

# **LOUDOUN SOCCER**

***Policies and Procedures***

***FIFA Laws of the Game***

***Loudoun Soccer Modifications to  
FIFA Laws of the Game***

***Policy Clarifications for Loudoun Soccer  
Coaches***

**August 2007**



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Dear Players, Parents and Coaches:

On behalf of our Referees, Area Coordinators, Board Members and Staff, Loudoun Soccer welcomes you! Many of you are already familiar faces. For those new to the Loudoun Soccer Family, you have entered at a very exciting time. The face of Soccer in the United States is rapidly changing, and Youth Soccer is leading the charge. Loudoun Soccer is dedicated to bringing the exciting game of soccer to the youth of Loudoun County. It demands much work and the dedication of countless volunteers. It is well worth the effort. The result is a first-class soccer experience!!

Loudoun Soccer prides ourselves on the depth and quality of the programs we offer each season. Our focus is to meet the needs of each player. However, if you see or experience something that could be improved, or could enhance our programs, please don't hesitate to get involved and help us continue our tradition of excellence! We're always looking for volunteers to help bring the game of soccer to all of the youth in Loudoun County.

We emphasize player development based on the recommendations of US Youth Soccer. This small-sided format is already producing dramatic results. We look forward to further progress in coming years. We offer a comprehensive Coaching Education Program. Our focus on this program intensifies our efforts to support our coaches, who are our front line volunteers.

Please remember that the behavior of parents and other spectators on the sidelines during games is an important factor in reinforcing our philosophy: "Youth sports should be fun; help to build strong and healthy bodies; teach the elements of individual player skills and team cooperation; and develop a spirit of fair play, mutual respect, and good sportsmanship in the player." Negative or critical verbal comments about any player's or referee's performance or ability is not only harmful to the players, but also implies that losing is "bad" or "dishonorable," and therefore should be avoided at all costs. On the other hand, positive words of encouragement are always welcome. Please support our coaches' efforts in working with your children by encouraging the play and development of ALL players, regardless of which team they're on.

Remember to encourage your child to practice often, help them enjoy the thrill of the game, and let's all provide a great experience this soccer year!

See you on the Fields!

Debbie Bicer  
President,  
Loudoun Soccer

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people are involved each year in putting the Loudoun Soccer program together and making it effective, the majority of whom are volunteers. Below are a few of the individuals and organizations that make it possible for your child to participate in Loudoun Soccer. Please take the opportunity to thank them as you meet them out on the fields.

**1. Loudoun County Department of Parks and Recreation:** Parks and Recreation has always been enormously helpful with preparing our playing fields. Preparations include lining, rolling, aerating, fertilizing, seeding, and cutting playing fields during the season. They also schedule space in local community centers for Loudoun Soccer referee and coach training clinics. While they do not serve in any capacity as administrators of our soccer program, they are an integral part of your child's playing experience.

**2. Loudoun County Public Schools, principals and faculty:** All Loudoun County Public Schools graciously provide Loudoun Soccer use of their recreational fields. Various schools have also provided Loudoun Soccer with space for annual coaches' meetings and instructional clinics. Faculty and principals at each county school have helped with distribution of Loudoun Soccer's annual player registration forms and other Loudoun Soccer information to students. As with any group of volunteers, some schools are able to provide more support (field time/space) than others; however, these individuals do not have an obligation to help Loudoun Soccer and your expression of appreciation, as well as abiding by the restrictions they place on our use, is helpful in maintaining this positive relationship.

**3. Referees:** These individuals are perhaps the most under-recognized part of our soccer organization. Each weekend, these young people (and some adults) take time to ensure our players play over 600 games under the Loudoun Soccer Rules of the Game. They work hard to ensure your player has a safe and positive soccer experience. Coaches are sure to have their players thank the Referee after each game, and you should make it a point to as well. Doing so, and holding back criticism, displays the sportsmanship and goodwill that we are trying to instill in all of our young players. What better way to lead than by example? If you have a question or concern about a referee's performance, you may discuss it with your child's coach who can follow up on your concern with the Director of Referees. Loudoun Soccer is always in need of additional certified referees. If you are interested in becoming a certified referee, please check our website.

**4. Age Group Coordinators, Team Coaches, and Parent Volunteers:** These individuals are our frontline Loudoun Soccer volunteers. They are integral in providing your child's soccer experience. Take every opportunity to express your appreciation to your Age Group Coordinator, Coach, and Parent Volunteers. These volunteers spend more time with our soccer program than anyone else. Their contributions are invaluable to our organization, and as our number of players increases each year, so does their workload. The exponential growth of our organization is a direct indication of the dedication and excellent job these individuals do each season.

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## LOUDOUN SOCCER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### OVERVIEW

Loudoun Soccer offers a diversified set of youth soccer programs. These programs are offered in both the fall and spring soccer seasons. The two major components include the Select (i.e., Travel) Soccer program and the Recreational Soccer program. Our Recreational Soccer program is further divided into the SFL Soccer program, the House Soccer program, and the Mini Soccer program.

The **Loudoun Soccer Select** program provides the opportunity for young men and women to participate in a highly competitive soccer environment. At present, Loudoun Soccer fields teams in three (3) Select Soccer Leagues in the Washington area. These leagues include the Washington Area Girls Soccer League (WAGSL; for young women), the National Capital Soccer League (NCSL; for young men), and the Old Dominion Soccer League (ODSL; for young men and women). Age groups range from U9 through U19. Participation in Loudoun Soccer Teams is obtained by placement via try-out. Try-outs are held prior to the fall season with supplemental, “as required” tryouts held prior to the spring season. The commitment to a Loudoun Soccer Select team is for the term of one year (fall and spring).

The **SFL Soccer Program** provides an opportunity for young men and women to participate in a competitive soccer environment, but without the level of obligations inherent in the Select Soccer program. All Loudoun Soccer recreational teams in the U13 through U19 age groups are organized under our SFL Program and play in the Suburban Friendship League (SFL). This league provides the opportunity for Loudoun Soccer teams to play teams from neighboring town/counties in addition to other Loudoun Soccer teams. Standings are kept within each division to provide competitive divisions and ensure every team and player the most rewarding soccer experience.

The **Loudoun Soccer House program** provides the opportunity for boys and girls to develop basic soccer skills and teamwork in a stress free and fun environment. The bulk of Loudoun Soccer players participate in our House Soccer program. Age groups range from U-6 through U12. Players in our House Program participate in weekly practices and Saturday games where they build on skills from season to season. No standings are kept.

The **Loudoun Soccer Mini Program** is designed to expose our youngest players to the game of soccer. It is a stress-free, fun environment where players begin to develop basic soccer skills. Children in age groups U4 through U5 are housed under this program. U4 and U5 players meet once a week on Saturdays to enjoy an instructional session followed by scrimmage activities. Mini Program Coaches benefit from Loudoun Soccer Professional Trainers who attend sessions (number of sessions attend varies per age group) where they learn the fine art of working with our youngest players.

The remainder of this book describes the Loudoun Soccer House Soccer program in greater detail. Major sections cover player safety, various procedures, and the Laws of the Game as modified for Loudoun Soccer House League soccer.

**Points of contact for additional information on these Loudoun Soccer programs are listed below.**

<u>Program</u>	<u>Point of Contact</u>
Select	Travel Program Manager
SFL	SFL Program Manager
Recreation	Recreation Program Manager
Mini Soccer	Mini Soccer Program Manager

## **PLAYER SAFETY**

### **I. GENERAL**

As long as a child is in the practice or game area, and in the absence of their parents, guardians, or other responsible adult, the COACH has the responsibility for the child's safety and behavior, including, but not limited to the following safeguards:

- A. Coaches' Responsibility for Players at Fields:** Coaches are never to leave a player unattended at the end of practice or a game without assuring that a responsible adult is present to provide them transportation home. This assurance is imperative regardless of the circumstances at the time. Coaches should help to impress on parents the importance of picking up their players promptly after practices and games. Coaches, know the persons who will be picking up your players, and **DO NOT RELEASE** them to anyone unless arrangements have been previously made and your player knows that person.
- B. Player Illness:** Coaches, if there is any doubt about a possible player illness, injury, or other condition that might be unhealthy or unsafe for the player to participate in a practice or game, you **must not allow** the child to play. Always be aware of special medications that any of your players are taking, either on a regular or infrequent basis.
- C. Player Behavior:** Players must be supervised at all times to prevent vandalism, littering, fighting, dangerous play, or any other undesirable behavior.
- D. Player Equipment:** The use of shin guards is mandatory and Loudoun Soccer's rules **DO NOT PERMIT** illegal clothing or jewelry, which includes metal shoe cleats; hard soled shoes; earrings; and metal, ceramic, glass and plastic jewelry. Coaches and parents must follow this restriction closely during both practices and games. Medical casts may be worn, if properly wrapped with padding, and if, in the opinion of the Referee, for that particular game, no hazard exists for the casted player or for the opposing team players; the Referee's decision is final.
- E. Coaches and Parents Action Plans During Inclement Weather:** Both parents and coaches must have a good understanding of exactly what procedures will be followed in the event of inclement weather during practices and games. The plan must include procedures for notifying all team players in the event of a delayed or cancelled game or practice, so no player is left alone, especially in bad weather.

- F. Spectator Conduct:** No player, coach, referee, or spectator involved in the soccer program will be permitted to engage in profanity, in any deliberate harassment or name-calling, in physical or vocal provocations or intentional abusive physical engagement of one another, or make negative gestures or vocal references about any player's ability to perform. Aggressive shouting at, displaying negative criticism, or any other type of intimidation of a player, coach, or referee will not be tolerated. Loudoun Soccer can and will take measures to enforce these requirements through the league association, participating schools, Loudoun County Parks and Recreation, and if necessary, the county Sheriff's department. Remember, these are your children, and the message you send forth for positive behavior begins with you and other spectators. Positive vocal encouragements are always welcome.
  
- G. Traffic Safety:** Coaches must be particularly observant of player behavior when they are in the vicinity of parking lots, roadways, or other vehicular traffic patterns.
  
- H. Player Transportation:** When player transportation is provided it is mandatory (it is also state law) that all vehicular occupants wear safety belts when such are installed in the vehicle. NEVER transport players in the back of a pickup truck, with or without a truck cap installed; exceptions may be made only with prior Loudoun Soccer approval for parades or special events.
  
- I. Field Inspection:** Before and after practices and games, make it a habit to inspect the field condition to determine if there are holes, stones, glass, or any other objects that might pose a hazard to the players, linesmen, or referees.
  
- J. Supervision:** Make certain that there are always at least two (2) adults (persons 21 years or older) present at all practices and games for each team.
  
- K. Smoking:** Smoking is not allowed at any Loudoun Soccer-sponsored activities. It is also against the law to smoke on any Loudoun School Property.
  
- L. Pets:** Per Virginia law, pets are not allowed on any school grounds.

## **II. KIDSAFE PROGRAM**

Since 1996, Loudoun Soccer (as a part of the Virginia Youth Soccer Association (VYSA)), has been participating in the KidSafe Program. The KidSafe program is a risk management program designed to foster safe circumstances for every person, and especially every child, who participates in a US Youth Soccer affiliated activity. It is intended to ensure that all Youth Soccer volunteers and paid employees are screened for any past or present behavior that may pose a threat to any player participants in US Youth Soccer. On an annual basis, all Loudoun Soccer Executive Board (EB) members, coaches, and all other volunteers are screened for initial or continued suitability in the Loudoun Soccer program. All USSF-certified referees officiating at Loudoun Soccer games are screened as well, under a separate program administered by the VYSA State Referee Administrator (SRA). This program is expected to further reduce the potential for any type of abuse against youth participants in US Youth Soccer caused by Youth Soccer volunteers and paid employees. Criminal

background checks are performed as part of this program on coaches, assistant coaches, board members, team managers, and all other Loudoun Soccer volunteers.

