

Soccer Simplified

AN INTRODUCTION FOR PARENTS AND NEW PLAYERS

From AYSO Region 177



SOCCER SIMPLIFIED

The Game...

Soccer is a simple game. All you need is a field, a ball, and two teams with the proper equipment and a referee. The field is approximately the size of a football field for older players and smaller for the younger players.

The game is played in two, timed halves of equal duration. To advance AYSO's "Everyone Plays" commitment, quarter breaks are made within each half to allow for player substitution. The duration of each half is determined by the age of the children playing - longer for older players and shorter for younger players.

Any kid of any size can become a skilled and successful soccer player, as physical size is not an important factor. And the best part for them is that due to the nature of the game, every kid gets a chance to participate in the action!

A team has a maximum of eleven (11) players on the field at any one time, although a game can be played with as few as seven on each team. In younger age divisions, Regions use short-sided teams which gives players more "touches" on the ball and the ability to learn skills quicker. The kids find it more fun too!

The 4 positions in soccer are...

GOALKEEPER: also known as the "keeper," this position is responsible for guarding the team's goal and preventing the opposing team from scoring.

DEFENDER: this position's primary duty is to prevent the opponent from having a good shot at the goal. The defender also works to gain possession of the ball and pass it to a teammate for an attack.

MIDFIELDER: also known as the "halfback," this position plays a "transitional" game from defense to offense and vice versa. Usually the midfielder is the most active player on the field and key to maintaining team continuity.

FORWARD: this position has the primary responsibility of scoring and also assists the midfielder in shifting play from defense to offense.

It's important to remember that any player may score a goal, regardless of position.

The Skills...

There are several basic skills in soccer that can be learned at any age and mastered by those players who continually practice them.

PASSING is kicking, pushing or heading the ball to a teammate or to a space where a teammate can run to the ball. A player may lightly tap the ball to a teammate several feet away or kick it strongly to move it down the field. The ball may scoot along the ground or may be kicked into the air.

Most players use two types of kicks to pass to a teammate or shoot towards the goal:

The **INSTEP DRIVE** which is a powerful kick.

The **PUSH PASS** which is done using the inside of the foot. The push pass is more accurate than the instep drive, but is less powerful.

DRIBBLING is transporting the ball under control from one area to another. In soccer, you can't use your hands, so players dribble the ball with their feet, using light taps on the ball to move it along the ground.

CONTROLLING (or trapping) is stopping the ball in flight or on the ground, then controlling it by either dribbling or passing it to teammates. There are many ways to trap a ball:

Allowing it to hit your chest at an angle that deflects it to the ground where it can be controlled.

Allowing it to hit your thigh or your knee to deflect it to the ground where it can be controlled.

Using your foot to stop it.

HEADING is unique to soccer. It's used to stop or pass a ball that's too high to kick or control with your chest. It's also used effectively to score. However, don't use it until your coach shows you the proper technique!

The Referee...

AYSO recommends the use of three (3) game officials:

One Referee and

Two Referee Assistants (formerly known as Linesmen)

The Referee is the ultimate authority during a game. There is no appeal. The Referee's chief responsibilities are to make the game as fun, fair and safe for players as possible.

The Referee enforces the rules - which in soccer are called Laws - by calling offenses and determining if goals have been scored.

The Referee Assistant provides vital assistance to the referee by signaling when the ball has gone out of play and which team gets possession. Referee Assistants also assist with substitutions and general control of the game

The Equipment...

Soccer has limited equipment requirements. However, most AYSO teams play in uniforms (shirt, shorts and socks) supplied by the Region. Shinguards are mandatory during both practices and games. Soccer shoes are also advisable, but not necessary.

Regions provide all the field equipment such as goals, nets, and flags.

The Equipment List:

1. One Enthusiastic Player!
2. Shirt
3. Shorts
4. Socks
5. Shoes (soccer shoes are advisable, no toe cleats allowed)
6. Shinguards (mandatory)
7. Age appropriate ball. U6/U8 - #3, U10/U12 - #4, U14/U16 - #5

The Rules...

