



# soccer

rules & regulations

[mercystreetdallas.org](http://mercystreetdallas.org)

	4U	6U	8U	10U	12U
number of players on the field	4 v 4	4 v 4	7 v 7	9 v 9	9 v 9
minimum players to start game*	3*	3*	6*	7*	7*
game time	15 min. halves 5 min. halftime	15 min. halves 5 min. halftime	20 min. halves 5 min. halftime	25 min. halves 5 min. halftime	25 min. halves 5 min. halftime
player substitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>unlimited</li> <li>injury</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>unlimited</li> <li>injury</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>halftime</li> <li>unlimited</li> <li>after any goal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>halftime</li> <li>any team's throw in</li> <li>any goal kick</li> <li>after any goal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>halftime</li> <li>any team's throw in</li> <li>any goal kick</li> <li>after any goal</li> </ul>
field size (approx. yards)	15x20	15x20	20x35	50x75	50x75
goal size (feet)	3x5	3x5	6.5x12	6.5x18.5	6.5x18.5
goalie	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES
offside rule enforced?	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES
out of bounds restart	kick in	kick in	throw in	throw in	throw in
penalty kicks	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES
direct/indirect kicks	indirect only	indirect only	both	both	both
slide tackles	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES
referees	coach	coach	center	center	center
ball size	3	3	3	4	4
max roster size	10	10	14	14	14

### \*loan a player rule (8U and above)

If a team does not have the minimum players to start a game, they may borrow a player from the opposing team. The game will be counted as a forfeit for the team that borrowed a player.

## general information

- **Equipment:** Each child will need an age appropriate soccer ball and shin guards. Soccer cleats are optional, no baseball/football shoes with cleats on the front tip. Metal cleats are not permitted.
- **Jewelry:** For your child's safety, players cannot wear jewelry during games except for medical and religious purposes-in this case it must be taped to the body. Earrings, necklaces, and bracelets must be removed. Bandages/tape must be placed over newly pierced ears during games.
- **4U/6U Scoring:** Score is not kept for 4U and 6U as these are developmental leagues. There are no winners and losers.
- **8U-12U Scoring:** Games scores are kept for 8U-12U but will record as a 1-0 or 0-0. Only 1 goal scored per team will be recorded regardless of how many are scored. Shut-outs, ties, or forfeits will be recorded appropriately.
- **Tie Breakers (if necessary):**
  - Wins/Loses
  - Head-to-Head
  - Common Opponents
- **Inclement Weather:** rain-out information will be sent-out via Mercy Street Sports registration system. Please check the email account you used to register your player. If a game has been played more than 50% that game is considered final. If an entire game is canceled, all reasonable attempts will be made to reschedule the game for a future weekend or weeknight. Rescheduled games that rain-out will not be rescheduled.

## game day rules

- Players should show up, ready to play: uniform on, shin guards on, shoes on. **BRING WATER.**
- Be ready for inspection. The referee will ask the team to line up so he can inspect equipment. Jerseys with player number (except 4U, 6U, and 8U) must be tucked in, socks must be over shin guards, cleats must be on with laces tied, and jewelry must be removed.
- **ALL** Mercy Street Sports games will begin with a prayer.
- The away team will receive the first half/quarter kick-off. The home team will kick-off the second half/quarter.
- Spectators must sit on opposite sides of the field as teams (players and coaches) and remain 5 feet away from the sideline so the linesman can have access to the entire sideline and are able to do their job without obstruction.
- Players, coaches, and spectators cannot enter the field during play for any reason without permission or invitation from the referee. In the case of an injured player, all players must take a knee and coaches remain on the sideline until referee stops play. The referee will call the injured players' coach to the field, if necessary. This is not a time to coach players. Entering without permission is an offence - see rules.
- Home team is required to change jerseys or wear pinnies in case of color conflict.
- For safety purposes, no one is permitted to stand behind the goal.
- Coaches are allowed to assist players on the field in 4U and 6U games. Maximum of 1 coach per team allowed on the field.
- Before a substitution (8U/10U/12U) can be made at any of the authorized points, the player must stand at the halfway line and have the permission of the referee before entering the field. This includes changing the goalkeeper.
- Each game, quarter, or half begins with a kick-off. There is also a kick-off after a goal by the team not scoring. The team that is not kicking-off must remain outside the center circle. The kicker must move the ball (even slightly), and then may not touch the ball again until someone else has touched it. A goal **CANNOT** be scored directly from a kick-off.
- Every player must play a minimum of 50% of each game. Equal playing time for all is our goal.
- **ONLY** rostered and registered players are allowed on the playing field. If an illegal player is found on the field, the game is forfeited and the coach suspended for one (1) game.
- **DO NOT RUN UP THE SCORE.** If you find that your team is winning too easily (by more than 5 points), make adjustments to your lineup through substitutions, moving players to different positions, only allowing certain players to shoot, requiring a certain number of consecutive passes before a shot is allowed, allowing the opposing team to add an extra player, etc. No one benefits from or enjoys a game where scoring is out of control.
- Excessive fouling and/or aggression will lead to "benching" or possible ejection of a play (**at the referee's discretion**).

