by the laws of the game as defined in these rules of competition and by FIFA.

- 5.1 Adult in Authority – Each team must be accompanied by an adult (18 years of age or older) at all scheduled games and practices. This adult is responsible for the conduct and well-being of all players on his/her team and may not leave the area until all children are picked up.
- 5.2 All fouls shall result in an INDIRECT free kick. Opponents shall be at least the following distance from the ball on free kicks, kickoffs or goal kicks: U-4,U-5&U-6: 5yds; U-7 & U-8: 6yds.
- 5.3 Goal kicks shall be taken from inside a rectangle extending from 3 yards on either side of the goal to 3 yards away from the end line. In U-7/8, the ball must leave the penalty area (big box) before the ball is in play, and must not pass the midfield line in the air.
- 5.4 There will be no offside rule.

## 6.0 RESPONSIBILITIES OF HOME AND VISITING TEAMS

- A. Abide by the rules of the league
- B. Demonstrate good sportsmanship and fair play
- C. Remove all debris from field after game
- D. Help develop a spirit of cooperation and good will for the program as a whole
- E. There shall be no use of tobacco or alcohol on or near the practice or playing field

## 7.0 RAIN POLICY

- 7.1 **PRACTICES at the YMCA Fields:** Practices at the YMCA, will be held if the Head Coach deems that field conditions are satisfactory. If a practice is to be cancelled the Head Coach will be notified by phone at least 45 minutes before their practice by the YMCA sports office. Practices that are cancelled will not be made up.

**GAMES at the YMCA Fields:** Unless field conditions are extremely unsuitable games will be played. If a game is cancelled the Head Coach will be notified by phone at least 45 minutes before their game by the YMCA sports office. Games that are cancelled by the YMCA will generally be made up during the week. The YMCA sports office will notify each Head Coach regarding rescheduled games.

**Please do not call the YMCA to check on practice or games.  
Call your Head Coach.**

- 7.2 **PRACTICES & GAMES at Crockett Park Fields:** Call the Crockett Park hotline at 373-7752. The City of Brentwood determines field availability. Practices that are cancelled will not be made up. Games that are cancelled by the City/YMCA will generally be made up during the week. The YMCA Sports Office will notify each Head Coach regarding rescheduled games.

**Please do not call the YMCA to check on practice or games.  
Call your Head Coach or the Crockett Park Hotline.**

- 7.3 In case of bad weather during a game in which the YMCA staff or coach calls a stoppage of play, the game will be rescheduled on another date by the coaches & YMCA sports office, unless the first half is already completed. If the first half is completed at the time of the stoppage of play, it will stand as a completed regulation game. (See also 8.1)

## 8.0 ABANDONED GAMES

The coach reserves the right at any time to abandon a game (call stoppage of play and leave the field) under the following condition: Extreme climatic conditions in which the playing conditions have become unsuitable or the possibility of danger exists to players, coaches, spectators, etc.

- 8.1 If a game is abandoned due to climatic conditions before the first half is completed, the game will be replayed.

## 9.0 LATE ARRIVAL – Game time is forfeit time for all teams.

10.0 NUMBER OF PLAYERS

- 10.1 Teams will field four (4) players per field on two (2) fields for each game. (This **includes** the goalkeeper in U-7 & U-8) In the event a team is short some players, the two head coaches will decide whether to start with a lesser number of players or share some players to provide four (4) players per team.
- 10.2 U-4, U-5 & U-6 teams will not have a goal keeper. U-7 & U-8 teams will play with a sweeper/keeper who shall be indicated by the wearing of designated vests/pinnies or other approved apparel (distinctive cap or wrist bands).
- 10.3 Goalkeepers may not punt or throw the ball past the midfield line in the air. The ball must touch a player or the ground before crossing the midfield line. Violation of this rule shall result in an indirect free kick for the opposing team at the midfield line.

11.0 PLAYING TIME

Each member of each team must be allowed to play a minimum of half of each game as long as said player(s) shows up on time and is properly uniformed. The team coach is responsible for the above and will be subject to expulsion if found not in compliance. Players shall be rotated so that the same players do not play only the minimum throughout the season.

12.0 SUBSTITUTIONS (Same for Boys & Girls)

Players shall be substituted at the quarter, the half, and for an injured player. \*It will be optional to also substitute half way between each of the 4 quarter breaks. (e.g. at or near the 5 minute mark in U-7/8 and at or near the 4 minute mark in the U-4/5/6). The clock will continue to run during these substitutions.

- 12.1 When the play is stopped for an injury, a player may be substituted for the injured player.
- 12.2 In the U-7/8 divisions, a goalkeeper may switch with any player presently on the field when the ball is out of play.

13.0 DURATION OF GAMES

Under 4/5/6 Boys & Girls..... Four (4) ..... Quarters of 8 Minutes Each  
Under 7/8 Boys & Girls..... Four (4) ..... Quarters of 10 Minutes Each  
There will be a 1 minute substitution period between quarters and a 5 minute interval between halves.

