

Eden Prairie Soccer Association

“G” Division Rules (2006 Revision)

I. Team Rules

A team shall be comprised of not less than twelve and not more than sixteen players. A side shall be comprised of not more than eleven players per team including a goalkeeper. Each player present for the game shall play at least one half of the game, unless injured.

Equal playing time for all players is required.

While it is also expected that each player shall be given equal playing time at each position it is recognized that some specialization (i. e. for the goalkeeper) may occur.

Each player must wear their team jersey, shin guards and socks that cover the shin guards. In cool weather, the team jersey must be worn on the outside of all other clothing. If both teams are wearing jerseys that are the same (or nearly the same) color, the visiting team will put a practice jersey over the team jersey.

No player may wear jewelry, watches, metal or hard-plastic barrettes or other hair beads or hard head bands that may pose a hazard to themselves or other players. A securely-fastened shoe must be worn. Any shoe is allowed except for shoes with metal spikes or metal-tipped spikes. (Metal rivets not in the spike are OK.)

II. Referees and Linesmen

A USSF-certified referee may be provided for each game. In the event that a referee is injured, is not available, or does not appear, each team shall provide a referee for one half of the game. Each team provides one linesman for the entire game. Parents and coaches may be used to fill these requirements but players cannot be used as either referee or linesman.

The referee is responsible for knowing and enforcing the rules of the game including cautions and send offs, for keeping time, for positioning the linesmen, for calling all fouls and for awarding goals. The referee is the ultimate authority in the game for the interpretation and explanation of the rules.

The linesman indicates when a ball has gone out of play (all of the ball over all of the line) by raising the flag and assists the referee in determining the last player to make contact with the ball. Each linesman is responsible for one entire touch line and for one goal line. Consequently, two linesmen “work” opposite ends (opposite diagonals) of the field.

III. Game Rules

The game is comprised of two forty minute halves. A five minute break is required between halves. During the game, access to the field of play is controlled by the referee. This includes all substitutions as well as permission for coaches to come onto the field.

Before the game, the referee will check all players for proper equipment (jerseys, shin guards that are covered by socks, legal shoes and no jewelry). Team captains participate in a coin toss. The visiting team calls the toss. The winner of the coin toss selects the end of the field they intend to defend. The team that loses the coin toss kicks off.

Kick Off: The game begins with a kick off from the center spot using a size five ball. A kick off is also used to restart the game after a goal.

All players on both teams must remain on their own side of the field until the ball is put into play. Furthermore, all players on the team that is opposing the kick off must remain outside the center circle until the ball has been moved by the kicking team.

The ball must go forward on the kick off and is not in play until it has been moved by the kicker. The kicker may not play the ball again until it has been touched by another player on either team. A goal can be scored directly from a kick off.

If the ball does not go into the opponents half of the field or if the defense enters the center circle before the kick is properly taken -- a rekick is awarded.

If the kicker retouches the ball (before it is touched by another player) -- an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team at the spot of the second kick.

Game Clock: The game clock starts when the kick off is properly taken and time runs continuously even when the ball is out-of-bounds. The clock does not stop when a goal is scored.

Injuries: Time will be added to compensate for time lost because of injuries. Upon noting an injury, the referee will whistle a stoppage of play and the injured player will be cared for.

Direction of Play: The teams switch ends of the field at halftime. The team that did not kick off to start the first half will kick off to start the second half.

IV. Play of the Game

While in the field of play, the ball is moved by striking with the foot and may be further controlled by using any part of the body except the hands or arms. Note: Using the head to purposely control the ball (this is called a header) is legal.

If the ball is touched or caught or if the arm or shoulder is used to control the ball (these are handballs) -- an direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team.

Note: If, in the opinion of the referee, the handball is not intentional, or if the player was trying to protect the genitalia, or if the team that commits the foul does not gain an advantage, then no handball need be called.

In Play: A ball may be "in play" while any part of the ball is in the field of play. The ball remains in play after striking goal posts, crossbars, corner flags, other players, or the referee (if the ball remains within the boundaries of play).