## game day rules (cont.)

- The referee will be in charge of the game and will have the authority to remove, at their discretion, participants or spectators who exhibit poor sportsmanship. Abuse, verbal or physical, of an official will not be tolerated and may lead to ejection from a game and/or permanent ejection for the season. Coaches are responsible for the behavior of the parents/fans of their team.
- Players and coaches will line up after the end of the game and wave to the opposing team and the officials.
- Coaches are not allowed to conference/discuss game calls with the referees **AFTER** the game. Rule interpretations and game feedback should be brought to the attention of Mercy Street Sports staff.

## rules of the game

### throw ins (8U/10U/12U ONLY)

When one team kicks the ball over a sideline and out of bounds, the other team gets a throw-in. The throw-in takes place where the ball went out of bounds. The player must stand behind the line and keep both feet on the ground until the ball leaves the players hands. Both hands must be on the ball and the ball must be thrown from behind the head. An incorrect throw-in results in a loss of possession\*. The thrower cannot play the ball until another player on either team touches the ball. If done incorrectly, the opponent will be awarded an indirect free kick. A goal may not be scored directly from a throw-in.

\*8U/10U is allowed a do over if a player raises their foot, throws from the side or in front of their head, or touches the ball before a second player has played the ball.

\*Kick-ins only for 4U and 6U optional. All kick-ins shall be indirect kicks. Do overs are allowed if done incorrectly.

### heading policy

Deliberate heading of the ball is NOT permitted for 8U and below. When a player deliberately heads the ball in a game, an indirect free kick should be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offence. If the deliberate header occurs within the penalty area, the indirect free kick should be taken from the spot of the infraction; unless the infraction was within 10 yards of a goal, in which case the indirect kick should be taken from the penalty spot. The team that committed the infraction may still set up a wall 10 yards away. If a player does not deliberately head the ball, then play should continue.

### direct & indirect free kicks

After any foul, the team that was fouled is awarded a direct free kick from the spot where the foul was committed. You can score off a direct kick by kicking the ball directly into the goal; you cannot score off an indirect kick. An indirect kick must touch another player, on either team, before it can go into the net, or it does not count as a goal and the defensive team gets a goal kick. That is why a team with an indirect kick near the opposing team's goal may have one player tap the ball so a second player can shoot. Once the second player has touched the ball, it will be a goal if it goes directly into the other team's goal.

Physical fouls and handballs result in a direct kick. Corner kicks are direct kicks. Offside and obstruction fouls result in an indirect kick. **After a player takes a free kick, including kick-offs, goal kicks, and corner kicks, he cannot touch the ball again until another player touches the ball.**

### direct free kick

A direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following offenses 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
- Tackles an opponent
- Holds an opponent
- Spits at an opponent
- Handles the ball deliberately (except for the goalkeeper within his own penalty area)

A direct free kick is taken from the place where the offence occurred and players of the defending team must remain 10 yards from the penalty mark until the ball is kicked. A goal can be scored from a direct free kick. Anyone on the team may take the kick.

## rules of the game (cont.)

### direct & indirect free kicks (cont.)

#### Indirect Free Kicks

An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a **goalkeeper**, inside his own penalty area, commits any of the following offenses:

- Controls the ball with his hands for more than six (6) seconds before releasing it from his possession
- Touches the ball again with his hands after he has released it from his possession and before it has touched another player
- Touches the ball with his hands after it has been deliberately kicked to him by a teammate
- Touches the ball with his hands after he has received it directly from a throw-in taken by a teammate

An indirect free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if, in the opinion of a referee, a player:

- Does something to endanger himself or others. Most common are high kicks or low headers
- Impeding the progress of an opponent when not within playing distance of the ball (obstruction)
- Obstructing the goalkeeper

### penalty kick (10U/12U only)

A penalty kick is awarded if any of the above ten offenses is committed by a player inside his own penalty area (goal box), irrespective of the position of the ball, provided it is in play. Position: the ball is kicked from the penalty spot and all players except the kicker (who does not have to be the fouled player) and the goalkeeper must remain outside the penalty area and at least 10 yards from the penalty spot (outside the penalty kick arc). The goalkeeper must remain on the goal line, can move side to side but not forward. If the ball hits the goalie and stays in the field, it is a live ball and any player can then play it. If the ball hits the post or crossbar, any player, except the one who kicked it, can play it.