Rules in soccer are called Laws and there are seventeen (17) of them.

We won't get into all seventeen here, but give you a general outline so that you can get a feel for how the game is played. Generally, the Laws require that referees stop the game when something has happened which is unfair or unsafe.

THE OBJECT. The object of soccer is for players to get the ball into their opponent's goal using any part of their body except their arms and hands. Only goalkeepers may use their hands while inside their own penalty area.

KICKOFF. A kickoff is taken from the center circle at the beginning of the game, beginning of the second half and after each goal.

THROW IN. After the ball has completely crossed the side boundary lines - called touchlines - a throw in is awarded against the team that last touched the ball. The throw in is taken from where the ball left the field and must be thrown with two hands from behind and over the head, while both feet are on the ground and on or behind the touchline.

GOAL KICK The goal kick is taken by the defending team each time the ball crosses the goal line and was last touched by an attacking player. The ball may be placed anywhere in the goal area and is not considered back in play until it has been kicked out of the penalty area.

CORNER KICK The corner kick is taken by the attacking team each time the ball is kicked by the defense over its own goal line. The ball is placed within the three-foot arc in the corner of the field (nearest to where the ball went out of play) and kicked into play by the attacking team.

PENALTY KICK The penalty kick is awarded when a defending player commits one of the 10 penal (major) fouls

within their own penalty area while the ball is still in play. A player takes the penalty kick from the offended team from a spot 12 yards from the goal. All players must remain outside the penalty area, 10 yards from the ball and behind the penalty-kick mark until the kick is taken, except for the kicker and the goalkeeper. The goalkeeper's feet must remain stationary on the goal line until the ball is kicked. At the referee's signal, the kicker attempts to kick the ball into the opponent's goal and the goalkeeper tries to stop the ball from scoring.

MISCONDUCTS There are two kinds of misconduct:

1. Actions resulting in a caution (yellow card) from the referee.
2. Actions resulting in a player being sent off or ejected from the field (red card).

A referee may also warn a player to improve his or her conduct (or unsportsmanlike behavior) before a caution is issued.

OFFSIDE A player is offside if they are ahead of the ball, except if they:

1. Are in their own half of the field.
2. Have two opponents even with or between him and the opponent's goal line. The referee's "moment of judgment" is the instant the ball is played, not when it is received.
3. Are the first to receive the ball from a throw in, corner kick or goal kick.
4. Are not involved in active play by interfering with play, interfering with an opponent, or gaining an advantage by being in that position.

FOULS: There are two types; Penal (Major) Fouls and Non-Penal (Minor) Fouls.

Penal Fouls: There are 10 major fouls that result in a direct free kick (DFK) and from which a goal may be directly scored against the opponents.

To be a major foul, the offense must be, in the referee's judgment, intentionally committed.

The 10 fouls are divided into two groups:

These six require that the foul be committed carelessly, recklessly or with disproportionate force:

1. Kicking or attempting to kick an opponent.
2. Striking or attempting to strike an opponent.
3. Pushing an opponent.
4. Charging an opponent.
5. Tripping an opponent.
6. Jumping into an opponent.

These four require only that they be committed:

1. When tackling an opponent, making contact with the opponent before the ball.
2. Spitting at an opponent.
3. Holding an opponent.
4. Handling the ball deliberately.

NON-PENAL FOULS: There are five (5) minor fouls that result in an individual free kick (IFK). At least one additional player of either team must touch the ball before a goal can be scored from an IFK.

DANGEROUS PLAY: including high kicking near another player's head or trying to play a ball held by a goalkeeper.

FAIR CHARGE AWAY FROM THE BALL: fairly charging when the ball is not within playing distance.

IMPEDING THE PROGRESS OF AN OPPONENT: getting between an opponent and the ball when not playing the ball.

CHARGING THE GOALKEEPER: shoulder-to-shoulder contact within the penalty area.

GOALKEEPER INFRINGEMENTS:

1. Taking more than four steps while controlling the ball with their hands or otherwise intentionally disrupting the flow of the game.
2. Playing ball with hands when ball is kicked by a teammate.