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U4 and U5 Parent/Referee Handbook

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This guide contains information which is relevant to parent/referees who officiate U4-U5 games.

Complete and original laws of the game, can be found at the FIFA website:

(<http://www.fifa.com/worldfootball/lawsofthegame.html>)

LAW 1 – Field of Play

Dimensions

The field of play must be rectangular. The length of the touch line must be greater than the length of the goal line.

Approximate Length: 35 yards

Approximate Width: 25 yards

Field Markings

The field of play is marked with lines which belong to the areas of which they are boundaries. This is important because in soccer, the ball must COMPLETELY cross a boundary line to be considered "out of play".

- The two longer boundary lines are called touch lines
- The two shorter lines are called goal lines
- All lines are not more than 5 inches wide
- The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line.
- The center mark is indicated at the midpoint of the halfway line. A circle with an approximate radius of 5 yards is marked around it.

The Goal Area

A goal area is defined at each end of the field and is used at this level to show where goal kicks are to be taken from. The area is defined as follows:

- Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line, 3 yards from the inside of each goalpost. These lines extend into the field of play for a distance of 3 yards and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is the goal area.

Flags

Flags are not used at this age level since they are a distraction and danger to the younger players.

The Corner Arc

This field marking is not present at this age level

Goals

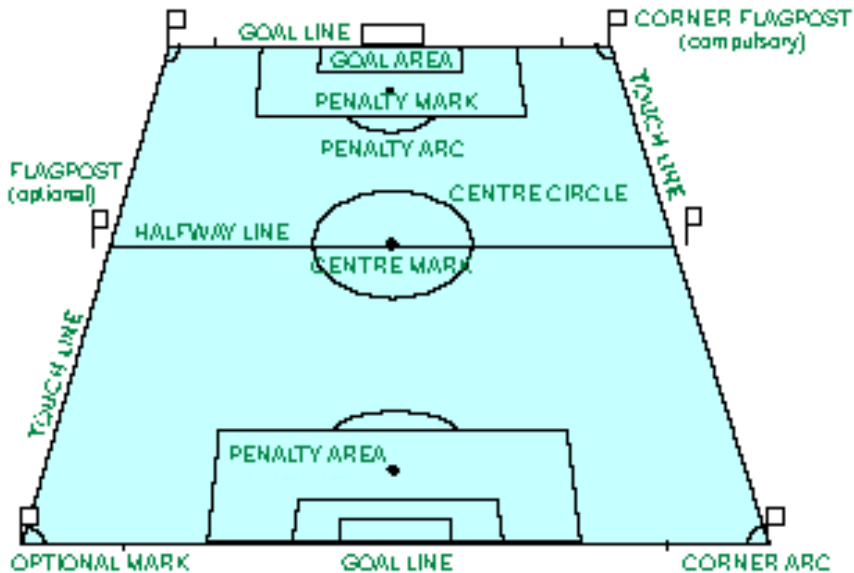
Goals must be placed on the center of each goal line.

They consist of two upright posts equidistant from the corners and joined at the top by a horizontal crossbar.

The goals at this age level are approximately 4 feet high and 4 feet wide; about the size of a hockey goal.

Safety

Goals must be anchored securely to the ground. Portable goals may only be used if they satisfy this requirement.



LAW 2 – Ball

Qualities and Measurements

The ball is:

- *Spherical*
- *Made of leather or other suitable material*
- *Size 3*
- *Of a pressure equal to 0.6 – 1.1 atmosphere (600 – 1100 g/cm²) at sea level (8.5 lbs/sq in 15.6 lbs/sq in)*

Replacement of a Defective Ball

If the ball bursts or becomes defective during the course of a match:

- *the match is stopped*
- *the match is restarted by dropping the replacement ball at the place where the first ball became defective * (see page 3)*

If the ball bursts or becomes defective whilst not in play at a kick-off, goal kick, corner kick, free kick, penalty kick or throw-in:

- *the match is restarted accordingly*

The ball may not be changed during the match without the authority of the referee.

