



1. General Guidance

- a. Your #1 job is to make the game **Safe, Fair, and Fun** for the kids.
- b. Smile and be friendly when on the field. Educate players to the laws of the game by verbalizing all your decisions. Ex. When a player picks up a rolling ball with their hands during play, you whistle, and tell them that in soccer they can't use their hands when the ball is in play. Only their feet. Don't coach though. Don't tell players where they should play or what they should do. That's the coach's job.
- c. Start the game on time and end on time! This is crucial!! Any reason to delay your game, should cut into that game's time, and not delay the start of the next game.
- d. Don't stop your watch. Let it run thru fouls, goals, substitutions, etc. It is running time for each half.
- e. Keep the games moving. The half goes by very fast. Don't be the source of delays by over talking to players, being picky about where a restart should be, or having the team do more than one re-take of a restart. Let the kids play.
- f. Hustle the kids along to set up for kick-offs (especially after a goal), goal kicks, and corner kicks. Use the coaches to help you align the players prior to a kick-off if necessary.

2. Pre-game Activities and Duties

- a. Come equipped with referee shirt, a watch, pencil, whistle, and game coin.
- b. Arrive at the field about 15 minutes before game time
- c. Inspect field and equipment for safety. Check field for holes (ankle breakers!), have coach mark the spot with flat cones and tell players to avoid those areas.
- d. Inspect players for proper shin guards, shoes, ensure players are not wearing jewelry and other unsafe items.
- e. Obtain game cards from coaches, and a tri-fold card from home team, stick game cards on trifold.
- f. Fill in game info on tri-fold (if available).
- g. Get and inspect game ball from home team. (Size 3 ball)
- h. Conduct coin toss at center circle with team captains
 - i. Do introductions and captains' handshakes
 - ii. Toss the coin and let the visiting team call while coin is in the air
 - iii. Winner of coin toss chooses "which side to attack"; the opponent kicks-off. Reverses for 2nd half kick-off.
 - iv. Record team kicking-off and direction.

3. Kick-Off

- a. Count the number of players (**U6**: 3v3, **U8**: 6v6 as of Fall 2008). In Spring: Coaches can agree to play with more or less, e.g. 4v4 would be fine in Spring. Also, teams don't have to play with an equal number of players on the field.
- b. Check that players are in their own half of the field. Ask them which goal they are kicking toward and have them point in the correct direction.
- c. Check that defenders are outside center circle.
- d. Start your watch (check to make sure it is running!) and then Whistle for kick-off. This is the recommended approach in order to make sure the watch is running and you avoid the panic of finding mid way thru the game that your watch isn't running or you forgot to start it.
- e. If defending team encroaches before the team has kicked the ball, blow whistle, educate players, and retake the kick-off.
- f. If the kicking team kicks the ball backwards, blow whistle, educate players, and retake the kick-off. If the player who kicks-off touches the ball a second time before anyone else (double touch), blow whistle, educate player, and allow them to kick-off again (Law says to give free kick to other team. At this level we educate and encourage second tries). If an infraction occurs for a third time and doesn't seem to affect the game (i.e. trifling), let it go and **KEEP THE GAME MOVING!**

4. During Play

In general, let them play and interfere as little as possible. Whistle only if necessary (i.e. all fouls, or when kids don't recognize that the ball is out of play and are continuing to play the ball). State the nature of stoppage and the proper restart and team taking the restart, e.g., "tripping by green team, blue takes a free kick", or "out on blue, throw-in for green", or "out off red, goal kick for yellow".

- a. **Throw-in:** (when: ball passes over the touch line, in the air or the ground) Signal with arm outstretched at 45 degrees angle pointing in the direction of the throw and say which color team gets the throw in, e.g. "Throw-in Green". If you forget which way Green is throwing, just say the words and don't point. You can also indicate the proper spot to take throw-in (within a yard or two of where it went out is fine), and remind thrower, if necessary, of the proper technique, e.g. "keep your feet on the ground when you throw", "make sure you throw the ball from behind and over your head". Give second tries if improper throw. Let game continue if re-take is also a foul throw.
- b. **Goal kick:** (when: ball passes over the goal line, last touched by attackers) Spot the ball about 5-6 yards out from the goal line and 1-3 yards outside goal post closest to the side it went out on. Back opponents off about 5-6 yards (U-6), or behind Penalty Area line (U-8). For U-8, the ball must be kicked beyond the Penalty Area line before it is in play and can be touched

by either team. If not, retake goal kick. If the first attempt is weak and you suspect the kicker will be unable to kick it past penalty area line on the second try, then move the ball closer to the penalty area line and retake. For U-6, consider it in play once it is kicked, as long as opponents were back 5-6 yards when kick is taken.

- c. **Corner kick:** (when: ball passes over the goal line, last touched by defenders) help spot ball, if necessary, within a yard of the corner (imagine corner arc). Back players off 5-6 yards (U-6) and 7-8 yards (U-8). Ball in play once it is kicked.
- d. **Goal:** say e.g. “goal for blue, green kick off”; bring the ball to center spot, either you or the player on team kicking off place ball at center mark, record goal, quickly get everyone in position (their own side of the field) and whistle for kickoff.
- e. **Fouls (Free Kicks):** such as kicking, tripping, charging, pushing, holding, dangerous play, etc., whistle, point in the direction of the restart, while saying the nature of foul and which team gets the free kick. If you get momentarily confused about the direction of the restart, just say which team gets the free kick. All fouls result in Direct Free Kicks in U6-U8. Indirect Free Kicks will be used beginning in U10. Spot the ball in the general location of the foul. Back opponents about 5-6 yds away from the ball in U-6 and 7-8 yards away from the ball in U-8. **NOTE: NEW PROCEDURE (Beginning 2006)** for all Free Kicks by the attacking team near the opponent’s goal move the ball back (away from the goal) to a point approx. 10 yards (U-6) and approx. 15 yards (U-8) from the goal. Since we are not using goal keepers, the defenders will be playing on the goal line to stop the kick. By moving the ball back, it provides the defending team more time to react to a ball kicked at them and avoid an injury from the ball hitting them in the face, stomach, etc.