Out of Play: A ball is "out of play" when the referee stops play, when a goal is scored, or when all of the ball completely crosses the touch line or the goal line.

Goal: A goal is scored when a ball in play passes completely over the goal line between the goal posts and under the crossbar. A goal may be disallowed if, in the opinion of the referee, it is a consequence of a foul where there has not been time enough for a whistle.

Throw-ins: When the whole of the ball has crossed over the touch line, a throw-in is conceded by the team that last touched the ball to the opposing team. The thrower must face the field of play, must use both hands, and must deliver the ball from over the top of the head while keeping part of each foot in contact with the ground on or behind the touch line. Note that the throw-in is still considered legal even if the player steps on the touch line.

The ball is not in play until it has broken the plane of the touch line into the field of play. The thrower cannot retouch the thrown ball until it is played by a second player of either team. A goal cannot be scored directly from the throw. Opposing players must be no closer than two paces away and may not jump at the thrower.

If the feet do not remain on the ground, or if the throw does not come over the head, or if the thrower does not use two hands, or if the thrower crosses the touch line before throwing -- award a rethrow.

If the thrower plays the ball before a second player touches it -- an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team at the spot of the second touch.

If an opposing player impedes the throw-in -- award an indirect free kick to the throwing team at the spot of the foul.

If a goal is scored directly from the throw-in (only the thrower touched the ball) -- no goal is awarded and the opposing team is given a goal kick.

Goal Kick: When the whole of the ball has crossed the entire goal line (except if a goal is scored) and was last touched by the attacking team, the defending team is awarded a goal kick. The ball may be placed anywhere in the goal area (the smaller of the two rectangles around the goal). The ball is in play when it been kicked completely beyond the penalty area (the larger rectangle).

Opposing players must leave the penalty area while the goal kick is taken. Defending players (as many as desired) are allowed in the penalty area. However, no player can touch the ball until it completely crosses the penalty area line. The kicker cannot touch the ball again until it has been played by another player of either team. A goal can be scored directly from a goal kick.

If the ball does not cross out of the penalty area, or is touched by either team before it crosses out of the penalty area, or is kicked out-of-bounds before it crosses out of the penalty area, or if the kicker kicks the ball into his own goal -- award a rekick.

If the kicker plays the ball (outside of the penalty area) before another player touches it -- an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team at the spot of the second kick.

Corner Kick: When the whole of the ball has crossed the goal line (except if a goal is scored) and was last touched by a member of the defending team, the attacking team is awarded a corner kick. The ball is placed in the corner area nearest to where it crossed the goal line. The ball is placed within one yard of the corner so that the entire ball is on the line(s) or in the field of play.

Opposing players must remain at least ten yards from the ball until it is in play. (The kicker does not have to wait for the defenders to retreat and may choose to play the ball immediately.) The ball is in play when it has moved. The kicker cannot touch the ball again until it has been played by another player of either team. A goal can be scored directly from a corner kick.

If the defenders do not remain ten yards from the ball (and the kicker requests room) -- instruct the players to retreat. The kicker must then wait for a signal from the referee.

If the kicker plays the ball before it is touched by another player -- an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team at the spot of the second kick.

Drop Ball: A drop ball is used to restart play after an injury or other stoppage of play that was not the result of a foul. The ball is in play once it touches the ground. A dropped ball, once it has struck the ground, can be touched twice by the same player.

If the ball does not strike the ground before a player touches it -- award another drop ball.

V. Goalkeepers

Each team must have a goalkeeper who must wear a distinctive jersey or a vest. The goalkeeper is the only player who may play the ball with the hands and may only do so within their own penalty area. Outside of the penalty area, the goalkeeper is treated exactly the same as any other player.

An opposing player cannot kick or attempt to kick the ball out of the hands of the goalkeeper or otherwise interfere with the goalkeeper's attempts to put the ball back into play. Kicking at a ball under the control of the keeper will be considered dangerous play. (See Minor Fouls, below.) For the safety of players in "G" Division play, a goalkeeper who has two hands on the ball is considered to be in control of the ball, even if that possession is tenuous.