LAW 3 – Number of Players

Players

A match is played by two teams, with U4 teams having 4 players on the field and U5 teams having 5 players on the field. Unlike older divisions, U4 and U5 teams do not have a goalkeeper and the teams may be co-ed. A match may not start if either team has less than four players.

Substitutions

Substitutions may occur when:

- *when an injury occurs, for the injured player only*
- *at half-time*
- *at the end of the first and third quarters*
- *each player must play at least 50% of each game*

Infringements/Sanctions

If a substitute enters the field of play without the referee's permission:

- *play is stopped*
- *the substitute is required to leave the field of play*
- *play is restarted with a dropped ball at the place it was located when play was stopped*

LAW 4 – Players' Equipment

Safety

A player must not use equipment or wear anything which is dangerous to himself or another player (including any kind of jewelry).

Basic Equipment

The basic compulsory equipment of a player is:

- *A jersey or shirt*
- *Shorts – if thermal undershorts or pants are worn, they should be underneath the shorts*
- *Socks*
- *Shin guards*
- *Footwear*

Shin guards

- *Should covered entirely by the stockings*
- *Made of a suitable material (rubber, plastic, or similar substances)*
- *Provide a reasonable degree of protection*

Infringements/Sanctions

For any infringement of this Law:

- *Play need not be stopped*
- *The player at fault is instructed by the referee to leave the field of play to correct his equipment*

- *The player leaves the field of play when the ball next ceases to be in play, unless he has already corrected his equipment*
- *Any player required to leave the field of play to correct his equipment does not re-enter without the referee's permission*
- *The referee checks that the player's equipment is correct before allowing him to re-enter the field of play*

LAW 5 – The Referee

The Authority of the Referee

Each match is controlled by a referee who has full authority to enforce the Laws of the Game in connection with the match to which he has been appointed.

Powers and Duties

The Referee:

- *Enforces the Laws of the Game*
- *Controls the match*
- *Ensures that any ball used meets the requirements of Law 2*
- *Ensures that the players' equipment meets the requirements of Law 4*
- *Acts as timekeeper and keeps a record of the match*
- *Stops, suspends or terminates the match, at his discretion, for any infringements of the Laws*
- *Stops, suspends or terminates the match because of outside interference of any kind*
- *Stops the match if, in his opinion, a player is seriously injured and ensures that he is removed from the field of play*
- *Allows play to continue until the ball is out of play if a player is, in his opinion, only slightly injured*
- *Ensures that any player bleeding from a wound leaves the field of play. The player may only return on receiving a signal from the referee, who must be satisfied that the bleeding has stopped*
- *Allows play to continue when the team against which an offence has been committed will benefit from such an advantage and penalizes the original offence if the anticipated advantage does not ensue at that time*
- *Punishes the more serious offence when a player commits more than one offence at the same time*
- *Ensures that no unauthorized persons enter the field of play*
- *Restarts the match after it has been stopped*

Decisions of the Referee

The decisions of the referee regarding facts connected with play are final.

The referee may only change a decision on realizing that it is incorrect provided that he has not restarted play.

LAW 6 – Assistant Referees

Not applicable at this age level

LAW 7 – Duration of the Match

Periods of Play

The match shall be four periods of 10 minutes each with a halftime break after the second 10-minute period.

Play will be stopped at the mid point of each half for substitutions. The mid point break of each half is approximate and should occur at a convenient stoppage of play, e.g., throw-in, goal-kick, corner kick or kick-off.

The break at the end of the second and fourth periods is approximate and should not occur if the attacking team appears to be close to a score.

Interval Between Periods

The half-time interval after the second period shall be 5 minutes.

The quarter-time interval after the first and third period shall be 2 minutes maximum.

Allowance for Time Lost

Allowance is made in any period for all time lost through:

- *Substitution(s)*
- *Assessment of injury to players*
- *Removal of injured players from the field of play for treatment*
- *Wasting time*
- *Any other cause*

The allowance for time lost is at the discretion of the referee.