5. Substitutions

- a. Substitution opportunities occur: 1. Mid-way through the first half, 2. Half-time, 3. Mid-way through the second half, and 4. Injury.
- b. About midway (U6: 5 min; U8: 10 min) through first half, look for natural stoppage, such as for throw-in, goal kick, or corner kick. If no natural stoppage occurs during this time, stop play when ball is around the mid-field area. Whistle and yell “Substitution break, One Minute!” Do not stop play during an attacking/goal scoring opportunity. Wait a few more seconds until the ball is played out toward mid-field/away from goal.
- c. After 30 seconds begin to encourage the coaches to get their players back on the field. Note: this is a substitution/water break, not a time for coaches to talk strategy. Allow one minute for substitution.
- d. Restart game according to the nature of original natural stoppage, or restart with dropped ball if ball was in play when you stopped the game, at the point where the ball was when you stopped play.
- e. Repeat procedures midway through second half.

6. Injuries

- a. Referee blows whistle to stop game immediately when a player is injured in U6 and U8 games. You must protect the child.
- b. Assess the injury; call coach on to handle it if more than just an “owie”.
- c. If not serious, but player is slow to respond to wanting to continue playing or there is blood that needs to be dealt with, have coach walk player off field to deal with injury, so that the game can continue. Game time is running! Don't stop the watch or add time on for injuries (the next game needs to start on time).
- d. If you stop active play for an injury, restart with a dropped ball at the location where the BALL was when you blew the whistle (not where the injury occurred). The only restriction is when the ball is less than 6 yards from the goal when play is stopped. In those instances, you move the dropped ball restart back from the original spot out 6 yards from the goal line. (U8 can use the goal kick line as a guide). If you stop for injury at a restart, continue with the original restart.
- e. Per the Laws of the Game, a coach can substitute for an injured player at that time or wait, play down a player, and return injured player to field when player is able to return. Don't be overly picky. It's o.k. at the U6 and U8 level to let a coach put another player on until injured player can come back, and then switch them out on the fly.

7. Half-time

- a. Whistle 2 tweets and signal with your arm out stretched and pointing toward the Center Circle for half time. Yell “Half-time!”
- b. Duration of each half (there are two halves in a game):
 - i. U6: 11 minutes (10 half +1 minute for substitutions);
 - ii. U8: 21 minutes (20 half +1 minute for substitutions).
 - iii. Never stop your watch. Let it run and just add the 1 minute for substitution break to the total time allowed for each half.
- c. Gather game ball.
- d. Record half-time score.
- e. Allow 5 minutes for half-time break. Start encouraging players onto the field after 4 minute mark so kick-off can happen on time.
- f. Ensure teams switch sides for second half kick-off.
- g. The team that didn't take the kick-off in the first half takes the second half kick-off.

8. End of Game

- a. Whistle 3 tweets and signal with your arm outstretched pointing toward the Center Circle for the end of game. Yell “That's Game” or something to that effect.

- b. Gather game ball and return to the coach.
- c. Complete tri-fold game card (no cards used in Spring Season). Note any issues/problems with coaches/parents on the tri-fold card, both positive and negative.
- d. Watch the players' handshakes to ensure sportsmanship is observed by all.
- e. Return game card as directed for that season.

9. Special Rules for this Age Group

- a. No heading the ball. Whistle, educate player, and give a direct free kick to opponents. This is considered Dangerous Play at this level.
- b. No Slide Tackling. Whistle, educate player, and give a direct free kick to opponents. This is considered, at a minimum, Dangerous Play at this level.
- c. No Goal Keepers at U6 or U8. Be aware of players who are playing as a "De facto goal keeper" whereby they are standing in front of their own goal and never move, no matter where the ball is during play. Don't confuse this with defenders playing near the goal or in the goal when the attackers/ball is nearby. That's proper defense. The objective is to have the kids involved with the game, and not stand back and guard the goal when the ball/opponents are far from their goal. Talk to the coach if you feel a kid is playing as a "de facto goal keeper" and remind them they can't play in that role and encourage them to make the player more active.
- d. No off-side infractions. Never call this in U6 games. We want to encourage spreading out and passing. For U-8 you are looking only for the kid who purposefully stands near the opponent's goal area, when the ball is in the other half of the field, with the sole purpose of waiting for a long ball to be kicked toward the goal so he can kick it in. This is considered "cherry-picking" and you would whistle, educate and give the opponents a free kick, from approximately where the ball was originally kicked to them by their teammate, not where the cherry picking player touched the ball. We want to encourage players to spread out and make forward passes to open players, so players will often be ahead of the ball and behind the opponents looking for passes. That is fine and should not be penalized at this level. It is only the obvious situations when the player is behind everyone, near the opponent's goal, and the ball is 20-30+ yards away, that we are concerned about. These events are very rare, and when you see a player in this type of position, take time during a break in the action to educate the player/coach. Note: When in doubt, don't whistle.

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