14.0 GAME BALLS

Game balls must be leather or other approved material, according to the following:  
Under 4/5/6/7/8..... Regulation Size 3 Ball  
Coaches will be responsible for providing a game ball. It is recommended that players purchase a ball to practice with at home and bring to practices.

15.0 SCHEDULED KICK-OFF TIMES

Scheduled kick-off times shall be designated by the YMCA sports office. Teams shall NOT change kickoff times for any reason.

16.0 SPECTATOR CONDUCT

Positive team support is encouraged. Offensive language or behavior will **NOT** be tolerated. Each coach is responsible for the conduct of all persons on his/her team or supporting his/her team. SPECTATORS should remain AT LEAST THREE (3) FEET AWAY from the TOUCH LINES.

17.0 PROTESTS

No protests are allowed. Register your complaint, in writing, to the YMCA sports office.

18.0 TEAM COACHES

Only one coach or designated responsible person from each team (combined - 2 per field) will be responsible for calling the game.

18.1 NO ONE IS ALLOWED IN OR AROUND THE GOAL AREA. (Coaches may position players when the ball is dead but not venture around the goal area while the ball is in play.)

19.0 POSSESSION BY THE GOALKEEPER (U-7 & U-8 DIVISIONS ONLY)

Possession or control of the ball includes when the goalkeeper has the ball trapped by either or both hands. Outside the penalty area, the goalkeeper has no more privileges than any other player. It is an offence for a player to prevent a goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his hands. A player must be penalized for playing in a dangerous manner if he kicks or attempts to kick the ball when the goalkeeper is in the process of releasing it. It is an offence to restrict the movement of the goalkeeper by unfairly impeding him at the taking of a free kick or corner kick.

20.0 POST GAME ACTIVITY

At the conclusion of every game, both teams shall line up at the center of the field for a congratulatory handshake.

Pre/Post-Game Prayer

The coaches should take the opportunity to bring their team and parents together prior to or at the conclusion of each game to recite this prayer. This is part of the YMCA philosophy and we feel it should also be a part of our Youth Sports programs. If someone would like to offer their own prayer we would be happy for them to share. Here is an example of a team prayer:

Win or Lose,  
I pledge before God to do the best I can,  
to be a team player,  
and to respect my teammates,  
my opponents, and officials,  
and to improve myself in **spirit, mind, and body.**

If an occasion arises that is not fully covered by these rules of competition or interpretation there of, the YMCA Sports Office will decide such cases. Any rule changes will be sent in writing to all coaches after approval by the YMCA of Middle Tennessee Youth Sports Cabinet.

**HAVE FUN!**

## TERMS USED IN SOCCER

**Direct Free Kick (DFK)**      *The 10 offences listed below will be treated as **Indirect Free Kicks (IFK)** in the U-4, U-5, U-6, U-7 & U-8 divisions:*

1. Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent
2. Trips or attempts to trip an opponent
3. Jumps at an opponent
4. Charges an opponent
5. Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent
6. Pushes an opponent
7. Tackles an opponent to gain possession of the ball, making contact with the opponent before touching the ball
8. Holds an opponent
9. Spits at an opponent
10. Handles the ball deliberately (except for the goalkeeper within his own penalty area)

**Indirect Free Kick (IFK)**      An indirect free kick is awarded to the opponent when a player:

1. Plays in a dangerous manner
2. Impedes the progress of an opponent
3. Prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his hands

An IFK is also awarded when a goalkeeper, inside his penalty area, commits one of the following:

1. Takes more than six seconds while controlling the ball with his hands before releasing it from his possession
2. Touches the ball again with his hands after it has been released from his possession and has not touched any other player
3. Touches the ball with his hands after it has been deliberately kicked to him by a team-mate
4. Touches the ball with his hands after he has received it directly from a throw-in taken by a team-mate

A goal may not be scored directly from an IFK. It must touch another player, from either team, before it enters the goal. An IFK is used to put the ball in play after all infractions of the laws of the game.

**Free Kicks**                      DFK's, IFK's and Goal Kicks - when taken by a defender from within his own penalty area, the ball must clear the penalty area before it can be played by another player.

**Goal Kick**                      A free kick taken from anywhere within the goal box. A player cannot be put off-side directly from a goal kick.

**Corner Kick**

A free kick taken from the corner of the field on the side where the ball crossed the goal line and was last played by a defender. A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick since the ball is in play when it has moved. A player cannot be put off-side directly from a corner kick.

**Throw In**

When the ball passes completely over the touch-line (sideline) whether on the ground or in the air, it is thrown in by a player opposite to the team which last touched the ball. When throwing the ball in, the player must:

1. Keep both feet in contact with the ground when the ball is released
2. Throw the ball, from behind the head, evenly with both hands

An infraction of the above results in a throw-in for the opposing team. The ball may not be thrown directly into the opponent's goal.

Note: These are general meanings and do not include exact definitions of the Laws of the Game or all official interpretations of FIFA, soccer's governing body.