### **III. INJURIES**

- A. Slight Abrasions:** Some types of minor abrasions can be treated with a "band-aid" and the player is allowed to continue playing in a practice or game.
- B. Serious Injuries:** The coach and parents need to adopt a procedure to follow when a player incurs a serious injury during practice or game participation. The procedures should be limited to performing only the most obvious and essential first aid steps necessary prior to transporting the player to a hospital Emergency Room or prior to the arrival of local Rescue Squad personnel.
- C. Notification Procedures:** Regardless of how serious an injury is or the duration of discomfort, all injuries must be reported to the player's parents or guardians as promptly as possible so they can determine what additional procedures to take for the player. Coaches must complete the Loudoun Soccer Injury Report form and mail to the Loudoun Soccer Office within 24 hours of the injury.
- D. Sprains:** Sprains are the most frequent player injury suffered in soccer; most often in the knee or ankle. A sprain is a stretching or tearing of ligaments. The immediate care for a sprain is "RICE". Listed below are immediate actions that may be taken to help the sprained area:

**REST:** Get the player off the field and off his or her feet.

**ICE:** Ice, wrapped in a towel or other soft cloth, should be applied to the injury, as well as the surrounding area, for 30-minute intervals to decrease swelling and reduce pain. **Do not apply ice directly on the injury.**

**COMPRESSION:** If you wrap the ice directly against the injured area or wrap the area without ice using an ACE or TENSOR bandage or use another material wrap, do not make it too tight. This can cause blood circulation complications and skin damage that can compound the injury.

**ELEVATION:** Swelling can be further reduced by having the player lie down and raise the sprained portion of the body above the level of the heart.

**CAUTIONS:** If the sprain symptoms do not disappear or are not significantly improved by the aforementioned procedures, the player should get medical attention from a doctor.

## PROCEDURES

### I. GENERAL CONDUCT OF LOUDOUN SOCCER PERSONNEL

- A. Unacceptable Conduct:** If at any time the conduct of a Loudoun Soccer official, team coach, or player is determined to be detrimental to Loudoun Soccer or the good of soccer, such individual(s) will be liable to suspension by the Loudoun Soccer Rules and Discipline (R&D) Committee from participating in the Loudoun Soccer program for a period of time as the R&D Committee may deem appropriate. Refer to Procedures Paragraphs I.E. and I.F. for additional information.
- B. Coaches Responsibility:** Coaches will be responsible for the conduct of their team's players and supporters while at a game, practice field or other Loudoun Soccer sponsored event. Improper conduct on the part of the coaches, players, or spectators may result in penalties against the individual causing the misconduct as defined in paragraph I.A. above. The referee has full jurisdiction in all matters that include conduct at all Loudoun Soccer sponsored games in accordance with the Federation International De Football Association (FIFA) Laws and Loudoun Soccer Rules.
- C. Referee Incident Reports:** In order to provide the Loudoun Soccer R&D Committee with information on whether or not to invoke rule I.A. above in a particular adverse incident, referees will provide a verbal report within twenty-four (24) hours of the incident to the Loudoun Soccer Referee Director describing the circumstances surrounding the ejection of an individual from a game in accordance with procedures defined under FIFA Law V and related Loudoun Soccer regulations. The Loudoun Soccer Referee Director will be responsible for relaying this information to the Loudoun Soccer R&D Committee for possible further action.
- D. Referee Decisions:** Referee decisions on game results and on game situations involving their judgment are final. No protests will be allowed. However, the Loudoun Soccer R&D Committee may exercise the option to review any incident involving misconduct on the part of Loudoun Soccer EB officials, coaches, players, or spectators, or any suspensions of players, coaches, or games as a result of misconduct and to act on the suspension itself, not the determination of the misconduct. Decisions made by the Loudoun Soccer R&D Committee may be appealed to the Loudoun Soccer EB. Any Loudoun Soccer R&D Committee member or Loudoun Soccer EB member directly associated with a player or coach suspension or the forfeiture of a game will be ineligible to participate in the proceedings relative to that incident.
- E. Rules and Discipline Committee:** The Loudoun Soccer Rules and Discipline (R&D) Committee is the principal Loudoun Soccer body responsible for supervising the enforcement of all Loudoun Soccer Rules and Procedures. This includes those rules and procedures externally adopted (e.g., FIFA Laws of the Game) and those rules internally developed and described elsewhere in formal Loudoun Soccer documentation (e.g., the Loudoun Soccer Bylaws, the Loudoun Soccer Rules and Procedures document).

## **1. Scope**

The Loudoun Soccer R&D Committee is responsible for reviewing, evaluating, and deciding on whether any disciplinary action should be taken by Loudoun Soccer against any player, team official, team, league official, or spectator who fails to abide by either the Loudoun Soccer Rules and Procedures or any rules and procedures externally adopted (e.g., FIFA Laws of the Game, Suburban Friendship League rules).

## **2. Philosophical Approach**

The Loudoun Soccer R&D process is to be used as sparingly as possible. Potential R&D Issues may be either game-related or non-game-related. The approach used to address each type of issue is discussed below.

- a) Potential Game-related R&D Issues. Most game-related R&D issues are expected to be protests submitted by Players and Coaches over being ejected from a game. The issue is clear and the R&D process permits Players and Coaches to challenge what they perceive to be an unfair penalty. Fairness requires that Players and Coaches have this opportunity, although the judgment of a Referee in a game is final and the Loudoun Soccer R&D Committee shall strongly support that position.
- b) Non Game-related R&D Issues. These issues can vary widely. They may be administrative in nature or involve “for the good of Loudoun Soccer” type issues. Administrative issues are initially assumed to be mistakes made either through oversight or because an individual felt they were acting in the best interest of the children. The issue will be approached in a positive fashion. The particular Program Manager will work with the individual(s) involved to correct the problem and to work on suggested improvements. In the event the Program Manager cannot resolve the issue, then the Program Manager will submit the issue to the R&D Committee for resolution. In this instance, Program Managers include the Travel Commissioner, the SFL Commissioner, and the House Commissioner. Non-program specific issues will be addressed by the Vice President / Director of Operations. The Vice President / Director of Operations will also initiate the R&D issue in cases where the cognizant Program Manager is the subject of the complaint. If the complaint is non-program related and the Vice President / Director of Operations is the subject of the complaint, then the President shall initiate the R&D issue.

“For the Good of Loudoun Soccer” type issues will be addressed in a similar fashion.

In either case, once an issue has been identified, it is referred to the R&D Committee Chairman for action. No review by the Executive Board is performed at this time.

It is strongly hoped and expected that, with the possible exception of game ejections, almost all of these issues can be resolved without becoming R&D Issues.

### 3. Composition

The Association Rules and Discipline Committee shall consist of the Loudoun Soccer Referee Association Director (chairperson), one representative appointed by each of the regional commissioners (Western, Central, and Eastern), one at-large member appointed by the Board of Directors, and any additional members deemed necessary by the Board of Directors. In accordance with the R&D Committee being a standing committee in the Bylaws, the R&D Committee members will be nominated by their respective Board members to serve on the Committee during both the spring and fall seasons of a given year. However, note the temporary replacement policy for individual cases specified in section 5.b. below.

Any Loudoun Soccer R&D Committee member directly associated with an incident being considered by the Loudoun Soccer R&D Committee will be ineligible to participate in the proceedings relative to that incident. If such ineligibility occurs, the Loudoun Soccer R&D Committee Chairman will be responsible for selecting a suitable substitute, or substitutes, to review and rule on the particular incident.

### 4. Process and Outcomes

#### a) When Initialized.

The Loudoun Soccer R&D process can be initiated in one of several ways. R&D issues can be loosely grouped into being either game-related or non-game-related.

- 1) Game-related R&D Issue. Typically, this will involve a Player or Coach protesting their being ejected from a specific game. The Player or Coach submitting the protest initiates the R&D issue. In addition, written comments on a Referee Game Report may be reviewed by the Referee Director and used to initiate an R&D issue. In this instance, the individual Referee, in consultation with the Referee Director, initiates the R&D issue.
- 2) Non-Game-related R&D Issue. These issues can vary widely. They may be administrative in nature or involve “for the good of Loudoun Soccer” type issues. If the issue is Program related (i.e., Travel, SFL, House), then the head of that program initiates the R&D issue. If the issue is non-Program related (e.g., training, fundraising, roster violations, registration violations), then the Vice President / Director of Operations initiates the R&D issue. The Vice President / Director of Operations will also initiate the R&D issue in cases where the cognizant Program Manager is the subject of the complaint. If the complaint is non-program related and the Vice President / Director of Operations is the subject of the complaint, then the President shall initiate the R&D issue. Note: as stated in the philosophical approach, it is strongly hoped and expected that almost all of these issues can be resolved without their becoming R&D Issues.

All issues placed before the R&D Committee must be submitted formally (i.e., letter or e-mail).

#### b) R&D Committee Timeliness Requirements.

Within 1 week (i.e., 7 days) after receiving the complaint, the R&D Committee will make a preliminary assessment of the complaint and decide either:

- 1) The response to the complaint is clear, given published Loudoun Soccer policy and procedures (e.g., Bylaws, Loudoun Soccer Rules and Procedures, FIFA Laws of the Game, as modified by Loudoun Soccer). In this instance, no further investigation will occur, and the R&D Committee will quickly render and document their decision in the matter. In this instance, the 7-day timeline includes reaching a decision, documenting that decision, and transmitting that decision to all interested parties.
  
- 2) The response to the complaint is not clear. In this instance, the R&D Committee will conduct a formal investigation into the matter. The R&D Committee Chairman shall inform all parties with regards to how the R&D issue will be addressed. This information includes:
  - The specific composition of the R&D Committee that will rule on the issue.
  - The information collection activities to be performed (e.g., requests for information in writing, a hearing) and when.
  - When the R&D Committee expects to render a decision.

In addition, the R&D Committee Chairman will immediately offer the different nominators for R&D Committee members (i.e., the 3 Regional Commissioners) the opportunity to temporarily replace “their” member with another individual who is particularly well versed (but disinterested) in the subject addressed by the complaint. The different nominators would have 2 days in which to name a replacement from the time they are notified by the R&D Committee Chairman. This replacement would be for the specific complaint only.

The R&D Committee is expected to complete all actions pertaining to a specific R&D issue no later than 21 days after receiving a complaint. This includes rendering a decision and informing the parties involved and the Loudoun Soccer Executive Board of that decision. Note: R&D issues should be resolved as soon as is practical. Members should be selected for the R&D Committee based, in part, on their availability. If the R&D Committee Chairman (i.e., the Referee Director) is unavailable, the Referee Director should select a substitute Chairman, preferably from within the Loudoun Soccer Referee Association. In an instance where the Referee Director is unavailable and fails to appoint a substitute R&D Committee Chairman in a timely fashion, the Loudoun Soccer President shall appoint a substitute R&D Committee Chairman.

### **c) Meetings**

The R&D Committee Chairman will manage the meeting schedule for addressing the issue. Meetings may be face-to-face, by telephone conference call, computer-based

electronic collaboration, or by other means, as appropriate. All parties shall be notified when these meetings will occur.

**d) Deliberations**

Deliberations will be conducted in a fair and impartial manner. Information may be gathered by the Committee in writing or verbally. All parties will be given the opportunity to address the committee, if they desire. Committee deliberations, other than for information gathering purposes, shall be private (i.e., no non-committee members will be permitted to be present).

Note: the process is designed so the initial investigation is conducted at the lowest level possible. Initial investigations are conducted by one of the individuals empowered to initiate an R&D issue, or their designated representative. The R&D Committee will not conduct the initial investigation. If the issue can be resolved at that level, then no R&D Committee issue is identified and the R&D process is not initiated. This varies from an indictment / trial process in that the individual Loudoun Soccer Program Managers are strongly encouraged to resolve the issue without resorting to the R&D process.

**e) Potential Actions**

All proposed actions of the Loudoun Soccer R&D Committee shall require a simple majority vote in favor to approve that action. Proposed actions shall be consistent with the philosophical approach stated in section E.3.

Actions That May be Taken Against a Player, Team Official, Team, League Official, or Spectator are listed below.