### 12U cautionable offenses (yellow card)

- Unsporting behavior
- Dissent by word or action
- Persistent infringement of the Laws of the Game
- Delaying the restart of play
- Failure to respect the required distance when play is restarted with a corner kick, free kick or throw-in
- Entering or reentering the field of play without the referee's permissions
- Deliberately leaving the field of play without the referee's permissions

### 12U ejectionable offenses (red card)

Any player, coach or spectator who has been red carded must leave the game. The game will not be continued until the offender has left the vicinity.

- Serious foul play
- Violent conduct
- Spitting at an opponent or any other person
- Denying 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)
- Denying 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
- Using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures
- Receiving a second caution in the same match

### corner kicks & goal kicks

If the ball goes over one of the end lines, it is either a goal kick or a corner kick depending on which team kicked it out of bounds. If the defensive team kicks it out, it's a corner kick. If the offensive team kicks it out, it's a goal kick.

#### Goal Kicks

The ball is placed on or inside the goal box (the smaller box in front of the goal) and must be kicked outside the penalty area (the larger box outside the goal) to be in play. If the ball is touched before leaving the penalty box, the kick is retaken.

## rules of the game (cont.)

### corner kicks & goal kicks (cont.)

#### Corner Kicks

The ball is kicked within the small, one-yard arc in the corner of the field by the corner flag nearest where the ball crossed the goal line. The opposing players must stay the minimum required distance from the ball on the corner kick spot. After kicking, the player cannot play the ball before another player from either team has touched it, otherwise the opponents will be awarded an indirect free kick. This also holds true if the ball bounces off a goal post or referee. A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick.

No corner kicks fro 4U/6U.

#### offside rule (12U only)

- Offside refers to an attacking player being in an offside position and is actively involved in play when the ball is played ahead.
- A player is in an offside position when there are less than 2 players between that player and the goal (one is usually the opposing goalkeeper) when the ball is passed ahead to that player.
- Offside can only occur in the attacking half of the field.
- No player can be offside when even with, or behind the ball.
- No player can be offside when first playing a throw in, goal kick, or corner kick.
- A player not in the play of the game is offside any moment he touches the ball, is interfering with play or seeking to gain an advantage by being in that position.
- A player shall not be declared offside by the referee if the player is NOT involved in the play, merely offside in location.

If a player is declared offside, the referee awards an indirect free kick, which is taken by a player of the opposing team from where the infringement occurred, unless the offense is committed by a player in his opponents' goal area, in which case the free kick shall be taken from any point within the goal area.

#### goalies

Goalies CAN touch the ball with their hands as long as they are within the penalty area, which is the big box that surrounds the goal. Once the goalie leaves the penalty area, he must play the ball like any other player, which means he cannot touch the ball with his hands or arms. The smaller box in front of the goal is the goal box; its only purpose serves as a place to put the ball for goal kicks.

Goalies CANNOT pick up a pass from a teammate. If a player passes to his goalkeeper, the goalie must play with his feet or the other team will get an indirect kick from the spot where the pass was picked up. Goalies cannot be substituted in an indirect or direct (PK) kick.

4U and 6U teams do NOT use the goalkeeper position. All players on the field are field players. A player is not to consistently remain inside of their own goal box. The purpose of this rule is to encourage all players to play the complete field and not to be designated as a defended that in effect acts as a goalie, and to encourage coaches to give every player the opportunity to see and play the game from every aspect and position on the field.

#### advantage rule

The referee, in his discretion, may decide to not stop play due to a foul if it would be an "advantage" to the fouled team to not stop play. The concept is that the team that was fouled should not be punished by having an attack stopped which might result in a goal and, conversely, that the team which committed the foul should not gain an advantage as a result of the foul.

#### team formation

- Teams are formed based on age, closest school, player, and coach request. All requests are honored when possible. Placement is based on availability. We cannot guarantee placement on a team by location or school, but we try our best.
- Existing teams new to Mercy Street can join without releases.
- Players are guaranteed spots on their previous team only if registered on time. Roster spots will be filled after the registration deadline.
- Returning players can play on the same team or request a new team.
- Players can "play-up" or "play-down" a league at the discretion of the league director.
- Players can join Mercy Street Sports from anywhere within the Dallas-Fort Worth area.