LAW 8 – Start / Restart of Play

Preliminaries

A coin is tossed and the team which wins the toss decides which goal it will attack in the first half of the match.

The other team takes the kick-off to start the match.

The team which wins the toss takes the kick-off to start the second half of the match.

In the second half of the match the teams change ends and attack the opposite goals.

Kick-off

A kick-off is a way of starting or restarting play:

- *At the start of the match*
- *After a goal has been scored*
- *At the start of the second half of the match*
- *A goal may be scored directly from the kick-off*
- *After a team scores a goal, the kick-off is taken by the other team*
- **Procedure**
 - *All players are in their own half of the field*

- *The opponents of the team taking the kick-off are at least 5 yards from the ball until it is in play*
- *The ball is stationary on the center mark*
- *The referee gives a signal*
- *The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves forward*
- *The kicker does not touch the ball a second time until it has touched another player*

Infringements/Sanctions

If the kicker touches the ball a second time before it has touched another player:

- *An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred **

For any other infringement of the kick-off procedure:

- *The kick-off is retaken*

Dropped Ball

A dropped ball is a way of restarting the match after a temporary stoppage which becomes necessary, while the ball is in play, for any reason not mentioned elsewhere in the Laws of the Game. Restart after an injury is the most common reason for a dropped ball.

Procedure

The referee drops the ball at the place where it was located when play was stopped

Play restarts when the ball touches the ground.

Infringements/Sanctions

The ball is dropped again:

- *If it is touched by a player before it makes contact with the ground*
- *If the ball leaves the field of play after it makes contact with the ground, without a player touching it*

Special Circumstances

A free kick awarded to the defending team inside its own goal area can be taken from any point within the goal area.

An indirect free kick awarded to the attacking team in its opponents' goal area is taken from the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred.

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

LAW 9 – Ball In and Out of Play

Ball Out of Play

The ball is out of play when:

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

Ball In Play

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

- *It rebounds from a goalpost or crossbar and remains in the field of play*
- *It rebounds from the referee when they are on the field of play*

LAW 10 – Method of Scoring

Goal Scored

A goal is scored when the entire 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

No standings or scores are kept at this age level, effectively ending each game in a “tie”

LAW 11 – Offside

Not applicable at this age level

LAW 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

Fouls and misconduct are penalized as follows:

Indirect Free Kick – Note: ALL free kicks at this age level are indirect, meaning a goal cannot be scored directly from the free kick. It must touch one other player (from either team) before going in the goal to be counted.

An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following six offences in a manner considered by the referee 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*

An indirect free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following six 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*
- *plays in a dangerous manner*
- *impedes the progress of an opponent*

The indirect free kick is taken from where the offence occurred

Disciplinary Sanctions

A player is immediately substituted off the field if he commits any of the following offenses:

- is guilty of unsporting behavior
- shows dissent by word or action
- persistently infringes the Laws of the Game
- delays the restart of play
- fails to respect the required distance when play is restarted with a corner kick or free kick
- enters or re-enters the field of play without the referee's permission
- deliberately leaves the field of play without the referee's permission
- is guilty of serious foul play *
- is guilty of violent conduct *
- spits at an opponent or any other person *
- 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 own penalty area)
- denies an obvious goal-scoring opportunity to an opponent moving towards the player's goal by an offence punishable by a free kick or a penalty kick
- uses offensive or insulting or abusive language and/or gestures *
- Any simulating action anywhere on the field, which is intended to deceive the referee, must be sanctioned as unsporting behavior.

The referee must explain all infractions to the offending player.

* A player guilty of these offenses must leave the pitch. If a substitute is not available, and the number of players on the field is less than four, the game will be forfeited.

LAW 13 – Free Kicks

All free kicks are indirect.

The ball must be stationary when the kick is taken and the kicker does not touch the ball a second time until it has touched another player.