- 1) The R&D Chairman may make a verbal warning. A written record of such warning shall be made and may be referenced in any future actions against that party. A copy will be sent to the appropriate Team Representative, as applicable.
- 2) The R&D Chairman may send a written censure to the offending party. A copy of the censure shall be sent to the offending party's coach or Team Representative, as appropriate.
- 3) A player, team official, team, league official, or spectator may be suspended for a number of games specifically identified to that party. A suspended player may not participate in any game for which she is suspended. Suspended team officials may not appear at the game site or its vicinity for which they are suspended. In cases where team standings are maintained, failure to comply with a suspension will cause the game for which the suspension should have been served to be forfeited to the opposition by a score of 1-0.
- 4) In extreme cases, the R&D Committee may ban a player, team official, team, league official, or spectator from either participation or attendance at Loudoun Soccer activities for a specified period of time.

In addition, in extraordinary circumstances, the Loudoun Soccer R&D Committee may defer judgment on a particular matter to the Loudoun Soccer EB. A unanimous affirmative vote of the Loudoun Soccer R&D Committee will be necessary to defer a particular matter to the Loudoun Soccer EB.

The R&D Committee Chairman shall keep appropriate records of all such actions and those records, along with the Laws and Rules of Loudoun Soccer may be the basis for future disciplinary action.

R&D Committee actions are separate and distinct from “next game” suspensions of Players and Coaches specified in the Loudoun Soccer modifications to Law 12, Fouls and Misconduct.

**f) Enforcement of Actions Taken.**

The Loudoun Soccer Executive Board, or its designated representative(s), will enforce any actions taken by the Loudoun Soccer R&D Committee.

**g) Appeals**

An affected party, or parties, to the Loudoun Soccer EB, may appeal any decision rendered by the Loudoun Soccer R&D Committee. The appeal must be postmarked or delivered personally into the hands of the Loudoun Soccer EB President (or designee) within 7 days of the receipt of the findings of the Loudoun Soccer R&D Committee. The Loudoun Soccer EB shall vote on the validity of the protest; a majority vote supporting the protest shall over-turn the Loudoun Soccer R&D Committee’s decision. The Loudoun Soccer EB shall vote on the protest within 21 days of the receipt of the findings of the Loudoun Soccer R&D Committee.

**5. Protests of Game Results (Special Case).**

This section is applicable only in instances where team standings are kept.

Referee judgment cannot be a basis for protest. Only misapplications of the FIFA Laws of the Game, as amended by the Loudoun Soccer Rules and Procedures, current edition, may be used as the basis to protest the results of an individual game.

Protest procedures are as follows:

- a) A team may protest the outcome of a game by submitting the protest in writing by mail, postmarked within 48 hours of the completion of the game, or personally delivered to the R&D Chairman. The reason for the protest shall be explicitly stated.
- b) The R&D Chairman will notify the referee and the opposing coach as soon as possible and organize a hearing of the Committee and request written statements from interested parties including referees and spectators. Written statements shall be the only evidence required to be considered by the Committee when rendering a decision,

but the Committee may accept verbal statements or other evidence at their option at the hearing. Actions which may be taken are:

- (1) Refuse the protest
- (2) Cause a game to be replayed in its entirety.
- (3) Award a game to an opponent by a score set by the Committee.
- (4) Allow the score of a game, whether or not completed, to stand.
- (5) For misconduct of both teams, enter a loss for both teams in the standings of the affected Division (assuming league standings are kept)

Matches terminated by a referee for reasons other than weather, Act of God, or force majeure (e.g., plane landing on field of play) will be reviewed by the Loudoun Soccer R&D Committee.

**F. Loudoun Soccer Executive Board (EB) Decisions:** The Loudoun Soccer EB will review any adverse situation that occurs during a game that has been:

1. Deferred to the Loudoun Soccer EB by the Loudoun Soccer R&D Committee for action.
2. Ruled on by the Loudoun Soccer R&D Committee and appealed to the Loudoun Soccer EB.

The Loudoun Soccer EB shall review and vote on the matter. A simple majority shall be required for a decision. Loudoun Soccer EB decisions in such matters shall be final.

**G. Parental Support:** Because Loudoun Soccer is dependent on volunteers for coaching, refereeing, administration functions, fund raising, and other related matters, the support of players' parents is fully expected.

### **III. END OF REGULAR SEASON AWARDS**

Each player on a Loudoun Soccer team will receive an appropriate award. The Loudoun Soccer Executive Board will determine the type of award each year. Generally, this decision is tempered by the availability of financial resources. Awards may consist of certificates, medals, and trophies.

### **IV. LENGTH OF PLAYING SEASON**

The Loudoun Soccer "Fall" playing season will normally commence on the **first** Saturday following Labor Day and will continue for ten (10) consecutive weeks thereafter. Eight games are scheduled through the first weekend of November and the tenth week is usually reserved for an end-of-season tournament. Makeup games may be scheduled as a result of regular season games that could not be played due to inclement weather or other circumstances. The "Spring" soccer season begins in early April with seven games scheduled through the first weekend in June (excluding Memorial Day weekend), and an end-of-season tournament is held on the second weekend in June.

### **V. CANCELLATION AND RESCHEDULING OF GAMES**

**A. Inclement Weather:** During inclement weather, the home field Regional Commissioner will review field conditions (or, depending on region, rely on the local area coordinators to review field conditions and provide feedback) no later than one and one half (1.5) hours prior to the first scheduled game's starting time to determine if the fields are playable. If the decision of the Regional Commissioner is to NOT PLAY, the Regional Commissioner will notify the individual responsible for updating the game cancellations mailbox on the Loudoun Soccer Information Line (703-777-5897).

All coaches, parents, players, and referees are individually responsible for checking the hotline for game cancellations.

Games should be played whenever possible and are normally played in light rain, snow, during chilly and windy weather. However, the preservation of the fields and player safety must always be the Regional Commissioner's first consideration in decisions to cancel or play the games.

**B. Other Reasons for Game Cancellation:** Game cancellation for any other reason than weather will only be affected upon the mutual agreement of both affected Coaches. The Regional Commissioner **must** be informed about any game cancellation in order to:

1. Inform the Referee Assignor responsible for that Area that the game has been canceled so that the associated Referee Assignment can be canceled. **Note: If the Referee is not notified of the game cancellation and reports to the field of a canceled game, that Referee will be paid (i.e., Loudoun Soccer funds will have been wasted).**
2. Maintain an accurate understanding of field availability in his/her Area.

**C. Makeup Games:** In the event that makeup games need to be scheduled, the following procedure shall be used for House League games (SFL games follow a slightly different procedure as published on the Loudoun Soccer web site):

1. The Home and Visiting team coaches shall informally coordinate a new date and time for the makeup game. The Regional Commissioner or Area Coordinator for the Home Team Coach must be consulted to determine the potential availability of a field at a particular date and time.
2. Once the Home and Visiting team Coaches have informally agreed to having a makeup game at a particular date and time, the Home Team Coach shall contact his/her Area Coordinator or Regional Commissioner who will formally reserve the particular field for the specified date and time. Coaches may not formally reschedule games on their own. In addition, the Area Coordinator or Regional Commissioner shall contact the Referee Assignor responsible for the particular Area to arrange for Referee coverage of the makeup game.
3. The Referee Assignor responsible for the particular Area shall assign a Referee, or Referee Team as appropriate, to officiate at the makeup game. Coaches or Age Group Coordinators shall not attempt to assign a referee to the makeup game

4. If the makeup game needs to be rescheduled, the process outlined in steps 1-3 shall be followed.
5. If the makeup game is to be held outside of the Home Team's area, other Regional Commissioners may be consulted to determine the potential availability of a field, as appropriate. In this instance, the Regional Commissioner who has control over that field shall formally reserve the field and contact the appropriate Referee Assignor for Referee coverage of the game.
6. Area or League-wide cancellations due to inclement weather are special cases which are dealt with using a variation of the above process. In many instances, the Regional Commissioner may elect to reschedule a block of games for the same field and time, but on a different date. The Regional Commissioner shall inform the appropriate Home Team Coaches of the block of schedule changes. In addition, the Regional Commissioner shall contact the Referee Assignor with responsibility for that Area to arrange for Referee coverage of the makeup games.

## **VI. TEAM FORMATION**

### **A. Team Formation Objectives**

Loudoun Soccer's mission is to provide a safe and fun environment that teaches fair play and good sportsmanship, and to provide the best opportunities for soccer development for all ages.

Coaches are Loudoun Soccer's greatest resource. The coaches' influence on the players' development environment is more significant than any other Loudoun Soccer resource. The first objective of the Loudoun Soccer's team formation process is to select the most qualified coaches who are committed to Loudoun Soccer's mission.

Player assignment must be fair and impartial. The second objective of the Loudoun Soccer team formation process is to assign players to teams in an equitable manner so that all players have equal opportunity to play in an optimal development environment.

### **B. Team Formation Roles**

#### **1. Age Group Coordinator (AGC)**

The Age Group Coordinators (AGCs) have the primary responsibility for forming recreational teams within Loudoun Soccer. Each AGC is responsible for one or more age groups within an area and may be responsible for both boys and girls or a single gender. AGCs are selected by and work under the direction of the Regional Commissioners. The AGC works closely with the Administrative Staff who provides the AGC with player registration and wait list information. An AGC may communicate with AGCs in other areas to develop the best mix of team sizes and players or to transfer players to a different area of play.

AGCs generally have the following responsibilities:

- Determining team counts
- Selecting team coaches
- Assigning registered players to teams
- Accepting players from the wait list to fill teams
- Distributing rosters to coaches

In addition, AGCs may also be delegated responsibility for assigning team practice times and distributing equipment and/or schedules to coaches. Each Regional Commissioner shall identify the specific responsibilities of the AGCs within his/her region.

## **2. Regional Commissioner/SFL Program Manager**

The Regional Commissioner is responsible for all teams formed within his or her region and has oversight over the team formation process for Age Groups U6 through U12. The SFL Program Manager is responsible for all teams formed for Age Groups U13 through U19. The Regional Commissioner/ SFL Program Manager selects the AGCs and approves all coach selections and team assignments prior to distribution to coaches. In addition, a Regional Commissioner may establish region-specific policies and procedures in consultation with the Program Manager.

In consultation with the Program Manager, the Regional Commissioners handle any issues associated with the interpretation, implementation, and enforcement of policy within their region. All requests for policy exceptions are escalated to the appropriate Program Manager.

## **3. Recreational Program Manager**

The Recreational Program Manager oversees all Recreational Programs. The Program Manager has oversight of Area Commissioners and the Classic Commissioner.

The Recreational Program manager will resolve all conflicts in policy interpretation, approve certain policy decisions (i.e., out of age group), and address any exceptions to policy. Such decisions are passed to the Loudoun Soccer Vice President of Recreation for review. Any association member, AGC, or Regional Commissioner may bring team formation issues to the appropriate Recreational Program Manager for resolution.

## **4. Vice President of Recreation**

As the Director of Operations, the Loudoun Soccer Vice President of Recreation has oversight of the Mini Soccer, House and Loudoun SFL Teams and all applicable processes,

including team formation. The Vice President is the next level of issue resolution above the League Commissioners.

The Vice President establishes the operations calendar for the season that details the dates associated with team formation and reporting of team information. In addition, the Vice President ensures that the Administrator has sufficient staff to support player registration.

## **5. Administration Staff**

The Administrative Staff includes the Loudoun Soccer Administrator, and one or more administrative and clerical assistants. The Administrative Staff registers players after verifying correct registration information, proper fees, and proof of age.

The Administrative Staff provides the AGCs, Regional Commissioners, League Commissioners, Vice President and President with the initial player registration data (approximately 2 wks after the end of regular registration). Following regular registration, the Administrative Staff periodically distributes a wait list of players who have not been registered pending acceptance by the AGCs. Once approved, wait listed players are added to the list of registered players. The updated registration data is also periodically distributed. Registration updates are made as necessary, but usually at least once per week.

