

Wallowa Valley Youth Soccer League

2008-09 LEAGUE GUIDELINES

Soccer is a game played primarily with the feet. The head and other parts of the body can be used but the hands & arms (up to & including the shoulder) cannot be used except on a "Throw-In" and by the Goalie in certain circumstances. If you've ever played basketball, many of the concepts you learned such as "give & go", "inbound plays", "getting open", "support", "man-to-man", "zone defense" & others are very applicable to soccer. You will also find similarities in many other team sports, and concepts such as "follow through", "staying on your toes" & a "quick first step" are used in most field sports. Soccer is very much a team sport.

Field Sizes: *Recreational players will have more fun and learn more on a smaller soccer field.* One of the worst mistakes a recreational league can make is to have teams playing on oversized fields. The reason is simple: on a smaller field the players will have more touches & more fun. The field size should be proportionate to the player size. When players are on an overly large field, it is easy for the game to degenerate to long kicks. It is also more difficult to teach tactics and team play, such as support, on an overly large field.

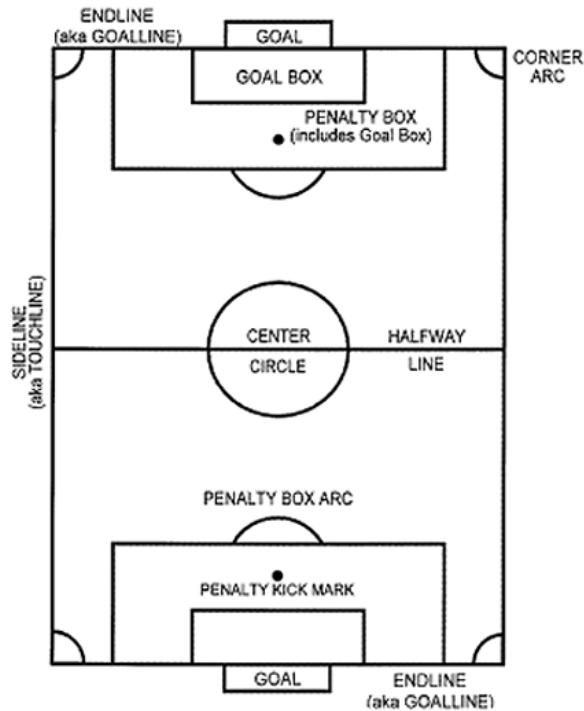
How large should the field be? If an adult over-30 novice recreational team plays on a 60-yard x 100-yard field (most play on this size or smaller because it is more fun), then youth recreational teams should play on proportionately sized fields. For example, if a 12-year old's step is about 80% that of an adult, then the field size should be 80% of the adult size, or about 50-yards x 80-yards. Dimensions for recreational teams might be as below:

Age (% Adult Size)	Field Size (in yards)
U-14 (100%)	60 x 100
U-10 (70%)	50 x 80*
U-8 (50%)	30 x 50*

If you can't properly size the fields, err on the side of fields that are undersized, not oversized. It will be more fun, the players will learn more about soccer, & fewer will drop out at age 11 or 12.

Field Layout

This drawing is not to scale. It is for the purpose of showing the names of parts of the field; not for showing dimensions.



Notes:

1. The Penalty Box includes the Goal Box
2. Areas include the lines that define them (e.g., the ball is not out of bounds until it totally crosses the line; and the ball must totally cross the line between the goal posts to score).

Soccer Rules-Rules Of Soccer

Who makes the rules? The official soccer rules are called the "Laws of the Game" and are revised annually (usually in July) by FIFA (pronounced "FEE' fuh"), the world soccer governing body, but youth organizations usually adjust the rules to fit children. Typical adjustments are field sizes, game lengths, number of players per team, the number and frequency of substitutions, "offside" is sometimes not called, and slide tackling is sometimes not allowed. Field sizes, ball sizes, length of games & rules vary by age group.

You can find the "Laws of the Game" at www.fifa.com (on the left side of the FIFA Home Page click "The Game" and then "Laws of the Game").