Opposing players may not charge a goalkeeper in possession of the ball, nor may they charge a goalkeeper who does not have the ball, even when the ball is within playing distance. Once in possession of the ball, the goalkeeper is allowed to take six seconds before putting the ball back into play. This does not include the time the goalkeeper takes to control the ball after taking possession of it, or that results from the keeper's momentum, or that the goalkeeper uses to get clear of an attacking player.

Goalkeepers are not allowed to use their hands to play a ball that has been kicked to them by a teammate. (This foul occurs only if all elements are in place: the ball must be kicked by a teammate in a deliberate attempt to play it to the goalkeeper and the goalkeeper must then touch the ball with the hands.) In addition, a goalkeeper cannot play a throw-in from a teammate with their hands. (Both of these infractions are also covered under Minor Fouls, below.)

A goalkeeper may dribble the ball to another part of the penalty area before picking it up. This also includes being allowed to dribble the ball back into the penalty area. (The goalkeeper cannot use this tactic to pick up a throw-in or a ball deliberately kicked back by a teammate.)

A goalkeeper may take as many steps with the ball (inside the penalty area) as they please. While the ball is in their possession, they may bounce-and-catch it. Once the ball has been set down, however, it may not be picked up again.

The goalkeeper may change places with any player at any time. However, the coach must notify the referee and the referee must give permission before the exchange is allowed to take place.

If a player charges a goalkeeper not in possession of the ball, if a player is guilty of dangerous play, or if a player impedes or obstructs the goalkeeper -- award an indirect free kick to the keeper's team.

If the goalkeeper wastes time (e. g., takes more than six seconds) -- verbally warn the keeper of the rule, indicate that the keeper should kick or throw the ball now and add time to the game clock.

VI. Offside

If an attacking player is closer to the opponent's goal line than the ball, that player is in the offside position. If the ball is then passed to the player, offside shall be called unless:

the player is in his own half of the field

or there are two defensive players (one of whom may be the goalkeeper) even with or between the attacking player and the goal at the moment the ball is kicked

or the player receives the ball directly from a throw-in, goal kick or corner kick.

Note that a player in the offside position who does not take advantage of that position need not be automatically called offside. If play proceeds, even if a goal is scored, offside will not be called unless the offside player receives the ball, is involved in the play or is interfering with (or distracting) defensive players.

Also note that a player in the offside position who gains an advantage as a consequence of that position is offside. For example, an offside player watches as the goalkeeper parries a shot by an attacking (legal) player and then plays the ball. Offside is called even though the ball is closer to the goal than the offending player because that player gained an advantage from the offside position.

When offside is called, the opposing team is awarded an indirect free kick at the point where the offside player was standing at the moment the ball was played.

VII. Coaches' Rules

During the game, only the players and the referee are allowed on the field of play. A coach may instruct players in position and strategy from behind the touch line but only on the side of the field where the team is assembled. Spectators, coaches and other players are not allowed to observe the game or give instructions from behind the goal line. A coach may not walk onto the field of play while the game is in progress. If both teams occupy the same side of the field, coaches should not cross into the opponents' half of the sidelines.

Coaches who act for a missing referee should refrain from giving coaching instructions on the field.

Coaches are expected to exhibit a level of sportsmanship commensurate with the spirit of the game.

VIII. Substitutions

There is no limit to the substitutions allowed during a "G" Division game. Any time the ball is out of play, the coach should inform the referee, and upon a signal from the referee, make as many substitutions as seem reasonable. Players may exit and reenter the game as often as desired.

Substitutions may only be made during stoppage of play (throw-in, corner kick, goal kick, kick-off, etc.). Both teams may substitute, without limit, at these times.

IX. Fouls and Their Penalties

The referee will call all fouls but may choose to apply the “advantage” concept where a fouled team is given the opportunity to retain the advantage. Even if advantage is ruled, the referee may still choose to warn, caution or send off players for committing the foul.

