

**GENERAL RULES OF PLAY**  
**ALL LEVELS AND AGES**  
**EXCEPTIONS AND ADDITIONS TO FIFA LAWS**

Updated 7.31.17 with changes approved at the July 23, 2017 GBM;

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Except as otherwise noted in these rules, FIFA Laws will govern the play of all games in STYSA Competitions for youth play.

**6.0 AGE GROUPS (Changed 2.21.16)**

Age groups are determined by the **age of the oldest rostered player’s Calendar Birth Year** as shown in Table 6.0 below.

Table 6.0

| <b>The age groups are as follows:</b> |                             |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 19 years of age and younger           | 11 years of age and younger |
| 18 years of age and younger           | 10 years of age and younger |
| 17 years of age and younger           | 9 years of age and younger  |
| 16 years of age and younger           | 8 years of age and younger  |
| 15 years of age and younger           | 7 years of age and younger  |
| 14 years of age and younger           | 6 years of age and younger  |
| 13 years of age and younger           | 5 years of age and younger  |
| 12 years of age and younger           | 4 years of age and younger  |

**Note: In the rules, the format age followed by a “U” means that age and younger.**

Any coach or assistant coach who is responsible for knowingly playing an ineligible player will be subject to suspension from participation in any STYSA sanctioned program.

Age groups can be combined at the discretion of the association/club as needed (e.g., 11-12U) or include brackets to combine age groups.

**6.1 SPECIAL RULES OF PLAY –4U through 19U Age Groups**  
**EXCEPTIONS AND ADDITIONS TO FIFA LAWS (Changed 2.21.16)**

**6.1.0 Age Group**

- (a) A player with his / her parent’s and coach’s permission, and in compliance with the local association playing rules, may play in an older age group.

- (b) Except as provided herein, no player may play in a younger age group than the age group for which he/she is eligible. For Division III and Division IV players only, if a medical condition exists (substantiated in writing by a licensed physician with no family relationship to player) that will prohibit or severely hinder a player from playing in his/her own age group, the player may seek special approval from his/her Local Association / Club Board and Member Association to allow the player to play down in a younger age group. All requests must be submitted to and approved by the STYSA Executive Committee prior to the player's first game.
- (c) Age groups 12U and younger shall be **required** to play with a number of players fewer than that specified in the FIFA Laws of the Game. **(Changed 2.21.16)**

6.1.1 **Number of Players (Changed 2.21.16)**

| Age      | Maximum # of Players on the field per team | Minimum # of players on the field per team to avoid forfeit |
|----------|--|---|
| 13U-19U  | 11   | 7   |
| 11U/U12U | 9  | 6   |
| 9U/U10U  | 7  | 5   |
| 6U-U8U   | 4  | 3   |
| 4U/U5U   | 3  | 3   |

Table 6.1

**\*For teams participating in a national, state or local competition, the** maximum and minimum number of players rostered to a team **are** to be determined by the national, state and local competitions. For teams participating in state competitions, please refer to the competition rules. Local competition rules shall be set by the local association or club.

If not prohibited by the rules of by the competition, coaches can agree, prior to the game, to adjust the environment as needed so that a forfeit can be avoided or game can be played even if a forfeit does occur. Playing a game pursuant to such an agreement does not alter a forfeiture that otherwise would occur. This can be accomplished by borrowing eligible players from the other team and adjusting both teams to make the teams even.

**6.1.2 Playing Time & Substitution Requirements (Changed 2.21.16)**  
Playing Time Requirements:

| Division   | Playing time requirements                          | Exceptions                              |
|--|--|---|
| 11U and 12U all play levels                                  | 50%  | Due to Illness or Disciplinary reasons* |
| Super II, Division II, Division III, Division IV and Academy | 50%  | Due to Illness or Disciplinary reasons* |
| Division I   | No minimum playing time for each registered player |   |

Table 6.1.2(A)

\*In the event that a player is present but will not be playing, the coach must inform the opposing coach and game officials as well as noting on the game card that the player will not be playing.