Why is it necessary to simplify and interpret the rules? The "Laws of the Game" are not simple and can be difficult to understand. The official FIFA rules have 17 sections and the rulebook is about 70 pages long. In addition, how to interpret the rules is discussed in referee clinics, special memos, videos for referees, and a guidebook for soccer officials that is over 300 pages long. There is also the problem that the rules use many soccer terms that are not defined in the rules and there are quirks, such as the fact that terms which are commonly used such as "Hand Ball", "obstruction", and "Linesmen" are not defined in the official rules. Another confusing aspect of the rules is the way "Fouls" are defined; basically, they are defined not only as "Fouls" but also in the rules regarding "Cards". For this reason, to understand "Fouls" you must also read "Cards". One of the biggest problems is that the official rules don't have a good index and there aren't good cross-links to related topics.

For the Wallowa Valley Youth Soccer League we have tried to simplify the rules.

Keep in mind that most youth leagues, women's leagues and adult recreational leagues modify the rules.

In the topics listed below we mention the typical modifications to the rules that are made by most youth leagues. The modifications that are made are usually to make matches more fun (e.g., smaller fields), safer (e.g., no slide tackling), more evenly matched or to promote a better learning environment (for example, by playing "small sided").

Boundaries

The ball is in play until it COMPLETELY crosses the side or end lines. A goal is scored when the ball COMPLETELY crosses the goal line (Note a goal is still scored if the goalie is holding the ball but the ball has completely crossed the goal line.)

Fouls

There are 2 kinds of fouls, Direct Kick Fouls & Indirect Kick Fouls.

(1) **Direct Kick Fouls** - For which the other team receives a "direct free kick" (meaning a goal can be scored by kicking the ball straight into the goal) or a "penalty kick" ("PK") if the foul occurs within the Penalty Box (Note: It doesn't matter whether the ball was in the Penalty Box or not; what matters is where the foul was committed).

There are 10 direct kick fouls. The rules say that the referee should call a foul for numbers 1 thru 6 if he believes they are committed in a manner he considers "careless, reckless or

using excessive force" – numbers 7-10 are always fouls:

1. Kicking or attempting to kick an opponent. Accidentally kicking an opponent while tackling the ball is not a foul unless it was careless, reckless, or there was excessive force. If a player slide tackles from the front, it will be considered at least "dangerous play" (which is an indirect kick foul), or kicking, or tripping, or "unsporting behavior", even if the ball is contacted, since it would at the least be reckless or dangerous.
2. Tripping or attempting to trip an opponent (if careless, reckless or using excessive force),
3. Charging into an opponent (the goalkeeper can also be called for this if his action is careless, reckless or uses excessive force),
4. Striking or attempting to strike an opponent (if careless, reckless or using excessive force),
5. Pushing an opponent, including the goalkeeper (if careless, reckless or using excessive force),
6. Jumping at an opponent in a careless or reckless manner or using excessive force (this includes jumping for a header if an opponent is carelessly or recklessly bumped, and jumping at the goalkeeper),
7. Blatant holding or pulling (including holding clothing, using any part of the body to hold an opponent & "Sandwiching"),
8. Making contact with an opponent before touching the ball when tackling an opponent to gain possession of the ball (Note: it is always a foul if the tackler contacts the ballhandler before touching the ball. However, it can still be a direct kick foul if the ball is touched first but the tackler was "careless, reckless, or used excessive force" and was judged to have kicked, tripped, charged or jumped at the ballhandler. Or, if the Referee believes the tackler played in a "dangerous manner", an indirect kick can be awarded),
9. Spitting at an opponent, even if it doesn't hit the opponent (this is grounds for a Red Card),
10. Deliberately handling the ball (a "hand ball" should not be called if a player is instinctively trying to protect himself from injury or if the ball hits the hand while it is in a natural position near the players side and has not been moved toward the ball. This does not apply to the goalkeeper inside his own penalty area.),

(2) **Indirect Kick Fouls** - For which the other team receives an **"indirect free kick"** (meaning a goal only counts if another player touches the ball before it enters the goal).

