* Minimum width 30yds [27.5m] maximum width 40yds [36.6m]
* Minimum length 50yds [46.7m] maximum length 60yds [54.9]

*[Where possible NCFL recommends the maximum size]*

* Penalty area: length 10yds [9.15m]; width 18yds [16.47m]

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**Decisions of the Referee**

* The decisions of the referee regarding facts connected with play are final.
* The referee may only change a decision on realising that it is incorrect or, at his/her discretion provided that play has not restarted.

**Law 6: Timekeeper/Scorer/Assistant Referee**

**Duties**

* A person may be nominated to assist the referee to:
* Record goals scored
* Act as timekeeper and signify to the referee by an agreed signal when the time of each half has expired
* Suspend time on an instruction from the referee for all stoppages and add that time to the end of each half
* Supervise the use of rolling substitutes
* Carry out any other duties as prescribed by the referee
* If an independent timekeeper/scorer is not nominated, these duties are the responsibility of the referee

**Law 7: Duration of the Game**

In any one day, no player shall play more than the stipulated period given below:

* Under 9 & Under 10s: 60 minutes
* Under 12s: 80 minutes

For the NCFL the duration of Under10/12 youth games shall be divided into two equal periods of 25 minutes, subject to allowance made in either period for time lost through stoppages as decided by the referee. For cup matches the game shall be divided into two equal periods of 25 minutes (as with League matches) and in cup matches in the event of a draw after this time the match shall be extended into one periods of 5 minutes extra time. After this time, if the score between the two teams is still level, the game will be decided by a penalty shoot-out. In the case of both Under 10 and Under 12 matches the duration of either half shall be extended to enable a penalty kick to be taken. The half time interval should take 3 minutes and should not exceed 5 minutes, except by consent of the referee.

**Law 8: Start and Restart of Play**

**Procedure**

A kick-off is taken at the centre of the playing area to start the game and after a goal has been scored, opponents must be 4.5m (5 yards) away from the ball, and in their own half of the field. The ball must be played forward. In Mini Soccer a goal cannot be scored directly from a kick-off.

**Special Circumstances** A dropped ball to restart the match after play has been temporarily stopped inside the penalty area takes place on the penalty area line parallel to the goal line at that point nearest to where the ball was located when the play stopped.

**Law 9: Ball In and Out of Play**

The ball is out of play when:

* It has wholly crossed the goal line or touch line whether on the ground or in the air
* Play has been stopped by the referee

The ball is in play at all other times, including when:

* It rebounds from a goal or post, crossbar or corner flag post and remains in the field of play
* It rebounds from either the referee or an assistant referee when they are on the field of play

**Law 10: Method of Scoring Goal Scored**

A goal is scored when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, between the goalposts and under the crossbar, provided that no infringement of the Laws of the Game has been committed previously by the team scoring the goal.

**Winning Team** The team scoring the greater number of goals during a match is the winner. If both teams score an equal number of goals, or if no goals are scored, the match is drawn.

**Competition Rules** For matches ending in a draw, competition rules may state provisions involving extra time, or other procedures approved by the International FA Board to determine the winner of a match. Please note this must be included within the maximum participation time.

**Law 11: Offside**

There is no offside.

**Law 12: Fouls and Misconduct**

* In Mini-Soccer all free kicks are direct. A free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following offences in a manner considered to be careless, reckless or using excessive force:
* Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent
* Trips or attempts to trip an opponent
* Jumps at an opponent
* Charges an opponent
* Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent
* Pushes an opponent

A free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following offences:

* Tackles an opponent to gain possession of the ball, making contact with the opponent before touching the ball
* Holds an opponent
* Spits at an opponent
* Handles the ball deliberately (except for the goalkeeper within his/her own penalty area)
* Plays in a dangerous manner
* Impedes the progress of an opponent
* Prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his/her hands
* Commits any other offence, not previously mentioned in Law 12, for which play is stopped to caution or dismiss a player

**Penalty Kick**

A penalty kick is awarded if any of the above offences is committed by a player inside his/her own penalty area, irrespective of the position of the ball, provided it is in play.

**An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if the goalkeeper:**

* Takes more than 6 seconds to release the ball from his/her hands
* Touches the ball again with his/her hands after it has been released from his/her possession and has not touched any other player
* **Touches the ball with his/her hands after it has been deliberately kicked to him/her by a team mate**
* **Touches the ball with his/her hands after he/she has received it from a throw in taken by a team mate**

**For all these offences, the indirect free kick should be taken from the penalty area line, parallel with the goal line, at the nearest point to the offence.**

**Cautionable Offences**

A player is cautioned and shown the yellow card if he/she commits any of the following seven offences:

1. Is guilty of unsporting behaviour

2. Shows dissent by word or action

3. Persistently infringes the Laws of the Game

4. Delays the restart of play

5. Fails to respect the required distance when play is restarted with a corner kick or free kick

6. Enters or re-enters the field of play without the referee's permission

7. Deliberately leaves the field of play without the referee's permission

**Sending Off Offences**

A player is sent off and shown the red card if he/she commits any of the following seven offences:

1. Is guilty of serious foul play

2. Is guilty of violent conduct

3. Spits at an opponent or any other person

4. Denies the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal scoring opportunity, by deliberately handling the ball (this does not apply to a goalkeeper within his/her own penalty area)

5. Denies an obvious goal scoring opportunity to an opponent moving towards the player's goal by an offence punishable by a free kick or penalty kick

6. Uses offensive or insulting or abusive language and/or gestures

7. Receives a second caution in the same match

**Law 13: Free Kicks**

For all free kicks opponents must be 4.5m from the ball.