Substitution Rules:

|  |
|--|
| <b>Prior permission of the referee is required:</b>  |
| On a throw-in (by the team in possession)  |
| On a goal kick (by either team)  |
| After any goal (by either team)  |
| After stoppage of play for an injury (either team)   |
| After a caution (the player receiving the caution)   |
| <b>Permission of the referee is not required:</b>  |
| The resumption of play after the half time break (except with respect to a change of goalkeeper) |

Table 6.1.2(B)

6.1.3 **Field of Play and Exceptions and Additions to FIFA Laws 5U-19U (Changed 7.19.15)**

The association / club / league which controls the fields shall determine the location of the teams, players, coaches, fans and supporters in relation to the field and each other. Field dimensions, goal sizes, and all necessary field markings will follow USSF, USYS, and STYSA rules and recommended guidelines. Field of Play and Technical Areas are also subject to national, state and local competition rules.

**Technical Areas.** If there is a Technical Area marked for each team, it will include, but not be limited to, that team's "bench area." Coaches, players, and eligible adults permitted to be present with the team must remain within the markings and within their half, except for substitution and warm-up. If both teams are assigned to one side of the field, only coaches, players, and eligible adults permitted to be present with the team may be within the Technical Area.

**Annual Field Inspection.** Each member association is responsible for establishing a system of yearly inspection of goals utilized by its member clubs, leagues and associations. A statement shall be provided to STYSA with the submission of fall registration that the goals have been inspected prior to the beginning of the fall season and found to be in safe condition. A statement or form and criteria shall be established by STYSA for a standardized procedure of inspection. The statement shall be signed by an officer of the member association. This requirement must be met or the member association shall not be in good standing.

| Age     | Markings on the field | Minimum Dimensions  | Maximum Dimensions  |
|---------|-----------------------|---|---|
| 13U-19U | Field Size            | (W) 50 x (L) 100 yards  | 100 x 130 yards<br><b>(W) 75 x (L) 112 yards (USSF suggested)</b> |
|         | Goals                 | 24 x 8 feet   |   |
|         | Center Circle         | 10 yards in radius  |   |
|         | Penalty Area          | 18 x 44 yards   |   |
|         | Goal Area             | 6 x 20 yards  |   |
|         | Penalty Spot          | 12 yards and perpendicular from the midpoint of the goal line |   |
|         | Penalty Arc           | 10 yards radius form the penalty spot                         |   |
|         | Offside               | The FIFA Offside Rule shall Apply                             |   |

Table 6.1.3(A)  
**(Changed 2.21.16)**

| Age     | Markings on the field | Minimum Dimensions  | Maximum Dimensions   |
|---------|-----------------------|---|--|
| 11U-12U | Field Size            | (W) 40 x (L) 60 yards   | (W) 70 x (L) 90 yards<br><b>(W) 47 x (L) 75 yards (USSF suggested)</b> |
|         | Goals                 | 18 x 6 feet   | 21 x 7 feet<br><b>18.5 x 6.5 feet recommended</b>                      |
|         | Center circle         | 7 yards in radius   |  |
|         | Penalty Area          | <b>12 x 30 yards</b>  |  |
|         | Goal Area             | <b>4 x 14 yards</b>   |  |
|         | Penalty Spot          | <b>8 yards and perpendicular from the midpoint of the goal line</b>   |  |
|         | Restarts              | Conform to FIFA with the exception of the opponents of the team taking the kick-off are at least eight (8) yards from the ball until it is in play. |  |
|         | Penalty Arc           | 7 yards radius form the penalty spot  |  |
|         | Offside               | The FIFA Offside Rule shall apply   |  |