There are 2 types of indirect kick fouls:

a. **Four that apply to all players:**

1. **"Dangerous Play"** (or playing in a dangerous manner) is any action by a player that in the judgment of the Referee is dangerous to himself or to another player and that isn't a "direct kick foul" such as tripping. Examples would be a high kick when an opponent is nearby, or if a player tries to head a low ball that an opponent is trying to kick, then the player who is putting himself in danger would be guilty of dangerous play. Another example would be any action that might endanger the goalkeeper within the Penalty Box. If the goalkeeper and an opponent both go for a loose ball, the Referee will tend to favor the goalkeeper if there is a collision. It isn't necessary for someone to be hurt for dangerous play to be called. For example, slide tackling with spikes high would be dangerous play, even if the opponent isn't contacted. However, a dangerous act (such as a high kick) isn't "dangerous play" unless an opponent is nearby.
2. **"Impeding the Progress of an Opponent"**. Generally, a player cannot use his body to impede another player's movements, even if it is not deliberate. This can be called if a player is not within "playing distance" of the ball (i.e., 3 feet) and block's an opponent's movement or screens an opponent from the ball. However, if a player is within playing distance & able to play the ball (meaning not laying on the ground), the player can legally screen an opponent from the ball. (You usually see this when a ball is going out of bounds & the player whose team will get the throw-in screens the opponent so the opponent can't save the ball). Impeding the progress of an opponent used to be called "obstruction". The rule also applies to "innocently" impeding the goalkeeper by standing in front of him when he has the ball.
3. **Preventing the goalkeeper from releasing the ball.** A player who attempts to prevent the Goalkeeper from putting the ball into play by standing directly in front of the Goalkeeper can be called for breaking this rule or for "unsporting behavior", in which case both a Yellow Card & an indirect kick would be awarded.
4. **Other inappropriate behavior** (e.g., for "unsporting behavior", "dissent", persistently breaking the rules,

and offensive or threatening language).

b. **Four indirect kick fouls that only apply to the goalkeeper & only if committed inside the Penalty Box** (the goalkeeper is treated like a regular field player when he is outside the Penalty Box):

1. Taking more than six seconds while controlling the ball with his hands before releasing it (releasing it can include throwing it, kicking it or dropping it to the ground and then kicking or dribbling it. Once released, it is "live").
2. Touching the ball with hands after it is deliberately kicked to the Goalkeeper by a teammate. (Note: It is okay to pick up an accidentally kicked ball or a pass from a teammate that isn't "kicked" but is made using the head, chest, knee, etc.).
3. Touching the ball with hands on a throw-in from a teammate (i.e., the goalkeeper can't pick up a throw-in from a teammate).
4. Intentionally handling the ball again after he has released it and it has not touched any other player (e.g., dropping the ball, dribbling it and then picking it back up). Read b.2 and b.3 above. The Goalkeeper can only handle it again after an opponent touches or if it is accidentally kicked back or if it is headed or chested back by a teammate. He can't pick it up if a teammate has intentionally kicked or thrown it to him.

Advantage Clause. This rule states that the Referee, in his discretion, may decide to not stop play due to a foul if it would be to the advantage to the fouled team to not stop play (i.e., The concept is that the team that was fouled should not be punished by having an attack stopped which might result in a goal and, conversely, that the team which committed the foul should not gain an advantage as a result of the foul). However, all dangerous or unsportsmanlike conduct should be dealt with immediately and a foul awarded.

Free Kick

When one team is penalized, the other usually gets a "free kick". There are 2 types of free kicks (direct & indirect) and a special type of Direct Free Kick called a Penalty Kick:

- **Direct Free Kick** - Where a goal may be scored by kicking the ball directly into the opponent's goal without anyone else touching it (although it still counts if someone else does touch it).
- **Indirect Free Kick** - On which a goal may be scored only if another player touches the ball before it enters the goal. Question: "How do you know if a free kick is indirect?" Answer: "The referee will raise his arm above

his head and leave it up until the ball is kicked". On an indirect kick you should have one player gently tap the ball so another player standing behind the ball can kick it; or pass it to someone who shoots it. If on an Indirect Free Kick the ball is kicked into the goal without anyone else touching it (other than the kicker) the goal does not count and the other team is awarded a goal kick.

