

# U8 Game Rules

**Official:** *Let the players have the freedom to play with minimum interruption.* The official should briefly explain any infringements to the player(s) and encourage proper play and sporting behavior. As with all games, *every effort should be made to keep the game moving and free from stoppages for doubtful infractions. Let them play and enjoy.*

**The Start of Play:** The game should be started with a *kick-off* in the middle of the field.

**The Kick-off:** A coin toss is used to determine which team kicks off to start the game and the other team kicks off to start the second half. Opponents must be eight yards from the center mark while kick-off is in progress. The winner of the coin toss chooses which goal to attack or if they want to kick off.

**Ball In and Out of Play:** The ball is out of play in all age group games when it completely crosses the touch line (side line) or goal line (end line), either on the ground or in the air.

**Method of Scoring:** A goal, in all age groups, is awarded when the ball completely crosses the goal line into the goal.

**Keeping Time:** Game will consist of two half 20 minutes long. Substitution will be taken and round the 9 minutes into each half. Half time break will be 5-7 minutes long.

**Fouls:** The opposing team must be at least ten feet from the ball when free kicks are taken in U8 games. The following are the fouls most likely to occur in U8 games: kicking, tripping, pushing, holding, handling the ball and dangerous play. Officials must remember that there is no need to stop play for technical violations that do not interrupt the flow of the game. It's a player's game and not a game of how many infractions can be identified, so keep the fun going and let them play.

**Misconduct:** *Misconduct (yellow and red cards) should not be used in U8 games.* There is no need for the public cautioning and sending off young players. Officials should work cooperatively with the coach when a player may need a 'time out'.

**Free Kicks:** All free kicks in U8 are *direct* kicks. Opponents must be at least ten feet from the ball or on the goal line between the goal posts during free kicks. Free kicks awarded to the attacking team inside the defending teams goal penalty area are to be taken from the nearest point on the penalty area line parallel to the goal line.

**Offside:** No offside.

**Throw-In:** is awarded to the opponents of player who last touched the ball when then whole ball passes over the touch line. The Throw-in is to be taken from the point where the ball crossed the touch line.

**Goal Kick:** A goal kick is awarded to the opposing team when the attacking team is last to touch the ball before it crosses the goal line but without scoring a goal. The goal kick may be taken from any point inside the penalty area. The opposing team must be behind build out line when the goal kick is taken in U8 games.

**Corner Kick:** A corner kick is awarded to the opposing team, in U8 and older, when the defending team is last to touch the ball before it crosses the goal line but not scoring a goal. The opposing team must be at least ten feet from the ball when the corner kick is taken in U8 games.

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**Dropped ball:** Drop the ball to a SINGLE player in all cases. the ball will be dropped for one player of the team that last touched the ball at the point of the last touch.

**Deliberately Handling Ball:** This infraction occurs when a player *handles the ball deliberately*. This includes the hand and entire arm up to the top of the shoulder. Accidental contact (ball striking hand or arm with no intent by the player) is not an offense and should not be penalized.

**Build-Out Line:** The build-out line promotes playing the ball out of the back in a less pressured setting. The build-out line shall be placed across the field between the top of the goal area and the halfway line. The opposing team must move back behind the build-out line when the goalkeeper gains position or on goal kicks.

- The opposing team may cross the build out line once the ball is in play.
- **The ball is in play once the goalkeeper has released the ball.**
- If an opposing player crosses the build out line before the ball is in play, the referee shall **stop play and restart play** by allowing the goalkeeper to retake the distribution.
- If the attacking team chooses to play the ball out by throwing, rolling, or with a foot pass while there are opponents inside the build out line, the ball is in play once released by the goalkeeper.
- The ball *can be distributed over the build out line*, kicked directly up the field either by the goalkeeper or another player.
- **Goal kicks:** opposition may not enter build out zone until ball leaves the penalty area. *The ball may be kicked directly over the build out line.*

**No Heading:** Consistent with the US Soccer mandates on heading the ball, heading is banned for all division U12 and below in both practices and matches. An indirect free kick will be awarded to the opposing team if a player deliberately touches the ball with his/her head during a match (taken where the player touched the ball with his/her head).