## **6. Coach**

AGCs may consult coaches in the interest of forming well-balanced teams, but the coach does not have a direct role in team formation. Coaches may **not** accept registration forms or guarantee placement of any player on any team.

# **C. Team Formation Policies**

## **1. Registration Deadline**

There will be a defined registration deadline date set by the Loudoun Soccer Executive Board, after which late fees will be imposed. The registration deadline will be well publicized in Loudoun Soccer mailings, on the Loudoun Soccer web site, and in the local newspaper. Players may register by mailing in completed registration forms, or bringing them to any scheduled walk-in registration, or the Loudoun Soccer office. Previously registered Loudoun Soccer players will be mailed a registration form to their last current address known by Loudoun Soccer. For new players, registration forms will normally be available through the local schools, libraries, community centers, participating sport shops, and AGCs.

## **2. Proof –Of-Age**

Proof-of-age is required for all new registrations and must be provided anytime that it is requested by the Administrative Staff.

*Proof of age shall consist of a birth certificate, a Uniformed Services Identification and Privilege Card (DD Form 1173) issued by the uniformed services of the United States, a birth registration issued by an appropriate government agency or board of health records, a passport, an alien registration card issued by the United States Government, a certificate issued by the Immigration and Naturalization Service attesting to age, a current driver's license, an unexpired federal, state, or local government identification card (if documentation of date of birth is required), or a certification of a United States citizen born*

*abroad issued by the appropriate government agency. Hospital, baptismal, or religious certificates will not be accepted. [USYSA]*

### **3. Date of Registration**

The official date of registration for a player is the date that the registration form is postmarked or the date that the form is accepted during a walk-in registration or at the office. If a form must be returned because of incorrect fees, lack of proof of age, or an improperly filled out form (e.g., lack of signature), then the registration date will be the postmark date the corrected form is mailed to Loudoun Soccer.

### **4. Properly Registered Players**

While AGCs and commissioners may accept registration forms at walk-in registration and in other circumstances, only the Administrative Staff can register a player. A player cannot be placed on a team until he/she has been properly registered.

### **5. Late Registration**

Late registration players are those whose dates of registration are later than the deadline date. Instead of immediately being registered, late players will be placed on a wait list to be drawn upon to fill existing teams that do not have the maximum allowable numbers of players assigned. Late players are individually approved for registration by the AGCs as they fill open spaces on teams.

### **6. Refunds**

#### **a) Unable to Place**

Inevitably, the AGCs will not be able to place some players in any of their desired areas of play due to limits in available teams, fields, or coaches, or because of a lack of players. In most instances the players in this circumstance will be those who registered late; however, in some smaller areas there may be an insufficient number of players to form teams in some age groups. If a player cannot be placed on a team, the registration fee will be fully refunded.

An AGC will notify any player that he or she is unable to place prior to the first practice. In general the AGC should notify the player whenever they suspect that they will not be able to place them and give them an opportunity for an alternate area of play before teams in other areas fill up. Whenever possible, a player who cannot be placed on a team will be placed on a wait list until the second game on the season. The Administrative Staff will fully refund the fee payment of all players on the wait list after the second game.

#### **b) Requested Refund**

Requests for refunds must be made in writing to Loudoun Soccer and will be processed by the Administrative Staff. AGCs and other Loudoun Soccer officials cannot accept

refund requests. The deadline for requesting a refund is the Saturday prior to the first practice; all requests must be postmarked by then. Requested refunds for children who can be placed on a team on or before the first day of practice will be assessed a \$10 processing fee.

Loudoun Soccer  
PO Box 1358  
Leesburg VA 20177

## **7. Everyone Plays**

All players shall be treated equally when being considered for team placement. The priority given to players is based on their date of registration. On-time registered players have priority over late registered players. The AGCs shall make every reasonable effort to place all on-time registered players on a team. Within reason, exceptions may be made to other Loudoun Soccer policies to facilitate the placement of an on-time registered player on a team. AGCs should anticipate and prepare for the placement of a certain number of late registered players, however allowing policy exceptions in this case is discouraged.

## **8. Teams**

Recreational teams consist of a head coach and a set of rostered players assigned to the head coach by an AGC for the duration of the season. The coach may choose one or more assistant coaches and request team parents as volunteers for various team “administrative” functions, such as snack coordinator, etc.

## **9. Team Balance**

Team parity during play is an important component in providing an optimal development environment. A primary goal of each AGC is to establish a fair and balanced distribution of playing talent among all teams in their age group and area. The AGCs shall make every reasonable effort to achieve that goal.

## **10. Area of Play**

Whenever possible, players shall be placed in the first choice area of play that was indicated on their registration form. If there is no available space in the player’s age group, then they should be placed in the second choice area of play and so on. If the player did not list an alternate choice, the AGC may (but is not required to) call the parents to determine if there is an alternate choice. Transferred players shall be handled in the same manner as if they had listed the alternate area as the first choice. Transfers should be done as soon as the AGC knows that the player cannot be placed in on a team and must be acknowledged by the receiving AGC. To update the master database, the Administrative Staff should be notified when players are transferred between one area and another.

## 11. Team Size

### a) House League

The target size for House League teams is shown in the table below. The House League target team sizes are designed to support the following considerations for fielding a team for a game:

- Every player must play at least two quarters per game in a field position. Playing goalkeeper does not count as a field position.
- The majority of players will play in at least three quarters of a game.
- With one player absent, no player will be required to play more than three quarters.
- A team can be fielded with two players absent.

**House League Target Team Size**

Age Group	Target Team Size	Min Team Size	Game	Goal-keeper
U4	10-12	NA	Activities only	N
U5	9	8	3v3 Dual Game Format	N
U6	9	8	3v3 Dual Game Format	N
U7 – U8	7	6	4v4	N
U9 – U10	9	8	6v6	Y
U11 – U12	12	11	8v8	Y

In anticipation of late registrations or player transfers from other areas, teams may initially be formed with fewer players than necessary to field a team during a game. The Regional and League Commissioner shall be notified if a team has less than the minimum number of players after the first practice.

In certain areas, to support placement of on-time registered players, the number of players on the team may have to be increased beyond the target number. The Regional Commissioner shall be notified any time an AGC must exceed the target team's size.

### b) Suburban Friendship League

For SFL teams, the minimum number of players on a team is eleven and the target team size is fifteen or more players. U13-U14 teams should be assigned no more than sixteen players. U16 & U19 teams may be larger than eighteen players as necessary to support on-time enrollment numbers in each region (due to the fewer number of teams).

## 12. Team Continuity

Recreational teams are formed for one season only. Teams are officially established when the AGC provides the player roster to the head coach that has been selected for the team.

Teams are disbanded after the last game of the season. Team continuity refers to the placement of coaches and players together on the same team from one season to the next.

**a) House League**

Youth players get the widest possible benefit from experiences with a variety of teammates and coaches. Under **no circumstances shall team continuity take precedence over team parity and balance within an area of play.**

**b) Suburban Friendship League**

When forming new U13 teams in the fall season, SFL AGCs shall make team parity the team formation priority, as it is in House League teams. SFL Players are older and are starting to develop deeper social bonds. Playing with an identifiable group becomes a component in player retention making team continuity a more important factor in forming teams. Following their first season on a SFL team, players may choose to be placed with the same coach and teammates that they played with in the previous soccer season. Such requests should be made on the player's registration form.

When there is space available on SFL teams, coordinators shall consider team balance when assigning players to the team. Space on teams may not be reserved for returning players who register late if doing so would adversely affect team balance. In any case where keeping a team together would prevent other players from playing, players shall be distributed among two or more teams in a balanced and fair manner. This most commonly happens in the fall when SFL teams move up an age group level.

**13. Age Groups**

Loudoun Soccer follows birth date ranges for its age groups as set by US Youth Soccer Association. In all but an extremely small number of instances, it is most appropriate for a player to play in their proper age group. Except as noted below for children of August/September birthdays wishing to play with their grade, any request to play in other than the players' default age group must be approved by the appropriate Regional and League Commissioners and the Loudoun Soccer Vice President. Play-up decisions shall be copied to the Loudoun Soccer President. Out-of-age group decisions are in effect for one season only, and must be requested again each season, if desired.

**Age Groups for Fall 2007 - Spring 2008**

Age Group	From	To
U4	August 1, 2003	July 31, 2004
U5	August 1, 2002	July 31, 2003
U6	August 1, 2001	July 31, 2002
U7	August 1, 2000	July 31, 2001
U8	August 1, 1999	July 31, 2000
U9	August 1, 1998	July 31, 1999
U10	August 1, 1997	July 31, 1998
U11	August 1, 1996	July 31, 1997
U12	August 1, 1995	July 31, 1996
U13	August 1, 1994	July 31, 1995
U14	August 1, 1993	July 31, 1994
U15	August 1, 1992	July 31, 1993
U16	August 1, 1991	July 31, 1992
U17	August 1, 1990	July 31, 1991
U18	August 1, 1989	July 31, 1990
U19	August 1, 1988	July 31, 1989

**a) Playing-Up – August/September Birth Dates**

Loudoun Soccer’s age groups are based on the player’s age on August 1<sup>st</sup> of the fall to spring soccer year. In many instances, children born in August and September will be attending one grade higher than most of the children in their age group. On request, players with August or September birthdays may play-up an age group to play with other players in their grade. Parents should be cautioned because this places the player in an environment where they may be less skilled than most of their teammates. This type of request must be made on the player’s registration form. Play-ups under this condition may be restricted due to team formation restrictions in the gaining age group.

**b) Playing-Up – Based on Ability**

Players that should be playing-up an age group based on ability are extremely rare. To be beneficial to the player and the player’s teammates, a player who is playing-up must be able to perform at an average to above average skill level for that age group. When determining if a player should play-up based on ability, the following must be considered:

- Physical Characteristics – size, speed, strength
- Individual Skill Level – ball handling and control
- Emotion Maturity – ability to interact with other players and handle different competitive levels
- Mental Development – ability to understand teamwork and the dynamics of the game

Failure to account for all these factors can be detrimental to the development of the player and his or her teammates. Requests to place players in an older age group must be made in writing detailing why this player and the player's teammates will benefit from playing in an older age group. Independent verification of the player's ability shall be required before a decision will be made by Loudoun Soccer.

**c) Playing-Down**

A written justification is required with a play-down request. Play-down requests are only granted if there is physical or mental justification. Additional information may be required (e.g., a doctors note) before the request is granted.

**d) Teams Playing-Up**

Play-up requests shall only be considered on an individual basis and never on a team basis.

**e) Playing Out Of Age Group – Last Resort for Player Placement**

As a last resort, under certain circumstances (usually in small areas), it may be necessary for an AGC to consider placing a player on a team out of his/her age group in order to maximize the number of on-time registered players placed or to fill teams to their target size. Because this decision may affect team parity and/or player development, any consideration to play a player out of his/her age group for these reasons shall be done in conjunction with the Regional Commissioner. Approval shall be obtained from the player's parents, League Commissioner, and Loudoun Soccer Vice President prior to final placement.

**14. Special Requests**

Occasionally players will make requests on their registration form for special needs due to personal conflicts or hardship. Requests are also often made for reasons of convenience or personal preference. Special requests can make team formation complicated for the AGCs and put them in a position to arbitrarily accept some and deny others. Honoring special requests shall not be put at a higher priority than team balance. In no case shall any special request be guaranteed to be granted.

**15. Resource Limitations**

Specific areas may experience limitations in resources that limit the number of teams that can be formed. Resources in this situation primarily include fields and coaches. In a situation where there are more players than available teams, the players shall be placed on teams in order of their registration date. Players not placed on a team shall be transferred to their alternate area of play or designated to receive a refund. AGCs shall inform the players when this situation occurs. Exceptions may be made for children of coaches, AGC, and other league volunteers.