**Law 14: Penalty Kicks**

A penalty kick is awarded for offences, as described in Law 12

**Position of the Ball and the Players**

All players except the defending goalkeeper and kicker must be outside the penalty area, at least 4.5m from the penalty mark and behind the ball. The ball must be kicked forward.

**Infringement/Sanctions**

If a player or players commit an offence at the taking of a penalty kick his/her team shall not be allowed to gain an advantage (i.e. the kick is retaken or the goal is disallowed depending on which team offended) If a player of both the defending and the attacking teams offend, the kick shall be retaken.

**Law 15: Throw-in**

A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw-in.

A throw-in is awarded:

* When the whole of the ball passes over the touch line, either on the ground or in the air
* From the point where it crossed the touch line
* To the opponents of the player who last touched the ball

**Procedure**

At the moment of delivering the ball, the thrower:

Faces the field of play

Has part of each foot either on the touch line or on the ground outside the touch line

Uses both hands

Delivers the ball from behind and over their head

The throw-in is awarded to the opposing team, if any of these requirements are not carried out

The thrower may not touch the ball again until it has touched another player. If he/she does, a free kick will be awarded against them. The ball is in play immediately when it enters the field of play.

**Law 16: Goal Kick**

A player of the defending team kicks the ball from any point within the penalty area. Opponents must remain outside the penalty area and at least 4.5m from where the kick is taken until the ball is in play.

**U10s:** Opponents must retreat to the half way line before a goal kick is taken.

**Law 17: Corner Kicks**

The opposing players must remain at least 4.5m from the ball until it is in play. The kicker may not touch the ball again until it has touched another player. If he/she does, an indirect free kick is awarded against them. The ball is in play immediately when it enters the field of play.

**Playing Rules for the NCFL U14 and U16 Youth (7-a-side) League**

**Rule 1: Playing Area Dimensions**

The matches may be played with or without barriers. The following dimensions are recommended, but the playing area must be rectangular. **Minimum size**: Length 70yds(64m). Width 40yds [36.6m]. **Maximum size:** 80yds [73.1m] width 50yds [45.7m]

**Pitch Markings**

The pitch is marked with lines. These lines belong to the areas of which they are boundaries. The two longer boundary lines are called touch-lines. The two shorter lines are called goal lines. All lines are 8 centimetres wide. The pitch is divided into two halves by the halfway line.

**Centre Mark**

The centre mark is indicated at the midpoint of the halfway line. Optionally, a circle with a radius of 4.5 metres is marked around it.

**Penalty Area**

Minimum dimensions: Length 10yds [9.1m] width 18yds [16.4m].

When using club FA 9v9 pitches the penalty area should be Length 13yds. Width 32yds.

*[Either of these size areas will be acceptable]*

**Penalty Mark**

A penalty mark is drawn 7.5 metres from the midpoint between the goal posts and equidistant from them.

**The Corner Arc**

Were possible, a quarter circle with a radius of 25 centimetres from each corner is drawn inside the pitch.

**Goals**

The goals must be placed on the centre of each goal line. The recommended sizes shall be **16 feet** long by **6 feet** high: or **16** feet long by **7** feet high with nets securely attached.

The goals may be portable but they must be anchored securely to the ground during play as per Health and Safety requirements

**Playing Surface**

Where natural turf is not available, then 3G/4G pitches will be acceptable. 1st generation astro turf or any hard surface will not be permissible.

**Rule 2: The Ball**

The ball used must be spherical, made of leather or other suitable material and size appropriate to the age group playing. [u14 size **4**. u16 size **5**]

**Rule 3: Number of Players**

A match is played by two teams, each consisting of seven players, one of whom is the goalkeeper.

**Substitutes**

Five (5) substitutes per team shall be permitted at any time during a game from a maximum of five (5) nominated substitutes. A player who has been replaced may return to the playing area as a substitute for another player. Substitutions should take place when there is a break in play. The player entering the playing area shall do so from the sideline. The player entering the playing area shall not do so until the player leaving the playing area has passed completely over the sideline. A substitute is subject to the authority and jurisdiction of the referee whether called upon to play or not.