However, if the ball is touched by a player on either team, including the goalkeeper, before it goes into the goal, the goal counts.

- **Penalty Kick** - When a player commits a foul within his own Penalty Box, which would normally result in a Direct Free Kick, the other team is given a Penalty Kick ("PK").

On Direct & Indirect Free Kicks, defenders must stay away from the kicker (6 yards if U-8, 8 yards if U-10 & 10 yards for U-12 & older) until a player on the kicking team moves the ball, if they don't they can receive a yellow card. On Penalty Kicks, everyone but the kicker & goalkeeper must stay out of the Penalty Box until the kicker moves the ball.

Free Kicks or Throw-ins. Any player on the team awarded the kick or throw in may take the kick or throw-in. It is not the referee's responsibility to decide who takes the kick or throw-in. Coaches can improve the quality of play by clarifying who shall take free kicks and throw-ins. For example, they may specify before the game that the person who is closest to the ball will take it, or specify specific names and positions.

The ball is dead until the referee indicates to the team awarded the ball that one of its players may proceed.

Goal Kicks. Goal kicks occur when the attacking team touches the ball last before it goes over the defending team's goal line.

- The defending team kicks.
- The kick is taken from the closest corner of the goal box. The goal box is only used for goal kicks – it has no other purpose during the game.
- The ball is not in play until it leaves the penalty area / penalty box.
- Opponents must stay outside the penalty area until the ball is in play.

Corner Kicks. Corner kicks occur when the defending team touches the ball last before it goes over the goal line.

- The attacking team kicks.
- A corner kick is a direct kick; it may go directly into the goal and count as a score.
- There are no off-sides on a corner kick.
- Opposing players must be at least 10 yards away from the initial kick from the corner.

Kick-Offs. Opposing players must be at least 10 yards away (outside the center circle). The ball must travel FORWARD one complete revolution before it is in play. Typically two or three players put the ball in play.

Throw-Ins. There are no off-sides on a throw-in. Opposing players may not harass a thrower. The ball must be thrown in with both hands with no or little spin. The motion must start well behind the head and continue over the head. You may not drop the ball. You may not twist your body while making the throwing motion. Both feet must be in contact with the ground when the ball is thrown. Your feet may touch but must not cross the sideline.

Goalie Play. The goalie can use hands anywhere within the penalty box unless it has been passed back to the goalie by a teammate using his / her feet. The goalie may leave the penalty box, but may not use hands – just like any other player.

Once making a save, the goalie can take as many steps as desired within the penalty box, but should throw or kick the ball within six seconds. Opposing players may not obstruct or interfere with the goalie if the goalie has the ball clearly in possession. If the goalie is bobbling the ball, opposing players may attempt to play the ball.

The goalie may throw or roll the ball in any manner desired, with one or two hands, or the goalie may punt, drop-kick, or place and kick the ball when putting it back into play.

Off-sides. An attacking player is off-sides if he/she is in front of the ball and there are less than two defending players between him/her and the goal / end line. The defending goalie counts as one of the two required players.

Playing Time. Each child must play at least 50% of every game he or she attends.

When You Can Substitute. (aka "Subbing"). We allow "unlimited substitutions" (which usually means the coach can "sub" as many times as he wants during the game but only during normal stoppage of play such as kick-offs, goal kicks, throw-ins, etc). You usually cannot sub on corners, or free kicks. Except at half-time or between quarters, substitutions may only occur with the Referees permission (you can get his attention by yelling "sub"). Players entering & leaving the field should only do so at the halfway line. The rules technically say that a player must leave the field first before his sub can enter the field. Many referees don't enforce this in youth games because there is so much substitution. However, if the Ref says "call them off first", this is what he means. Often, midfielders are subbed the most because they run the most.

Players Equipment. Each child should be encouraged to have good sports shoes and shin pads. We try to make available second hand shoes and shin pads as supplies last. Call Nils if a player needs equipment and cannot afford to buy it.