**16. Coach Selection**

Loudoun Soccer coaches are the primary influence on player development and project an image of Loudoun Soccer to the members and the community. Loudoun Soccer coaches are

expected to show respect for the all members of the Loudoun Soccer community at all times, including players, parents, referees, volunteers, school employees, and employees of Loudoun County. In addition, Loudoun Soccer coaches must also demonstrate respect for Loudoun Soccer's policies and procedures and the Laws of the Game.

AGCs should select coaches based on training, experience, ability, and the image of Loudoun Soccer they project. No coach is guaranteed to be selected simply because they coached in a previous season, but that should be one of the first considerations. Regional Commissioners shall approve all coach selections prior to the notification of each coach's selection. Regional Commissioners may be aware of circumstances that may either encourage or discourage the selection of a particular coach. When two coaches of apparently equal standing are being considered for the team, the AGC may choose to alternate the coaches from one season to the next.

### **17. Team Formation Policy Exceptions**

Unless addressed otherwise in this document, all requests for exceptions to the team formation policies must be approved by the responsible Regional and League Commissioners and reviewed by the Vice President and President. AGCs should not speculate on the success of any policy exception request to any member.

**IMPORTANT NOTE on Player Registration Information/Parent and Coach Code of Conduct:** Coaches must always keep the player registration information, signed medical release forms, and Parent and Coach Code of Conduct forms available at each practice and each game. NO EXCEPTIONS. Should a player injury occur, this information will be needed at the Hospital Emergency Room for player admittance

## **VII. TRAINING FOR REFEREES AND COACHES**

### **A. Referee Training:**

Loudoun Soccer will make suitable training available to all referees in the rules of soccer. This training will include all rules adopted by Loudoun Soccer. Training will be in a format adopted by Loudoun Soccer and consistent with FIFA and USSF. Persons who have not received referee training will not be paid by Loudoun Soccer to referee.

1. Referees will be provided a book summarizing all rules adopted by Loudoun Soccer before being permitted to officiate at Loudoun Soccer games.
2. Referees are encouraged to further their licensing certifications by continuing in their soccer education and Loudoun Soccer will provide information on referee recertification annually.

### **B. Coach Training:**

Providing sufficient training opportunities is a key element for improving and maintaining the quality our recreational coaches. Loudoun Soccer has devised a progressive training program that our club offers our coaches to improve their knowledge and coaching abilities.

## Loudoun Soccer Policies and Procedures

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Coaches are encouraged to attend all courses that apply for the age groups they are coaching. Certification credits will be awarded for each course that a coach attends. All-Star coaches and coaches of Challenge division teams would be required to attain a minimum level of certification. Some of the courses that will be offered and their assigned “point value” are listed below. In addition to an in-house certification program, Loudoun Soccer is host to numerous USSF License Courses each year. Coaches are encouraged to advance themselves through these courses throughout their coaching career. Below is a summary of the coaching Requirements for Loudoun Soccer Coaches. Information of dates, times and locations of any coach course can be found on our website [www.loudounsoccer.com](http://www.loudounsoccer.com).

<b>Course</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Credits</b>
<b><i>Preseason Coach Clinics</i></b> Level 1 – U4/U5/U6 (Dual Field Coaches) Level 2 – U7/U8 (Micro Field Coaches) Level 3 – U9-U12 (Small Field Coaches)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age Specific Topics</li> <li>• One 3-hour session per age group prior to the start of each season</li> <li>• General Topics to Be Covered                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Fundamentals of Soccer</li> <li>○ Principles of Coaching</li> <li>○ League policy, organization, and objectives</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>3</b> (per course level)
<b><i>Positive Coaching Alliance</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PCA Coach Seminar (The Two Goal Coach)</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<b><i>Goalkeeper Training</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching coaches how to train goalkeepers</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<b><i>Loudoun Soccer In-House Training Courses</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan for six 2-hour classes held throughout the year at various locations in the county</li> <li>• Content similar to portions of E and D License courses                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Laws of the Game</li> <li>○ Principles of Coaching and good Sportsmanship</li> <li>○ Soccer Fundamentals</li> <li>○ Tactics and Skills</li> <li>○ Safety and First Aid</li> <li>○ Team Management</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>3</b> (per course)
<b><i>USFF F License Course</i></b>		<b>6</b>
<b><i>USFF E License Course</i></b>		<b>16</b>
<b><i>Advanced Coaches Clinic</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clinic held at Foxcroft annually every February</li> </ul>	<b>16</b>
<b><i>USFF D License Course</i></b>		<b>48</b>

### Recreational Coach Training Requirements

Points Accumulated are Credited for a period of Two Years

*R = Required P = Preferred*

Training Course	U5/U6	U7/U8		U9/U10		U11/U12		SFL	All-Star
	H	H	Ch	H	Ch	H	Ch		
Coach Clinic 1 (3 Points)	R								
Coach Clinic 2 (3 Points)		R	R						
Coach Clinic 3 (3 Points)				R	R	R	R	R	R
Positive Coach Alliance (2 Points)	P	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Goalkeeper Clinic (2 Points)				P	R	P	R	R	R
Loudoun Certification*		P	R	P	R	P	R	R	R
USSF F License		P	P	P	P				
USSF E License						P	P	P	P
Advanced Coaches Clinic						P	P	P	P
USSF D License								P	P
Minimum Required Credits	3	5	11	5	13	5	13	10	13

H = House, Ch = Challenge

Loudoun Soccer offers an in house certificate-training program. The program consists of 6 hours of training (broken into 2 hour intervals) to be spread throughout the year. Up to Six Age-Specific Courses will be offered each season. These courses are to be used as an enhancement and/or precursor to the USSF Licensing courses.

A Sampling of a season’s course offering is listed below. This is an example of what a Loudoun Coach may expect to be offered each season. Additionally, courses may be scheduled during our “off season” when practices and games do not dominate a coach’s free time. All scheduling of courses, times, dates and locations can be found on our website [www.loudounsoccer.com](http://www.loudounsoccer.com)

#### IN-HOUSE TRAINING SAMPLE (LOUDOUN CERTIFICATION)

Training Course #1: Dribbling and Shielding

Training Course #2: Coerver Moves/Juggling

Training Course #3: Team Management/Shooting Activities

\*These courses would be further broken down into age group specific session.

\*\* The same courses would be offered in both the fall and the spring (or in the “off-season”) in order for coaches to attend as their schedules allow.

\*\*\* The courses (three in total) are designed to be completed over the period of one year.

## **VIII. END-OF-SEASON EVENTS**

**Tournament Formats:** This is a brief overview of the End-of-Season Events. A complete list of rules and regulations will be devised and published by the directors of each tournament.

### **U4, U5, U6 Programs:**

Due to the young ages of these players, no End of Season Activities will be planned.

The large crowds and the longer distance of travel sometimes required to participate in an end of season event can be overwhelming to the younger players.

Therefore, Loudoun Soccer has determined that keeping the normal schedules for these players is more beneficial.

#### **1. U7 Jamboree**

All U7 teams will end their season with a fun day of games. This Jamboree is included in the cost of registration and is at no additional cost to the teams. The Jamboree will consist of two games for each team in a festival type atmosphere. No Standings will be kept, and no Champions or Finalists will be named. **Notification is required if your team does NOT plan on attending.**

#### **2. U8 Festival**

All U8 Teams are invited to participate in an end of the season festival. The cost of the festival is in addition to registration fees, and the festival is optional. This festival is designed to give young players the experience of a tournament atmosphere without the pressure of final games. Therefore, all teams will be guaranteed three games, with Champions and Finalist being decided by points. All league rules apply in the tournament including playing time and sportsmanship requirements. Every accommodation will be made to separate Challenge and Rec teams into separate divisions where possible.

#### **3. U9 –U12 House Tournaments**

All U9-U12 teams are invited to participate in an end of the season tournament. The cost of the tournament is in addition to registration fees, and the tournament is optional. This tournament is designed to give young players the experience of a tournament atmosphere while keeping within the boundaries of the house league. Teams will be placed in divisions by age group, and each team is guaranteed three games with the possibility of four. Champions and Finalists will be named for each division, and division champions will play in the Final game. Placement in final games will be made based upon division standings following completion of all preliminary rounds for that division. Some age groups may not have a final game, depending on the number of teams in the division. In that case, each team will play 3-4 games and the champions and runners-up will be determined by division standings.

#### **4. SFL Tournament**

Loudoun Soccer U13-U19 recreational teams compete in the Suburban Friendship League (SFL). The SFL includes an end-of-season tournament for these teams. Standings are kept during the season, and this information is used to group teams into competitive tournament divisions. There is no additional cost for teams to participate in the SFL tournament, and all teams are included in the tournament regardless of record. Teams must notify the SFL if they do not plan to participate. Tournament rules and procedures are distributed to coaches each season, and they are also available on the SFL web site.

The following rules and procedures apply to U7-U12 teams participating in Loudoun Soccer End-of-Season events. Rules and procedures for U13-U19 teams participating in the SFL tournament are not addressed in this document and can be found in the SFL documentation.

**A. Age and Eligibility:** Competition is open to all teams of Loudoun Soccer Association (Loudoun Soccer) registered and rostered players during the period associated with the Tournament. Guest or SFL league players are not permitted. Any team using players who played on a different Loudoun Soccer team during the season will forfeit all games which they have taken part in unless special exemption was prearranged with the Tournament Director.

**Laws of the Game:** All Rules and Regulations stipulated by FIFA and adjusted to Loudoun Soccer standards will apply, just as they were during the regular season. Consult your rulebook for any questions.

**B. Field of Play:** Field sizes will vary according to age groups and field availability. Assigned fields may change at the discretion of the Tournament Director or Site Coordinator.

#### **C. Equipment:**

**1. Ball.** - The size of the ball used will be as follows: Size 3: U4-U8, Size 4: U9 – U12, Size 5: U13 and older

**2. Uniforms** - All teams are required to play in Loudoun Soccer Jerseys.

The home team will play in red, the visiting team in white. Home team is listed first on the schedule. Players will be allowed to wear sweatshirts or sweat pants underneath their uniforms, as long as the colors do not interfere with the opposing team.

**D. Referees:** If the referee does not arrive on time, the Field Coordinator will attempt to locate a referee. If a referee cannot be found, the game may be played with a volunteer referee agreed upon by both coaches. If the assigned referee arrives, the game may be turned over to

him or her at a stoppage of play or at a break in action (quarter/halftime breaks) after establishing the score and time remaining.

**E. Linesman:** Each team is required to provide a club linesman for its side of the field if an official linesman is not assigned.

**F. Duration of the Game:**

All games will be in accordance with Loudoun Soccer policy as referenced below:

- U4: No games/Age appropriate activities and scrimmages
- U5: 25 Minutes Training Activities followed by 25 Minutes of game Time  
(game is broken into halves with free substitutions taking place as needed)
- U6: 25 Minutes Training Activities followed by 25 Minutes of game Time  
(game is broken into halves with free substitutions taking place as needed)
- U8-U10: 4 Quarters of 10 minutes
- U11-U12: 2 Halves of 25 minutes

Once the game has commenced, the Referee (where applicable) will not stop the game clock for any reason and no time may be added to the duration of any game. Should an injury occur, the game clock would continue to run while the injured player is being treated. Should a scheduled break in action (quarter or halftime) be reached prior to the resumption of play, the referee will declare a break in action and measure the required break time interval. The Tournament Director may shorten a game length at their discretion to keep the tournament on schedule.

**G. Fouls and Misconduct:**

1. The goalkeeper may not be charged.
  
2. When a player is ejected, the offending team may replace this player. Please Note: Since this is a House Tournament, substitution will be permitted for a player ejected by the referee (red card or equivalent) at the time of ejection. This will allow teams to play at full strength and give other players a chance to participate. Additionally, an ejected player is disqualified from the remainder of the game and the next game in which that player's team participates.

**H. Conduct of Players, Coaches and Spectators:**

The two teams will be positioned on one side of the field and all spectators will be located on the opposite side of the field. All coaches and substitutes must stay within 10 yards of the midfield line. All spectators must stay between the 18 yard lines and 3 yards behind the touchline. No one will be permitted behind the goal line.

