



# SOMERVILLE YOUTH SOCCER LEAGUE

## U7 and U8 Division

### RULES OF PLAY

Generally all SYSL games are governed by the international rules of soccer as determined by FIFA. For U7 and U8 division play some modifications have been made. We have attempted here to summarize all the deviations from FIFA rules, plus reiterating the major rules of the game.

**Coach and Fan Conduct:** SYSL has adopted a zero tolerance regarding abuse of our referees. Coaches are expected to set and example. **THERE ARE TO BE NO NEGATIVE COMMENTS MADE BY ANY COACH REGARDING CALLS OR NON CALLS MADE BY THE REFEREES!** Coaches violating this policy will be asked to leave the field. Please explain to your parents that this applies to them too. Coaches are encouraged to bring constructive criticism regarding referee performance to the age coordinator or to any board member. This is a learning experience for all of our young referees.

**Team Position:** Both teams will be located on the same side of the field. All spectators will be located on the other side of the field. Players and spectators should remain three (3) feet behind the side lines. Only registered coaches and assistants are allowed to be with the team. (Exception: **one** parent may be permitted to be with the substitutes to maintain discipline. This parent **should not coach** from this position. Coaches should remain with their team - they are not permitted to move down the sideline in front of the other team, nor are they allowed on the end lines.

**Player Equipment:** Each player should wear an approved SYSL uniform consisting of Jersey, shorts, and socks. On cold days additional clothing can be worn **under** the uniform. The jersey should be tucked into the pants at all times. Players are required to wear approved shin guards. Players may wear soft cleated soccer shoes or sneakers. No jewelry of any type shall be worn (this includes studs in ears), nor any other equipment that the referee determines is dangerous to another player. (Medical bracelet may be worn but it must be completely covered by tape.) No hard casts will be allowed.

**Referees:** SYSL will endeavor to provide referees for all games. If this is not possible then a volunteer parent or coach will be asked to ref. At this age level the referees are responsible for applying the rules of the game and for instructing the players in how the rules are applied. In the case of repeated rule violations, i.e. illegal throw-ins, the referee may instruct players in proper technique. The referees will be members of the SYSL community and must be treated with respect at all times. **Yelling at, berating, or any other mistreatment of the referees of any type will not be tolerated.** Any questions regarding the performance of the referees should be addressed to the U8 Referee Coordinator or any board member.

**Number of players:** Maximum number of players on the field at any one time shall be six (6), one of whom must be designated as goalie. *Note: Goalies may play at any*

*place on the field, but must be distinguished by a different colored jersey or pinny, and may only use their hands inside the penalty area.*

**Game Time:** The game will consist of two halves, each of which will be broken into four periods. The length of each period will be set by the referee before the start of the game. The length may vary depending on extenuating circumstances, scheduling conflicts, etc. but will usually be 5 minutes long. Half time break will be 5 minutes long.

**Substitutions:** Substitutions will be made at the end of each period, or for injury or equipment breakage at any time play is stopped. Each player should play a minimum of 50% of the total playing time. If there are substitutes available **no player should play the entire game.**

**Start of Play:** Before the start of the game the referee will toss a coin to determine field position. The “visiting” team calls the toss, and the winner of the toss has the choice of ends. The toss loser kicks off. The referee having given the signal, the game shall be started by a player taking a place kick (a kick at the ball while stationary on the ground in the center of the field of play) into their opponents half of the field. Every player shall be in his own half of the field during the kick-off, and every player on the defending team shall remain not less than eight (8) yards from the ball until it is kicked off. The ball shall not be deemed in play until it has made a forward motion. The kicker shall not play the ball a second time until it has been touched or played by another player.

**Ball in and out of Play:** The ball is out of play when it has **wholly** crossed the goal-line or the touch-line, whether on the ground or in the air. The ball is in play at all other times unless the referee has blown the ball dead including:

- if it rebounds from the goalpost, cross-bar or corner flag post into the field of play
- if it rebounds off of either the referee or linesmen when they are in the field of play.

**Fouls:** Fouls resulting in a direct free kick are:

- 1) hand ball
- 2) kicking, striking, tripping, holding, pushing, jumping at, or charging into an opponent.
- 3) Charging an opponent from behind.

Fouls resulting in an indirect free kick are:

- 1) playing to endanger either ones self or ones opponent,
- 2) obstructing an opponent
- 3) goal keeper delaying the game.

**Free Kicks:** Direct free kicks can be kicked directly at the goal, resulting in a score. Indirect kicks must be touched by another player on either team before passing across the goal line in order to result in a score. On all free kicks members of the non-kicking team must the minimum of: eight (8) yards from the ball, or on the goal line between the goal posts.

No free kicks will be taken within the penalty area. All free kicks will be moved to the boundary of the penalty area at a point closest to where the foul was committed.

**Penalty Kicks:** No penalty kicks shall be taken.

**Goal Kick:** Goal kicks will be taken from a spot marked half way between goal line and penalty line, centered in front of the goal. The ball must exit the penalty area before the ball is considered in play. All members of the non-kicking team must remain outside of the penalty area until the ball is in play.

A goal kick must either bounce or be played by a member of either team before it crosses the midfield line or there is a loss of ball, and the non-kicking team is awarded a free kick at the midfield line at the point where the ball crossed. This rule also applies to kicks, drop-kicks, and throws taken by the goalkeeper after a save.

**Goalkeeper Saves:** The goal keeper may use their hands at any point inside the penalty box. At this level there are no limitations to passing back to your own goal keeper. After making a save the goal keeper must release the ball in a timely manner (usually considered less than five seconds.) Referees will use their discretion to assess when the goal keeper is holding the ball to obtain an advantage or is just inexperienced.

**Corner Kicks:** If a team kicks the ball beyond its own goal line, the other team is awarded a corner kick from a corner arc. During the kick defensive players must be at least eight (8) yards from the player kicking the ball. The kicker's teammates can position themselves anywhere they choose.

**Throw-in:** When the ball is kicked out of bounds along the sideline, the game is restarted with a throw-in. The team that last touched the ball loses possession, and the other team gets to throw the ball back in play. The player putting the ball back in play must use both hands to throw the ball and keep both feet on the ground. The throwing motion should begin from behind the head and be a continuous forward thrust until the ball is released in front of the head. The player throwing in the ball cannot play the ball further until it has been touched by another player. In cases of illegal throw-ins the referee at their discretion will request the player to re-take the throw-in. Minor violations will not result in re-takes. Any violation that results in a clear advantage for the throwing team will require a re-throw. In the case of repeated violations the referee may request that a different player take the throw-in but in no case will it result in loss of possession.

**Slide- Tackles:** Slide tackles (intentionally sliding in an attempt to win the ball) are not permitted at any time and will result in an indirect free kick. The referee will distinguish between intentional slides and accidental loss of balance or footing.

**Off-Sides:** The off-sides rule is not in use at this age level.