



# FOOTBALL PLAYING RULES

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🔑 LOOK OUT FOR THE MOST  
IMPORTANT 'KEY' RULES



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**mitre**  
Official Sports Partner



These League Rules and Playing Rules shall be overridden by the 'Terms and Conditions of Business' which shall always prevail in the event of any dispute, ambiguity or inconsistency.

## SMALL-SIDED FOOTBALL

### 1. DURATION

- 1.1 All matches consist of 2 halves, usually of 14 to 20 minutes duration (check with Powerplay for specific durations).
- 1.2 The half time interval shall be a maximum of 1 minute duration. Half time may be dispensed with at the Organiser's discretion.

### 2. START OF PLAY & BREAKS IN PLAY

- 2.1 At the beginning of the game the choice of ends is decided by the match official. Where there is no half-time choice of ends shall rest with the first named team on the fixture list.
- 2.2 If a ball crosses the side line or it hits the fence above a kick board, a throw in is awarded to the opposing team.
- 2.3 To return the ball into play the player must deliver the ball underarm and under knee height. The ball must go in a horizontal or downward direction.
- 2.4 A foul throw shall be called if the ball reaches above knee height or is not underarm.
- 2.5 If a ball crosses the goal line by the defending team where it is not a goal, a corner kick shall be awarded. If the ball crosses the goal line by the attacking team, a Goal Kick shall be awarded.
- 2.6 The opposition must be a minimum of **TWO METRES** from a throw in or a corner kick.
- 2.7 There is no offside. Players may place themselves in any part of the playing area without any restriction, including the goal areas.
- 2.8 When a player is taking a free kick, the opposition shall be a minimum distance of **TWO METRES** from the ball until it is in play.

- 2.9 All free kicks that happen around the goal area must be a minimum distance of 1m from the goal area.
- 2.10 A penalty kick shall be taken from the penalty mark or from the edge of the area directly in line with the centre of the goal.
- 2.11 A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw in.
- 2.12 In most leagues there are no restrictions on players entering the goal areas. However, where there is a restriction the following applies:
  - 2.12.1 If an attacker enters the penalty area then a free kick is awarded to the opposing team 2 meters outside the penalty area.
  - 2.12.2 If a defender enters the penalty area then a penalty kick will be awarded against them.
  - 2.12.3 Goalkeepers may not leave the penalty area. If they do so then a penalty is awarded to the opposition unless the goal keeper's momentum has carried him/her out of the area while making a save.
- 2.13 In most leagues there is no head height restriction. However, where there is a restriction the following applies:
  - 2.13.1 If the ball goes over head height then a free kick is awarded to the opposition.
  - 2.13.2 If the ball is saved by the keeper, hits the cross bar or post and goes over head height then the goalkeeper retains possession.
  - 2.13.3 A player is not permitted to use his head to play the ball.

### 3. THE GOAL KEEPER

- 3.1 The goal keeper is allowed out of his goal area. Once he has crossed onto the outfield, he shall be treated as a normal player.
- 3.2 The goal keeper cannot take the ball back into his area from the outfield.

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- 3.3 In most leagues there is no restriction on the goalkeeper using feet in the area during active play. This includes returning the ball into play using a kick. However, where there is a restriction the following applies:
- 3.3.1 Goal keepers may save with their feet but may not pass or clear with their feet.
- 3.3.2 Infringement will result in a free kick 2 metres outside the area.
- 3.4 If the goalkeeper chooses to return the ball using a throw, it must be thrown underarm and under knee height in a horizontal or downward direction.
- 3.5 For a Goal Kick, the goalkeeper must return the ball into play using one kick from anywhere on his goal line. They may not return the ball using a throw.
- 3.6 If a goal keeper passes the ball to his own player the ball must be played to another player before it can be returned into the area for the keeper to pick up.
- 3.7 Penalty for infringements of the rules above is a free kick to the opposition 1m from the goal area.

#### 4. SLIDING TACKLES

- 4.1 Please note particularly that charging / sliding tackles are forbidden and shall be penalised by the awarding of a free kick.
- 4.2 Persistent charging / sliding tackles shall result in a blue card.

#### 5. PLAYERS EQUIPMENT

- 5.1 All players **MUST** wear shin pads. This is compulsory and failure to do so may result in that player being excluded from play.

- 5.2 Permitted footwear on sand dressed turf is astroturf boots or trainers. Permitted footwear on rubber crumb turf is astroturf boots, trainers, or football boots with non-metal blades or non-metal studs. Failure to wear the appropriate footwear may result in that player being excluded at the referee's discretion.

#### 6. SUBSTITUTES

- 6.1 Three (3) substitutes per team shall be permitted during a game.
- 6.2 These substitutes may be pooled from the team's registered players but must be nominated at the start of the match.

- 6.3 The rules of the competition allow unlimited rolling substitutions.
- 6.4 The conditions for making a substitution are:
- The referee must be informed before a substitution can be made.
  - The player leaving the field shall do so from their own goal line.
  - The player entering the field must do so from their own goal line but not until the other player has left the field.
- 6.5 Any player may change with the goal keeper, provided that the referee is informed of the change and it is done so in a stoppage of play.

### 11-A-SIDE FOOTBALL

#### 7. GENERAL

- 7.1 Normal FA rules apply
- 7.2 Substitutes are interchangeable at any time when there is a dead ball situation, with the permission of the referee.
- 7.3 A player who has received the ball from his keeper may not pass back to the keeper before another player touches the ball. Infringement will result in a free kick being awarded from where the back pass was made.

### CODE OF CONDUCT & RESPECT

#### 8. RESPECT

- 8.1 Respect is the FA's response to a clear message from throughout the game that the health of football depends upon high standards of behaviour on and off the pitch.
- Respect is a behavioural code for Football
  - Respect is about recognising that the integrity of the game is more important than the result of the match
  - Respect is about creating an understanding of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in Football
  - Respect is about those involved taking responsibility for the consequences of their own actions
  - Respect is about supporting match officials to do their job. Without them we don't have a game
  - Respect is not a slogan. It is a collective responsibility of those involved in football to create a fair, safe and enjoyable environment in which the game can take place

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## 9. PLAYERS CODE OF CONDUCT

9.1 On and off the field, I and all my players will:

- Adhere to the Laws of The Game
- Display and promote high standards of behaviour
- Promote Fair Play
- Always respect the match officials' decisions
- Never engage in public criticism of the match officials
- Never engage in offensive, insulting or abusive language or behaviour
- Never engage in bullying, intimidation or harassment
- Speak to my team-mates, the opposition and my coach/manager with respect
- Remember we all make mistakes
- Win or lose with dignity. Shake hands with the opposing team and the referee at the end of every game

**I understand that if I do not follow the Code, any/all of the following actions may be taken by the Organiser, County FA of The FA:**

- Be required to apologise to team-mates, the other team, referee or team manager
- Receive a warning from the league
- Be required to attend an FA education course
- Be dropped or substituted
- Be suspended from league games
- Not be selected for the team
- Be required to serve a suspension
- Be fined
- Be required to leave the league

**In addition:**

- The FA/County FA could impose a fine and/or suspension on the club

All participants entering into sporting activities do so entirely at their own risk and the organisers, their servants or agents do not accept liability for any personal injury or loss/damage to property howsoever caused. A copy of these rules shall be given to all participating clubs and are binding on the clubs and players taking part. A copy of these rules are available on request from Powerplay and a copy of The Laws of Small Sided Football are available from the relevant sanctioning County FA or from [www.thefa.com](http://www.thefa.com)

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