Players are expected to conduct themselves within the spirit as well as the letter of the Laws of the Game. Displays of temper or dissent by word or action against an opponent or referee will be dealt with severely by the referee or tournament officials. Violent conduct or serious foul play will be cause for ejection. An ejected player is disqualified from the remainder of the game and the next game in which that player's team participates.

Coaches are also expected to conduct themselves within the spirit as well as the letter of the Laws of the Game. Displays of temper or dissent by word of action against an opponent, referee or tournament official will be dealt with severely by the referee or tournament officials. Coaches, who during a single game, receive two cautions or are sent off (ejected from a game) will leave the tournament site immediately. In addition, that coach will not be permitted to be present at any tournament sites until the team he or she was coaching at the time of the ejection has played its next scheduled game. Should the coach be coaching other teams participating in the tournament, he or she will be barred from appearing at any tournament site for the other team's games until the team he was coaching at the time of his ejection has completed its next scheduled game.

Spectators will conduct themselves in a courteous and sportsmanlike manner. If a coach was ejected as a result of a spectator's conduct, the same penalties shall be applied to the spectator as the coach. **Please Note: Coaches will be held responsible for the conduct of the spectators on their side of the field.**

Unsportsmanlike or violent conduct by substitutes, coaches, or spectators will be reported to the local soccer association. Teams and/or individuals guilty of behavior detrimental to referees or tournament officials will be barred from participating in the tournament the following year.

**Failure to Appear and Forfeits:** Teams must be at the field and ready to start play at the scheduled time. If the minimum number of players cannot be assembled, the start of play may be delayed. A grace period, after the scheduled starting time, not to exceed 10 minutes will be allowed. When the grace period expires, a forfeit will be declared by tournament officials and the game awarded to the opposing team. Forfeits will be recorded as a 3-0 win. No team forfeiting a game is eligible for first or runner-up in their respective division.

**I. Game Reports:** Both teams and the referee will immediately sign the Game Report in the Field Coordinator Book. This report will be used to record yellow and red cards as well as the score of the game. The winning coach will report the score to the scorer's table. In case of a tie the home team is responsible for reporting the score.

**J. Inclement Weather:** In the event of inclement weather, Tournament Officials reserve the right to adjust playing time or cancel games according to field conditions. The Referee, in consultation with the Field Marshall, will decide if individual games are to be halted due to unsafe field conditions. If the Referee determines the fields are unsafe to play, his/her decision is final.

The Field Marshall, in conjunction with the Tournament Committee, will decide if games are to be halted, postponed, or rescheduled on a site-wide basis (e.g., due to adverse weather or field conditions). The Tournament Committee also reserves the right to make the following changes:

1. Relocate and/or reschedule any game.
2. Reduce up to 50% the scheduled duration of any game. Games will be played as 4 six-minute quarters.
3. In the event of major weather problems, entire age group competitions may be cancelled.
4. In the event inclement weather forces cancellation of a game after at least half of regulation time has been played, the game shall be considered official and the score at the point of cancellation shall be the final score.

If the entire tournament must be cancelled, partial refunds will be given to teams, based on expenses already incurred. These include lining the fields, referee assignments, and administrative costs. Please be patient in finding out about refunds. Information will be posted on the website as well as emailed to coaches. If you have any doubts as to the status of tournament games, please call the Loudoun Soccer hotline at 703-777-5897 for the latest tournament information. Regardless of weather conditions, coaches and their players must be available at the site, ready to play, at the scheduled time unless Tournament Officials have suspended competition. Failure to appear will result in forfeiture of the game. Only Tournament Officials may cancel or postpone a game.

#### **K. General Rules**

1. **Tournament Officials:** The Tournament Officials shall decide upon all matters pertaining to the tournament. The Officials' interpretation of these rules of play and participation shall be final. The tournament director reserves the right to forfeit a game for unsportsmanlike conduct by the team coaches, players, or parents.
2. **Tournament Awards:** Awards will be presented for Champion and Finalist in each division of competition. There will be one award for each player. The award presentation will take place at the Loudoun Soccer Tournament Booth after completion of divisional play for U8 and after each final played for U9 and above.
3. **Abandonment of Matches:** Tournament Officials shall decide the outcome of any match abandoned by the referee for reasons other than inclement weather. If abandonment results from the conduct of one or both teams, the Tournament Officials, after consulting with the referee, shall determine the outcome and any disciplinary measures. No points will be awarded toward final determination for the responsible team(s). Should termination occur during a final match, no awards will be given to the team(s) judged responsible.

- 4. Cancellation of Games:** Should it be necessary to cancel preliminary round games prior to their official completion for any reason, Tournament Officials shall restructure the tournament competition to provide an equitable basis for completing the competition and determining division champs. Restructuring actions may include disregarding games already completed during a round of play if all cancelled games scheduled in that round for the division or flight cannot be rescheduled.

**Games Ending in A Tie Score:**

- a) **U7 Jamboree** - Ties will stand at the end of regulation play for all games.
  - b) **U8 Festival** – Ties will stand at the end of regulation play for all games.
  - c) **U9-U12 Tournaments** - Ties will stand at the end of regulation play for all preliminary games. For final games, following a 5-minute break, two complete overtime periods of 5 minutes will be played. There is no sudden death during this time. If the match remains tied at the end of the overtime period, Co-Champions will be declared in that division. No penalty kicks will be taken to determine the Champions of a division.
- 5. Division Standings (U9-U12):** After the preliminary round games are considered complete, teams will be ranked in order of points earned for wins and ties. Points awarded will be:
- Three (3) points for each win (also applies to a win by forfeit)
  - One (1) point for each tie
  - Zero (0) points for a loss

**6. Tournament Tiebreakers:**

- a) **U8 Festival** -When determining Champions and Finalists by way of points, tie-breaking procedures established in the General Rules 1-6 will be utilized. In the event there is still a tie after the tie-breaking methods are applied, Co-Champions will be named in that division. There will be no final games.
- b) **U9-U12 Tournament** - When determining the teams who shall participate in the Final games, tie-breaking procedures established in the General Rules will be utilized.
- c) **Tiebreakers**
  - 1) Winner of head to head competition of the two teams tied. (Disregard if more than two teams are tied—NEVER revert to this tiebreaker if more than two teams are tied.)
  - 2) Most wins.

- 3) Team with highest goal differential. (Example: a team wins by a score of 5-3 receives 2 bonus points) A maximum differential of three (3) goals per match will be counted. Therefore a blowout is NOT necessary.
- 4) Fewest Red and Yellow cards received.
- 5) Least number of goals allowed.
- 6) Most shutouts.
- 7) Penalty Kicks in accordance with FIFA rules. (for U9-U12 ONLY)

7. **Parking:** Local Law Enforcement Officials have been notified about the Tournament. They will be enforcing “NO PARKING” areas for safety considerations. The Tournament Officials have worked hard to create a good neighbor policy with business, public and private establishments around the tournament sites, so please respect their rights. This will allow us to continue our use of these sites.

**Disclaimer:** The Tournament Committee, Loudoun Youth Soccer Association, and the Virginia Youth Soccer Association will not be responsible for any expense incurred by any team, club, or individual if the tournament is cancelled in whole or part.

8. **Protests are not allowed.**

## **IX. MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION**

### **A. Practices:**

1. Team practice will not be allowed to start before the date set by Loudoun Soccer each season.
2. No recreational league team may practice more than two (2) days per week.

### **B. Spectators:**

1. Spectators must remain behind designated lines at the playing fields during game play, and may not stand at the ends of the field.
2. Team players and Coaches must be on one side of the playing field and the spectators must be located on the opposite side.
3. A player's parent, or anyone else, may only be on the team's side of the playing field if they are assisting the Coach for that game.
4. Refer to LAW I (Loudoun Soccer modification) for additional information.

## FIFA LAWS OF THE GAME

The laws of the game, as authorized by the Federation Internationale De Football Association (FIFA) and the United States Soccer Federation (USSF), will apply in all cases except as modified by the Loudoun Youth Soccer Association (Loudoun Soccer) rules. The seventeen (17) FIFA Laws of Soccer are provided below in an abbreviated format.<sup>1</sup>

### LAW 1: THE 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.

Length: minimum 90 m (100 yds) maximum 120 m (130 yds)

Width: minimum 45 m (50 yds) maximum 90 m (100 yds)

#### INTERNATIONAL MATCHES

Length: minimum 100 m (110 yds) maximum 110 m (120 yds)

Width: minimum 64 m (70 yds) maximum 75 m (80 yds)

#### FIELD MARKINGS

The field of play is marked with lines. These lines belong to the areas of which they are boundaries. The two longer boundary lines are called touch lines. The two shorter lines are called goal lines. All lines are not more than 12 cm (5 ins) wide. The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line. The centre mark is indicated at the midpoint of the halfway line. A circle with a radius of 9.15 m (10 yds) is marked around it.

#### THE GOAL AREA

*A goal area is defined at each end of the field as follows:* Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line, 5.5 m (6 yds) from the inside of each goalpost. These lines extend into the field of play for a distance of 5.5 m (6 yds) 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.

#### THE PENALTY AREA

*A penalty area is defined at each end of the field as follows:* Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line, 16.5 m (18 yds) from the inside of each goalpost. These lines extend into the field of play for a distance of 16.5 m (18 yds) and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is the penalty area. Within each penalty area a penalty mark is made 11 m (12 yds) from the midpoint between the goalposts and equidistant to them. An arc of a circle with a radius of 9.15 m (10 yds) from each penalty mark is drawn outside the penalty area

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<sup>1</sup> The complete and official descriptions of FIFA's Laws of the Game are described in "FIFA Laws of the Game, Guide for Referees, United States Soccer Federation, current edition. This document contains the seventeen (17) Laws of the Game, associated International Football Association Board decisions, additional instructions regarding the Laws of the Game, instructions regarding the taking of kicks from the penalty mark, the technical area, the role of the fourth official, and additional rules of the International Football Association Board.

### **FLAGPOSTS**

A flagpost, not less than 1.5 m (5 ft) high, with a non-pointed top and a flag is placed at each corner. Flagposts may also be placed at each end of the halfway line, not less than 1m (39 inches) outside the touch line.

### **THE CORNER ARC**

A quarter circle with a radius of 1 m (39 inches) from each corner flagpost is drawn inside the field of play.

### **GOALS**

Goals must be placed on the centre of each goal line. They consist of two upright posts equidistant from the corner flagposts and joined at the top by a horizontal crossbar. The distance between the posts is 7.32 m (8 yds) and the distance from the lower edge of the crossbar to the ground is 2.44 m (8ft). Both goalposts and the crossbar have the same width and depth which do not exceed 12 cm (5 ins). The goal lines are the same width as that of the goalposts and the crossbar. Nets may be attached to the goals and the ground behind the goal, provided that they are properly supported and do not interfere with the goalkeeper. The goalposts and crossbars must be white.

### **SAFETY**

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

## **LAW 2: THE BALL**

### **QUALITIES AND MEASUREMENTS**

#### **The ball is:**

- spherical
- made of leather or other suitable material
- of a circumference of not more than 70 cm (28 ins) and not less than 68 cm (27 ins)
- not more than 450 g (16 oz) in weight and not less than 410 g (14 oz) at the start of the match
- of a pressure equal to 0.6 – 1.1 atmosphere (600 – 1100 g/cm<sup>2</sup>) 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

#### **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 ball is replaced and the match is restarted accordingly

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

## **LAW 3: THE NUMBER OF PLAYERS**

### **PLAYERS**

A match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than eleven players, one of whom is the goalkeeper. A match may not start if either team consists of fewer than seven players.

### **OFFICIAL COMPETITIONS**

Up to a maximum of three substitutes may be used in any match played in an official competition organised under the auspices of FIFA, the confederations or the national associations. The rules of the competition must state how many substitutes may be nominated, from three up to a maximum of seven.

### **OTHER MATCHES**

In other matches, up to five substitutes may be used, provided that:

- the teams concerned reach agreement on a maximum number
- the referee is informed before the match

If the referee is not informed, or if no agreement is reached before the start of the match, no more than three substitutes are allowed.