There are ten **Major Fouls**:

- 1) Kicking, or attempting to kick, an opponent
- 2) Tripping, or attempting to trip, an opponent
- 3) Jumping at or into an opponent
- 4) Striking, or attempting to strike, an opponent
- 5) Pushing an opponent
- 6) Holding an opponent
- 7) Spitting at an opponent
- 8) Handling the ball (handballs)
- 9) Tackling an opponent. (Note: Tackling is the act of taking the ball away from an opponent by using your feet. However, the tackling player must touch the ball before making contact with the ball handler. If the player with the ball is touched first, it is a Major Foul.)
- 10) Charging an opponent (Note: Players are allowed to use their shoulders to lean into an opposing player while they both pursue the ball. To be a Major Foul, the player must be guilty of charging from behind, charging a player who is not in playing distance of the ball, or charging in a manner that forces the opponent off balance.)

There are eight **Minor Fouls**:

- 1) Dangerous play or dangerous kicks (including high kicks near other players)
- 2) Impedes progress of an opponent (blocking an advancing player or setting a pick)
- 3) A player prevents the opposing goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his hands
- 4) The goalkeeper takes more than ten seconds after having the ball under control
- 5) The goalkeeper releases the ball then picks it up again, unless the ball has been touched by another player. (Note: Deliberately bouncing the ball is allowed)
- 6) The goalkeeper plays the ball with his hands after a teammate kicks it to him deliberately
- 7) The goalkeeper plays the ball with her hands after a teammate throws it in to her
- 8) Any player offense, not covered under Major or Minor Fouls, for which play is stopped.

For both Major Fouls and Minor Fouls where the referee stops play, the ball is placed at the point of the foul. (See below, for placement when the foul occurs in the goal area or penalty area of the offending team.) The ball is put back into play with a Free Kick.

Diving or sliding tackles are not allowed in “G” Division play. The Division Commissioner will advise the teams and the referees if sliding tackles will be permitted. (The decision is usually made at the coach’s meeting prior to the start of the season.)

Direct Free Kick: All opposing players must retreat ten yards from the ball. (The kicker need not wait for the defenders to retreat and may choose to play the ball immediately.) The ball is in play once it has been moved and cannot be played again by the kicker until it has been touched by another player on either team. A goal can be scored from a direct free kick.

The ball does not have to go forward. Furthermore, if a direct free kick is awarded to a team within its own penalty area, the ball must cross out of the penalty area before it is in play even if the penalty

area line is more than ten yards from the point of the foul. If a direct free kick is awarded to a team within its own goal area, the ball may be placed anywhere in the goal area. All rules and awards as discussed under Goal Kick, above, then apply.

If the kicker retouches the ball (before it is touched by another player) -- an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team at the spot of the second kick.

If the ball is kicked directly into the players own goal -- no goal is awarded and the opposing team is awarded a corner kick.

Indirect Free Kick: A goal cannot be scored directly from an indirect free kick. All opposing players must retreat ten yards from the ball. (The kicker does not have to wait for the defenders to retreat and may choose to play the ball immediately.) The ball is in play once it has been moved and the ball cannot be played again by the kicker until it has been touched by another player.

The ball does not have to go forward. Furthermore, if an indirect free kick is awarded to a team within its own penalty area, the ball must cross out of the penalty area before it is in play even if the penalty area line is more than ten yards from the point of the foul. If a indirect free kick is awarded to a team within its own goal area, the ball may be placed anywhere in the goal area. All rules and awards as discussed under Goal Kick, above, then apply.

If the kicker retouches the ball (before it is touched by another player) -- an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team at the spot of the second kick.

If a goal is scored directly from the indirect free kick (only the kicker touched the ball) -- no goal is awarded and the opposing team is given a goal kick.

If the ball is kicked directly into the player's own goal -- no goal is awarded and the opposing team is awarded a corner kick.

If the defense commits a Minor Foul inside their own goal area, the ball is moved to the goal area line parallel to the goal line at a point nearest to where the foul occurred and an indirect free kick is awarded. The defensive players must retreat ten yards but may stand on the goal line between the goal posts at *any* distance from the ball. They cannot move off the goal line until the ball has been played.