Games: Duration and Number of Players. The following recommendations are offered for the different age groups – they are not hard rules and can be negotiated by coaches at the start of a game depending on team size, weather, etc.

Age Group	Game Time	Number of Players on Field
6-7 Year Olds	Four 10 minute quarters	6 vs. 6
8-10 Year Olds	Four 12 minute quarters	9 vs. 9
11-13 Year Olds	Four 15 minute quarters	11 vs. 11

Time-Outs. There are no time-outs in soccer for the purpose of planning plays or discussing strategy and positioning with players. This can be done through instructions during the course of play or during the quarter and half-time breaks. The only reason to stop play is in the event of an injury.

Tie Games. Tie games are acceptable outcomes. If both coaches and the referee agree to an extra period to resolve the tie, that is fine, but if any one entity is not in favor of continuing the game should be concluded without argument or discussion.

Referees. The home team coach is responsible for organizing a referee and timekeeper for the game. Neither coaches nor parents should criticize referees during the course of the game. Concerns can be discussed in a friendly and constructive manner during breaks between quarters, or if the Referee specifically asks for assistance.

Things You Should And Things You Should Not Do:

- a. Positive encouragement and instruction of your players from the sidelines (the coach's box) is allowed. Negative criticism, hostility, abuse or anger are things you should not do. You are a role model and must set the example of good sportsmanship and insist upon it from your team.
- b. Cheering when the other team makes a mistake is bad. Cheering when the other team makes a great play is good.
- c. Never criticize the referee. It is a tough job. If an appealable mistake is made, talk to the referee and then the to the WVYS Management Group after the game. Remember, you are the role model and must set the standard for behavior. It is good to thank the referee and linesmen after the game.
- d. You should stay 2 steps back from the sideline during games so you don't block the Assistant Referee's view of the line.
- e. Don't run up the score. It's not good for either team if the game is a mismatch, but sometimes it happens. If your team gets 5 goals ahead, you should be a good sport & do one of the following:
 - o Put your weakest scorers up front (use this as an opportunity to let them be forwards).
 - o Try someone new in goal & at fullback
 - o Pull a player off the field & "play short". If it is still a mismatch, pull off another player.

- Tell your players they must complete 5 consecutive passes before shooting
- Tell them they can only take shots from outside the Penalty Box (i.e., practice chip shots, lofted shots at the top of the goal or power shots).

Coaching During Games. Some books will tell you that during games you should let the players play & not give instructions. That may work for older or select teams, but it isn't very practical for youth recreational teams that only practice once a week. Most leagues allow coaching from the sidelines (although sometimes only by one coach who must stay in a designated area). If the objectives are to have fun & to teach the boys and girls how to play, then coaching during the game can help achieve those objectives. There are many things that you can teach in a game that are difficult to teach in practice, especially if you only practice one time a week (a "shifting & sagging" defense is one). If possible, use 2 coaches during the game, one for offense & one for defense to teach your players how to "shift & sag" & to help them learn positions. This is hugely beneficial because one coach can't watch both ends of the field at the same time.

Be sure to not get in the other team's way & remember you have to coach from the side lines, not the "end zones". Do I yell? Yes, I find it necessary to yell instructions to the players so they can hear me across the field. I don't yell negative or general comments such as: "You guys stink" or "Hustle". I yell specific instructions such as "John, push up", or "Matt, cover the center" or "Don't get thrown over" (or "punted over" or "goal kicked over"), or "Mark up behind a man" (on the other teams throw-ins, goal kicks, & free kicks) or, on the other teams corner kicks, "Mark a man goalside". I try not to show frustration or irritation & try to not single out anyone for criticism unless they aren't hustling. However, I do make coaching comments to correct errors. For example, if a player's passes are coming off the ground, I will say "Matt, strike the ball higher". Or, if they turn over a throw-in because their foot came off the ground I will say "Patrick, drag your toe".

Guidance for Parents. Similar to that for Coaches. Keep all remarks positive. Stay out of the way of opposing teams and coaches, and stay well back (3-5 yards) from the sidelines. To the extent possible, parents should stay on the sides and not be behind or adjacent to either goal (unless they are briefly there to take pictures).