**Changing Places with the Goalkeeper**

Any of the other players, or substitutes, may change places with the goalkeeper, provided that the referee is informed before the change is made, and provided also that the change is made during a stoppage in the game.

**Rule 4: The Players’ Equipment**

**Safety**

A player must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous to himself or another player, including any kind of jewellery or anything around the wrists or neck regardless of what it is made of.

Jewellery, which is potentially dangerous, should be removed. (Outfield players are not allowed to wear peaked caps e.g. Baseball caps or snoods)

**Basic Equipment**

Footwear shall be worn in accordance with the Laws of the Game, and subject to any local regulations. The wearing of shin guards, which must be covered by socks, in accordance with the Laws of the game is compulsory.

**Goalkeepers**

The goalkeeper is permitted to wear long trousers and should wear colours which easily distinguish him from the other players and the referee.

**Rule 5: Referees**

A referee shall be appointed to officiate in each game. He shall have the same powers and duties as laid down in the Laws of the Game.

**Rule 6: Duration of the Game**

­­The duration of the game shall be divided into two equal periods of 25 minutes, subject to allowance shall be made in either period for time lost through stoppages as decided by the referees. For cup matches the game shall be divided into two equal periods of 25minutes (as with League matches) but in the event of a draw after this time the match will be decided by 12 minutes (6 mins Each Way) The duration of either half shall be extended to enable a penalty kick to be taken. The half time interval should take 3 minutes and should not exceed 5 minutes, subject to allowance made in either period for time lost through stoppages as decided by the referee.

**Rule 7: Start of Play**

At the beginning of a game the choice of ends will be decided by the toss of a coin. Play shall be started by the team not winning the toss, taking a standard centre kick from the centre mark, initially with the ball travelling towards the opponent’s goal, a player may not score direct from kick-off. **The opposing players must stand at least 4.5 metres from the centre mark, in their own half of the field.** The game shall be re-started in the like manner after a goal has been scored, by the team which conceded the goal. After any other stoppage the game shall be re-started by the referee dropping the ball at the point nearest to where it was when play was suspended, unless it was in the goalkeeper’s possession, when the player shall, at the referee’s signal put the ball into play. The referee shall not drop the ball within 4.5 metres of the lines marking the penalty areas or within 3 metres of the sidelines.

**Rule 8: Ball in or Out of Play**

The ball shall be in play at all times from the start of the game unless it has wholly crossed the goal line or side lines whether on the ground or in the air, or when play has been stopped by the referee. When the defending team puts the ball out of play over their goal-line, a corner kick shall be awarded to the attacking team from the side of the goal where the ball went out of play.

**Defenders must stand at least 4.5m from the ball until the corner is taken.** When the attacking team puts the ball out over the opponent’s goal-line, the goalkeeper will be given possession of the ball and must take a goal kick from anywhere within the **goal area**, **or, if there is no goal area then the goal kick shall be taken from the goal line within the width of the penalty area.**

**Throw in**

When the ball goes out of play over the side-line it shall be returned to the field of play by a throw-in by a member of the team who did not touch the ball last before it passed out of play. Throws-ins shall be overhead and be in accordance with the normal rules of football.

**Rule 9: Scoring**

A goal is scored when the whole of the ball crosses the goal line between the goalposts and under the crossbar, provided that it has not been thrown, carried or propelled by hand or arm by a player of the attacking side.

**Rule 10: Offside**

There is no offside.

**Law 11: Fouls and Misconduct**

* A free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following offences in a manner considered to be careless, reckless or using excessive force:
* Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent
* Trips or attempts to trip an opponent
* Jumps at an opponent
* Charges an opponent
* Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent
* Pushes an opponent

A free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following offences:

* Tackles an opponent to gain possession of the ball, making contact with the opponent before touching the ball
* Holds an opponent
* Spits at an opponent
* Handles the ball deliberately (except for the goalkeeper within his/her own penalty area)
* Plays in a dangerous manner
* Impedes the progress of an opponent
* Prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his/her hands
* Commits any other offence, not previously mentioned in Law 12, for which play is stopped to caution or dismiss a player

**Penalty Kick**

A penalty kick shall be awarded if any of the above offences is committed by a player in his/her own penalty area

A player who is sent off shall not be allowed to take any further part in the competition on that day.

No substitution is allowed for a player permanently dismissed (Red Card) for misconduct during the game in which the offence occurred.

**Rule 12: Free Kicks**

**When a player is taking a direct or indirect free-kick, all the opposing players shall be at least 4.5 metres from the ball until it is in play**.

**An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if the goalkeeper:**

* Takes more than 6 seconds to release the ball from his/her hands
* Touches the ball again with his/her hands after it has been released from his/her possession and has not touched any other player
* **Touches the ball with his/her hands after it has been deliberately kicked to him/her by a team mate**
* **Touches the ball with his/her hands after he/she has received it from a throw in taken by a team mate**

**Goal Keepers**

Normal goal keeping rules will apply, as above, see also rule 8 regarding goal kicks