In particular, the defending team should be allowed enough time to get into position.

If a defensive player moves off the goal line (and moves into the area less than ten yards from the ball) before the ball is played -- award a rekick.

Penalty Kick: A Major Foul called against the defending team inside its own penalty area results in the award of a penalty kick. The ball is placed on the penalty spot and all players except the goalkeeper and the player designated to take the kick must leave the penalty area. Players must also remain outside of the penalty arc. The goalkeeper must stand with both feet on the goal line but may move along the goal line before the kick is taken. The kicker may not feint at the ball in an attempt to draw the goalkeeper off the line. The ball must move forward. The ball is in play once it has been moved and cannot be played again by the kicker until it has been touched by another player of either team.

If the kicker retouched the ball (before it is touched by another player) -- an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team at the spot of the second kick. This also applies if the ball rebounds off of the goal frame (but not off of the goalkeeper).

If a defensive player enters the penalty area or penalty arc before the ball is played and a goal is not scored on the kick, or if the goalkeeper moves off the goal line before the ball is played and a goal is not scored -- award a rekick.

If an offensive player enters the penalty area or penalty arc before the ball is played and a goal is scored, or if the kicker fakes a kick then scores a goal, or if the ball does not go forward -- award a rekick.

If an offensive player enters the penalty area or penalty arc before the ball is played and a goal is not scored -- stop play and award an indirect free kick to the defending team.

X. Cautions and Send Offs

Note: Yellow cards have been given in this division but reds card are rare. Still, verbal warnings may be used to curtail actions that do not warrant a yellow card.

Verbal Warnings: Verbal warnings may be given to any player at any time and for any purpose when, in the opinion of the referee, a more severe action is not warranted. Verbal warnings can be even if a foul has not occurred and may be issued even if advantage has been applied.

Cautions: Yellow cards are displayed to a player who engages in dangerous play. They are warnings that the player is being over-exuberant. A Caution can be given if the player persists in disagreeing with the call(s) of the referee. Two yellow cards during the course of the game are equivalent to a red card. (By law, Cautions are given for: dissent with the umpire, unsporting behavior, persistent infringement of the rules, delaying the restart of the game, failure to keep the required distance on free kicks or corner kicks, entering or reentering the field of play without permission, and deliberately leaving the field of play without permission.)

Send Offs: Red cards indicate immediate ejection from the game and are displayed to any player who is deliberately attempting to hurt another player. A player who uses foul or abusive language should also be given a red card. (By law, Send Offs are given for: serious foul play, violent conduct, spitting at any person, using offensive, insulting or abusive language, deliberately denying a goal scoring opportunity by an offense punishable by a free kick or penalty kick, or if a player who has already received a Caution commits a second cautionable offense in the same match.)

The EPSA strongly suggests that a player who gets a Caution be temporarily taken out of the game to underscore the severity of the action and to allow the player to regain their composure.

In "G" Division play, an ejected player may not be replaced.

XI. Miscellaneous

Both teams will meet in the center of the field after the game to exchange handshakes and to show appreciation for their opponents. Any questions on the rules or their interpretation by the referee(s) can be addressed at this time.

If two fouls occur simultaneously, the referee shall enforce the more serious penalty. A goal scored against the offending team is a more serious penalty than a free kick.

No forfeits -- if a team cannot field eleven players, the team that is short should borrow some players from the other team (or from a team on an adjacent field) and play anyway. Alternately, both teams can play ten-v-ten.

Standings will not be kept, nor will the outcome of the game be reported. Games are over when the referee indicates the end of regulated time -- no overtimes nor shoot-outs.

The 2005/2006 FIFA Laws of the Game will be used to settle any events not covered by these laws. The changes to the official FIFA laws, as outlined above, are made for the express purpose of the enjoyment of players in the "G" Division (17-and-Under) and are intended for participants in Eden Prairie Soccer Association programs.