### **ALL MATCHES**

In all matches, the names of the substitutes must be given to the referee prior to the start of the match. Substitutes not so named may not take part in the match.

### **SUBSTITUTION PROCEDURE**

**To replace a player by a substitute, the following conditions must be observed:**

- the referee is informed before any proposed substitution is made
- a substitute only enters the field of play after the player being replaced has left and after receiving a signal from the referee
- a substitute only enters the field of play at the halfway line and during a stoppage in the match
- a substitution is completed when a substitute enters the field of play
- from that moment, the substitute becomes a player and the player he has replaced ceases to be a player
- a player who has been replaced takes no further part in the match
- all substitutes are subject to the authority and jurisdiction of the referee, whether called upon to play or not

### **CHANGING THE GOALKEEPER**

**Any of the other players may change places with the goalkeeper, provided that:**

- the referee is informed before the change is made
- the change is made during a stoppage in the match

## **INFRINGEMENTS/SANCTIONS**

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

- play is stopped
- the substitute is cautioned, shown the yellow card, and required to leave the field
- play is restarted with a dropped ball at the place it was located when play was stopped

### **If a player changes places with the goalkeeper without the referee's permission before the change is made:**

- play continues
- the players concerned are cautioned and shown the yellow card when the ball is next out of play

### **For any other infringements of this Law:**

- the players concerned are cautioned and shown the yellow card

## **RESTART OF PLAY**

### **If play is stopped by the referee to administer a caution:**

- the match is restarted by an indirect free kick, to be taken by a player of the opposing team from the place where the ball was located when play was stopped

## **PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTES SENT OFF**

- A player who has been sent off before the kick-off may be replaced only by one of the named substitutes.
- A named substitute who has been sent off, either before the kick-off or after play has started, may not be replaced.

## **LAW 4: THE PLAYER'S 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 are worn, they are of the same main colour as the shorts
- stockings
- shinguards
- footwear

### **SHINGUARDS**

- are covered entirely by the stockings
- are made of a suitable material (rubber, plastic, or similar substances)
- provide a reasonable degree of protection

## **GOALKEEPERS**

- each goalkeeper wears colours which distinguish him from the other players, the referee, and the assistant referees

## **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
- the player is only allowed to re-enter the field of play when the ball is out of play

A player who has been required to leave the field of play because of an infringement of this Law and who enters (or re-enters) the field of play without the referee's permission is cautioned and shown the yellow card.

## **RESTART OF PLAY**

If play is stopped by the referee to administer a caution:

- the match is restarted by an indirect free kick taken by a player of the opposing side, from the place where the ball was located when the referee stopped the match

## **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 in co-operation with the assistant referees and, where applicable, with the fourth official
- ensures that the ball 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 Law infringements
- 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 penalises 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
- takes disciplinary action against players guilty of cautionable and sending-off offences. He is not obliged to take this action immediately but must do so when the ball next goes out of play
- takes action against team officials who fail to conduct themselves in a responsible manner and may at his discretion, expel them from the field of play and its immediate surrounds
- acts on the advice of assistant referees regarding incidents which he has not seen
- ensures that no unauthorised persons enter the field of play
- restarts the match after it has been stopped
- provides the appropriate authorities with a match report which includes information on any disciplinary action taken against players, and/or team officials and any other incidents which occurred before, during or after the match

### **DECISIONS OF THE REFEREE**

The decisions of the referee regarding facts connected with play are final. The referee may only change a decision on realising that it is incorrect or, at his discretion, on the advice of an assistant referee, provided that he has not restarted play.

## **LAW 6: THE ASSISTANT REFEREES**

### **DUTIES**

Two assistant referees are appointed whose duties, subject to the decision of the referee, are to indicate:

- when the whole of the ball has passed out of the field of play
- which side is entitled to a corner kick, goal kick or throw-in
- when a player may be penalised for being in an offside position
- when a substitution is requested
- when misconduct or any other incident has occurred out of the view of the referee

### **ASSISTANCE**

The assistant referees also assist the referee to control the match in accordance with the Laws of the Game. In the event of undue interference or improper conduct, the referee will relieve an assistant referee of his duties and make a report to the appropriate authorities.

## **LAW 7: THE DURATION OF THE MATCH**

### **PERIODS OF PLAY**

The match lasts two equal periods of 45 minutes, unless otherwise mutually agreed between the referee and the two participating teams. Any agreement to alter the periods of play (for example to reduce each half to 40 minutes because of insufficient light) must be made before the start of play and must comply with competition rules.

### **HALF-TIME INTERVAL**

- Players are entitled to an interval at half-time.
- The half-time interval must not exceed 15 minutes.
- Competition rules must state the duration of the half-time interval.
- The duration of the half-time interval may be altered only with the consent of the referee.

### **ALLOWANCE FOR TIME LOST**

Allowance is made in either 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.

### **PENALTY KICK**

If a penalty kick has to be taken or retaken, the duration of either half is extended until the penalty kick is completed.

### **EXTRA TIME**

Competition rules may provide for two further equal periods to be played. The conditions of Law 8 will apply.

### **ABANDONED MATCH**

An abandoned match is replayed unless the competition rules provide otherwise.

## **LAW 8: THE START AND 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
- at the start of each period of extra time, where applicable

A goal may be scored directly from the kick-off.

### **PROCEDURE**

- all players are in their own half of the field
  - the opponents of the team taking the kick-off are at least 9.15 m (10 yds) from the ball until it is in play
  - the ball is stationary on the centre 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
- After a team scores a goal, the kick-off is taken by the other team.

### **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.

### **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 is taken from any point within the goal area.

An indirect free kick awarded to the attacking team in its opponents' goal area is taken on 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: THE BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY**

### **BALL OUT OF PLAY**

**The ball is out of play when:**

- it has wholly 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, crossbar or corner flagpost and remains in the field of play
- it rebounds from either the referee or an assistant referee when they are on the field of play

## **LAW 10: THE METHOD OF SCORING**

### **GOAL SCORED**

A goal is scored when the whole of the 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**

The team scoring the greater number of goals during a match is the winner. If both teams score an equal number of goals, or if no goals are scored, the match is drawn.

### **COMPETITION RULES**

For matches ending in a draw, competition rules may state provisions involving extra time, or other procedures approved by the International F.A. Board to determine the winner of a match.

## LAW 11: OFFSIDE

### OFFSIDE POSITION

It is not an offence in itself to be in an offside position.

A player is in an offside position if:

- he is nearer to his opponents' goal line than both the ball and the second last opponent

A player is not in an offside position if:

- he is in his own half of the field of play, **or**
- he is level with the second last opponent, **or**
- he is level with the last two opponents

### OFFENCE

A player in an offside position is only penalised if, at the moment the ball touches or is played by one of his team, he is, in the opinion of the referee, involved in active play by:

- interfering with play, **or**
- interfering with an opponent, **or**
- gaining an advantage by being in that position

### NO OFFENCE

There is no offside offence if a player receives the ball directly from:

- a goal kick **or**
- a throw-in **or**
- a corner kick

### INFRINGEMENTS/SANCTIONS

For any offside offence, the referee awards an indirect free kick to the opposing team to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred.

## LAW 12: FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

Fouls and misconduct are penalized as follows:

### DIRECT FREE KICK

**A direct 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

**A direct free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following four 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 (except for the goalkeeper within his own penalty area)

**A direct free kick is taken from where the offence occurred.**

### **PENALTY KICK**

A penalty kick is awarded if any of the above ten offences is committed by a player inside his own penalty area, irrespective of the position of the ball, provided it is in play.

### **INDIRECT FREE KICK**

**An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player, in the opinion of the referee, commits any of the following three offences:**

- plays in a dangerous manner
- impedes the progress of an opponent
- prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his hands

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

- takes more than **six seconds** while controlling the ball with his hands, before releasing it from his possession
- touches the ball again with his hands after it has been released from his possession and has not touched any other player
- touches the ball with his hands after it has been deliberately kicked to him by a team-mate
- touches the ball with his hands after he has received it directly from a throw-in taken by a team-mate
- wastes time

**The indirect free kick is taken from where the offence occurred.**

### **DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS**

#### **CAUTIONABLE OFFENCES**

**A player is cautioned and shown the yellow card if he commits any of the following seven offences:**

1. is guilty of unsporting behaviour
2. shows dissent by word or action
3. persistently infringes the Laws of the Game
4. delays the restart of play
5. fails to respect the required distance when play is restarted with a corner kick or free kick
6. enters or re-enters the field of play without the referee's permission
7. deliberately leaves the field of play without the referee's permission

### **SENDING-OFF OFFENCES**

**A player is sent off and shown the red card if he commits any of the following seven offences:**

1. is guilty of serious foul play
2. is guilty of violent conduct
3. spits at an opponent or any other person
4. denies an opponent 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)
5. 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
6. uses offensive, insulting or abusive language
7. receives a second caution in the same match

## **LAW 13: FREE KICKS**

### **TYPES OF FREE KICKS**

Free kicks are either direct or indirect.

**For both direct and indirect free kicks, 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 DIRECT FREE KICK**

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

### **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 PENALTY AREA**

#### **Direct or indirect free kick to the defending team:**

- all opponents are at least 9.15 m (10 yds) from the ball
- all opponents remain outside the penalty area until the ball is in play
- the ball is in play when it is kicked directly beyond the penalty 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 9.15 m (10 yds) 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 PENALTY AREA**

- all opponents are at least 9.15 m (10 yds) 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 penalty area and the ball is not kicked directly into play, the kick is retaken

#### ***Free kick taken by a player other than the goalkeeper***

**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:**

- a direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred
- a penalty kick is awarded if the infringement occurred inside the kicker's penalty area

*Free kick taken by the goalkeeper*

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

- a direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team if the infringement occurred outside the goalkeeper's penalty area, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred
- an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if the infringement occurred inside the goalkeeper's penalty area, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred

## **LAW 14: THE PENALTY KICK**

A penalty kick is awarded against a team which commits one of the ten offences for which a direct free kick is awarded, inside its own penalty area and while the ball is in play. A goal may be scored directly from a penalty kick. Additional time is allowed for a penalty kick to be taken at the end of each half or at the end of periods of extra time.

### **POSITION OF THE BALL AND THE PLAYERS**

#### **The ball:**

- is placed on the penalty mark

#### **The player taking the penalty kick:**

- is properly identified

#### **The defending goalkeeper:**

- remains on his goal line, facing the kicker, between the goalposts until the ball has been kicked

#### **The players other than the kicker are located:**

- inside the field of play
- outside the penalty area
- behind the penalty mark
- at least 9.15 m (10 yds) from the penalty mark

### **THE REFEREE**

- does not signal for a penalty kick to be taken until the players have taken up position in accordance with the Law
- decides when a penalty kick has been completed

### **PROCEDURE**

- the player taking the penalty kicks the ball forward
- he does not play the ball a second time until it has touched another player
- the ball is in play when it is kicked and moves forward

**When a penalty kick is taken during the normal course of play, or time has been extended at half-time or full time to allow a penalty kick to be taken or retaken, a goal is awarded if, before passing between the goalposts and under the crossbar:**

- the ball touches either or both of the goalposts and/or the crossbar, and/or the goalkeeper

### **INFRINGEMENTS/SANCTIONS**

**If the referee gives the signal for a penalty kick to be taken and, before the ball is in play, one of the following situations occurs:**

#### **The player taking the penalty kick infringes the Laws of the Game:**

- the referee allows the kick to proceed
- if the ball enters the goal, the kick is retaken
- if the ball does not enter the goal, the kick is not retaken

**The goalkeeper infringes the Laws of the Game:**

- the referee allows the kick to proceed
- if the ball enters the goal, a goal is awarded
- if the ball does not enter the goal, the kick is retaken

**A team-mate of the player taking the kick enters the penalty area or moves in front of or within 9.5 m (10 yds) of the penalty mark:**

- the referee allows the kick to proceed
- if the ball enters the goal, the kick is retaken
- if the ball does not enter the goal, the kick is not retaken

**A team-mate of the goalkeeper enters the penalty area or moves in front of or within 9.15 m (10 yds) of the penalty mark:**

- the referee allows the kick to proceed
- if the ball enters the goal, a goal is awarded
- if the ball does not enter the goal, the kick is retaken

**A player of both the defending team and the attacking team infringe the Laws of the Game:**

- the kick is retaken

**If, after the penalty kick has been taken:**

**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

**The kicker deliberately handles the ball before it has touched another player:**

- a direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred

**The ball is touched by an outside agent as it moves forward:**

- the kick is retaken

**The ball rebounds into the field of play from the goalkeeper, the crossbar or the goalposts, and is then touched by an outside agent:**

- the referee stops play
- play is restarted with a dropped ball at the place where it touched the outside agent.