Table 6.1.3(B)  
**(Changed 2.21.16)**

| Age    | Markings on the field | Minimum Dimensions   | Maximum Dimensions   |
|--------|-----------------------|--|--|
| 9U-10U | Field Size            | (W) 30 x (L) 50 yards  | (W) 60 x (L) 80 yards<br><br><b>(W) 30 x (L) 47 yards (USSF suggested)</b> |
|        | Goals                 | <b>18 x 6 feet Minimum</b><br><b>21 x 7 feet Maximum</b><br><br><b>18.5 x 6.5 feet recommended</b>                                   |  |
|        | Center circle         | 7 yards in radius  |  |
|        | Penalty Area          | <b>10 x 20 yards</b>   |  |
|        | Goal Area             | <b>4 x 14 yards</b>  |  |
|        | Penalty Spot          | 8 yards and perpendicular from the midpoint of the goal line   |  |
|        | Penalty Arc           | 7 yards radius from the penalty spot   |  |
|        | Restarts              | <b>Conform to FIFA with the exception of the opponents of the team taking the kick-off are at least six (6) yards from the ball.</b> |  |
|        | Offside               | The FIFA Offside Rule shall apply.   |  |
|        | <b>Build out Line</b> | <b>14 yards from and parallel to each end line</b>   |  |

Table 6.1.3(C)

(Changed 2.21.16)

| Age   | Markings on the field | Minimum Dimensions   | Maximum Dimensions   |
|-------|-----------------------|--|--|
| 6U-8U | Field Size            | (W) 20 x (L) <b>30</b> yards   | (W) 40 x (L) 60 yards<br><b>(W) 20 x (L) 30 yards (USSF suggested)</b> |
|       | Goals                 | <b>6 x 4 feet</b>  |  |
|       | Center circle         | <b>5 yards in radius</b>   |  |
|       | Penalty Area          | None   |  |
|       | Goal Area             | 3 x 3  |  |
|       | Penalty Spot          | <b>No penalty area</b>   |  |
|       | Penalty Arc           | None   |  |
|       | Fouls                 | All fouls shall be penalized with indirect kicks   |  |
|       | Restarts              | From the point of taking an indirect kick or corner kick, <b>opponents shall not be any closer than 5 yards</b>  |  |
|       | Throw-ins             | If there is an infraction of the FIFA throw-in rules, the player throwing the ball in shall receive one additional throw-in after a correcting instruction from referee. If the player violates the FIFA rule on his/her second attempt then the opposing team shall be awarded a throw-in |  |
|       | Offside               | <b>There shall be no offside rule.</b>   |  |
|       | Goalkeeper            | <b>There is no goalkeeper.</b>   |  |

Table 6.1.3(D)

(Changed 2.21.16)

| Age   | Marking on the field | Minimum Dimensions   | Maximum Dimensions    |
|-------|----------------------|--|-----------------------|
| 4U-5U | Field Size           | (W) 15 x (L) 20 yards  | (W) 20 x (L) 30 yards |
|       | Goals                | Goals shall be approximately 4 feet tall by 6 feet wide. Hockey goals may be used. Cones spaced 6 feet apart may be used.  |                       |
|       | Center circle        | 3 yards in radius  |                       |
|       | Penalty Area         | None   |                       |
|       | Goal Area            | None   |                       |
|       | Penalty Spot         | None   |                       |
|       | Penalty Arc          | None   |                       |
|       | Fouls                | There shall be no penalty shots.<br>All fouls shall be penalized with indirect kicks.  |                       |
|       | Restarts             | From the point of taking an indirect kick or corner kick, opponents shall not be any closer than 3 yards.  |                       |
|       | Throw-ins            | <p>If there is an infraction of the FIFA throw-in rules, the player throwing the ball in shall receive one additional throw-in after a correcting instruction from referee. If the player violates the FIFA rule on his/her second attempt then the opposing team shall be awarded a throw-in.</p> <p>Some associations may elect to play without throw-ins. In such cases, the ball will be returned to play by an indirect kick taken from the touchline where the ball exited the field of play. STYSA- sanctioned tournaments will use the throw-in.</p> |                       |
|       | Offside              | There shall be no offside  |                       |
|       | Goalkeeper           | There will be no goalkeeper  |                       |