The Indirect Free Kick

Signal

The referee indicates an indirect free kick by raising his arm above his head. He maintains his arm in that position until the kick has been taken and the ball has touched another player or goes out of play.

Ball Enters the Goal

A goal can be scored only if the ball subsequently touches another player before it enters the goal.

- *if an indirect free kick is kicked directly into the opponents' goal, a goal kick is awarded*
- *if an indirect free kick is kicked directly into the team's own goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opposing team*

Position of Free Kick

Free Kick Inside the Goal Area

Indirect free kick to the defending team:

- *all opponents are at least 5 yards from the ball*

- *the ball is in play when it is kicked directly beyond the goal area*
- *a free kick awarded in the goal area is taken from any point inside that area*

Indirect free kick to the attacking team:

- *all opponents are at least 5 yards from the ball until it is in play, unless they are on their own goal line between the goalposts*
- *the ball is in play when it is kicked and moves*
- *an indirect free kick awarded inside the goal area is taken from that part of the goal area line which runs parallel to the goal line, at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred*
- *Free Kick Outside the Goal Area*
- *all opponents are at least 5 yards from the ball until it is in play*
- *the ball is in play when it is kicked and moves*
- *the free kick is taken from the place where the infringement occurred*

Infringements/Sanctions

If, when a free kick is taken, an opponent is closer to the ball than the required distance:

- *the kick is retaken*

If, when a free kick is taken by the defending team from inside its own goal area, the ball is not kicked directly into play:

- *the kick is retaken*

If, after the ball is in play, the kicker touches the ball a second time (except with his hands) before it has touched another player:

- *an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred **

If, after the ball is in play, the kicker deliberately handles the ball before it has touched another player:

- *an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred **

LAW 14 – The Penalty Kick

Not applicable at this age level

LAW 15 – The Throw-In

A throw-in is a method of restarting play.

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

A throw-in is awarded:

- *When the entire ball passes over the touch line, either on the ground or in the air*
- *Taken from the point where it crossed the touch line*
- *Awarded 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 his head*

The thrower may not touch the ball again until it has touched another player.

The ball is in play immediately after it enters the field of play.

Infringements/Sanctions

If, after the ball is in play, the thrower touches the ball a second time before it has touched another player:

- *an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred **

LAW 16 – The Goal Kick

A goal kick is a method of restarting play.

A goal may be scored directly from a goal kick, but only against the opposing team.

A goal kick is awarded when:

- *the whole of the ball, having last touched a player of the attacking team, passes over the goal line, either on the ground or in the air, and a goal is not scored in accordance with Law 10*

Procedure

- *the ball is kicked from any point within the goal area by a player of the defending team*
- *opponents remain outside the goal area until the ball is in play*
- *the kicker does not play the ball a second time until it has touched another player*
- *the ball is in play when it is kicked directly beyond the goal area*
- *all opponents are at least 5 yards from the ball*

Infringements/Sanctions

If the ball is not kicked directly into play beyond the goal area:

- *the kick is retaken*

If, after the ball is in play, the kicker touches the ball a second time before it has touched another player:

- *an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred **

For any other infringement of this Law:

- *the kick is retaken*

LAW 17 – The Corner Kick

A corner kick is a method of restarting play.

A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick, but only against the opposing team.

A corner kick is awarded when:

- *the whole of the ball, having last touched a player of the defending team, passes over the goal line, either on the ground or in the air, and a goal is not scored in accordance with Law 10*

Procedure

- *the ball is placed inside the corner arc at the nearest corner flagpost*
- *the corner flagpost is not moved*
- *opponents remain at least 5 yards from the ball until it is in play*

- *the ball is kicked by a player of the attacking team*
- *the ball is in play when it is kicked and moves*
- *the kicker does not play the ball a second time until it has touched another player*

Infringements/Sanctions

If, after the ball is in play, the kicker touches the ball a second time before it has touched another player:

- *an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred **

For any other infringement, the kick is retaken