Table 6.1.3(E)

(Changed 2.21.16)

#### 6.1.4 Ball Size (Changed 2.21.16)

Ball sizes for the age groups as shown in Table 6.1.4 below will follow USSF/USYS rules and recommended guidelines.

| Ball Size     |      |
|---------------|------|
| Age           | Size |
| 13U-19U       | 5    |
| <b>9U-12U</b> | 4    |
| <b>4U-8U</b>  | 3    |

Table 6.1.4

#### 6.1.5 Length of Games (Changed 2.21.16)

| Length of Games |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Age             | Time   |
| 19U             | Two Forty Five (45) minute halves/ <b>15</b> min half  |
| 17U-18U         | Two Forty Five (45) minute halves/ <b>15</b> min half  |
| 15U-16U         | Two Forty (40) minute halves/ <b>15</b> min half       |
| 13U-14U         | Two Thirty Five (35) minute halves/ <b>15</b> min half |
| 11U-12U         | Two Thirty (30) minute halves/ <b>10</b> min half      |
| 9U-10U          | Two Twenty Five (25) minute halves/ <b>10</b> min half |
| <b>8U</b>       | <b>Three Fifteen (15) minute periods/5 min breaks</b>  |
| <b>4U-7U</b>    | <b>Four Eight (8) minute quarters/5 min breaks</b>     |

Table 6.1.5

If deemed necessary, competition officials, coaches and/or referees may adjust the length of games due to weather conditions (i.e. water breaks) or may adjust based on the nature of the competition.

#### 6.1.6 Player Equipment

- (a) All players will wear shin guards which are commercially produced and specifically designed to provide protection to the shins.
- (b) No player will be allowed to play with a hard cast (padded or otherwise)
- (c) No player will be allowed to play with any brace (knee or otherwise) that contains exposed metal or hard plastics, unless it is wrapped with a

minimum of ½ inch high-density foam wrapping or the manufacturer's recommended protective coating.

- (d) Bandannas of any style may not be worn during any game. Players may not wear a bandanna either on their heads, legs or arms. Exceptions may be made at the local level for medical reasons.
- (e) The Players' Equipment: Conform to FIFA. Non-uniform clothing is allowed based on weather conditions, but uniforms must still distinguish teams.

#### 6.1.7 **Referees (Changed 7.19.15)**

The referee's judgment decisions shall be final in all matters concerning the rules governing the playing of the game, the playability of the field and the appropriateness of the uniforms. At the completion of the match, the referee shall have each coach sign the game report and submit the game report to the competition representative.

Rules pertaining to the number of players on the field to avoid forfeit will be determined by the national, state and local competition. Also see Rule. 6.1.1.

A game card will be completed by the referee for all play within STYSA. This card will, at a minimum, contain the following:

- (a) Association, age group, division, game location, date, game time
- (b) Team names and final score
- (c) Cautions (yellow cards) or ejections (red cards) issued, by team with player / name
- (d) Any protest noted and brief basis for those protests
- (e) Prior to each STYSA sanctioned match, each team shall present to the referee the Adult Participation Pass for each Coach and other Eligible Adult who is present. The referee shall record as part of the game card each Adult Participation Pass that is so presented, by marking on the roster next to the name of each Coach (over age 17) or other Eligible Adult who is listed on the roster and is identified on an Adult Participation Pass and by recording on the game card the name of each Coach (over age 17) or other Eligible Adult for whom an Adult Participation Pass is presented but is not on the roster.

These game cards are to be retained through the end of the District or STYSA Tournaments.

Disputes must be noted on the referee's game report and a complete description of the incident shall be submitted to the appropriate Disciplinary and Protest Representative.

#### 6.1.8 **Fouls and Misconduct**

The FIFA Law with respect to the charging of the goalkeeper shall not apply in youth play. There shall be no charging of the goalkeeper, fairly or unfairly, in

STYSA sanctioned competition. Any such act will be considered as “dangerous play” at the least and punished accordingly.