## **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 whole of the ball passes over the touch line, either on the ground or in the air
- from the point where it crossed the touch line
- 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 as it enters the field of play.

## INFRINGEMENTS/SANCTIONS

*Throw-in taken by a player other than the goalkeeper*

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

- a direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred
- a penalty kick is awarded if the infringement occurred inside the thrower's penalty area

*Throw-in taken by the goalkeeper*

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

- a direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team if the infringement occurred outside the goalkeeper's penalty area, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred
- an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if the infringement occurred inside the goalkeeper's penalty area, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred

**If an opponent unfairly distracts or impedes the thrower:**

- he is cautioned for unsporting behaviour and shown the yellow card

**For any other infringement of this Law:**

- the throw-in is taken by a player of the opposing team

## 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 penalty 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 penalty area

### **INFRINGEMENTS/SANCTIONS**

If the ball is not kicked directly into play beyond the penalty area the kick is retaken.

#### *Goal kick taken by a player other than the goalkeeper*

**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:**

- a direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred
- a penalty kick is awarded if the infringement occurred inside the kicker's penalty area

#### *Goal kick taken by the goalkeeper*

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

- a direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team if the infringement occurred outside the goalkeeper's penalty area, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred
- an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if the infringement occurred inside the goalkeeper's penalty area, 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 either on or inside the corner arc at the nearest corner flagpost
- the corner flagpost is not moved
- opponents remain at least 9.15 m (10 yds) 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**

#### *Corner kick taken by a player other than the goalkeeper*

**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:**

- a direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred
- a penalty kick is awarded if the infringement occurred inside the kicker's penalty area

#### *Corner kick taken by the goalkeeper*

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

- a direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team if the infringement occurred outside the goalkeeper's penalty area, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred
- an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if the infringement occurred inside the goalkeeper's penalty area, the kick to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred

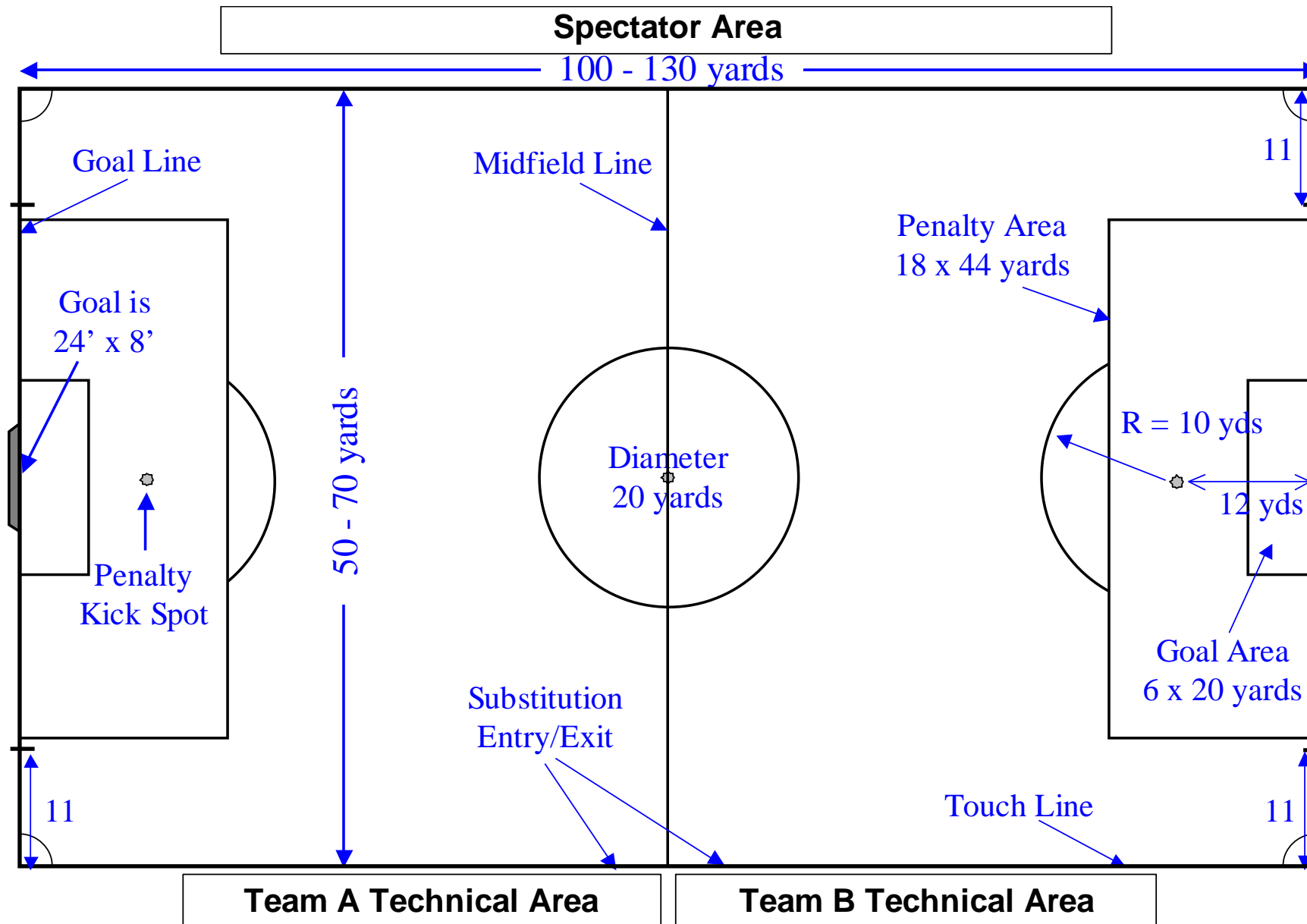
**For any other infringement the kick is retaken**

**SUMMARY OF LOUDOUN SOCCER MODIFICATIONS TO FIFA LAWS OF THE GAME**  
*Effective Fall 2007-Spring 2008 for U4 – U19 Recreational Games*

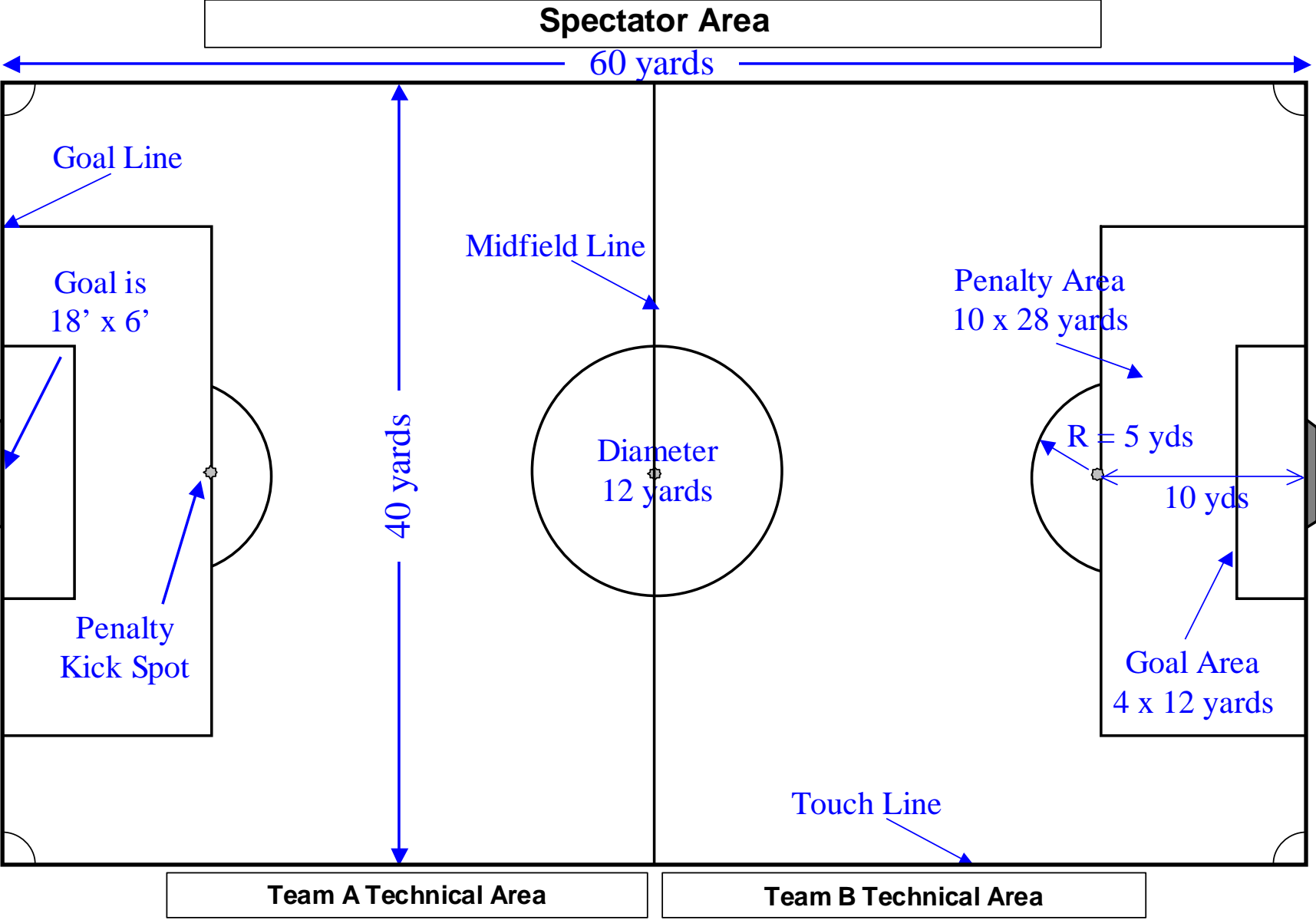
Age Group	Law 1	Law 2	Law 3				Law 7	Law 11	Law 14	Law 15
	Field Size (see diagrams)	Ball Size	Number of Players	One Player is Goal Keeper	Minimum Players	Player Substitution	Game Duration	Offside Penalty	Penalty Kick	Throw In
<b>U4</b>	1/2 of 30x40 field	<b>#3</b>	<b>10-12</b>	<b>No</b>	N/A	N/A	45 min. session	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>U5</b>	½ 30x40 field (dual game format)	<b>#3</b>	<b>3 vs 3</b>	<b>No</b> 4' x 6' Goals	3 Start 3 Continue	Free Subs as necessary	25 minutes (breaks as necessary)	Not Enforced	From top of penalty arc (open goal)	Kick-in replaces Throw-in
<b>U6</b>	½ 30x40 field (dual game format)	<b>#3</b>	<b>3 vs 3</b>	<b>No</b> 4' x 6' Goals	3 Start 3 Continue	Free Subs as necessary	25 minutes (breaks as necessary)	Not Enforced	From top of penalty arc (open goal)	Kick-in replaces Throw-in
<b>U7</b>	40 x 30 yds (10 yd penalty arc)	<b>#3</b>	<b>4 vs 4</b> (7 max per team)	<b>No</b> 4' x 6' Goals	3 Start 3 Continue	Only at Quarter Breaks	40 minutes (breaks at quarters)	Not Enforced	From top of penalty arc (open goal)	Kick-in replaces Throw-in
<b>U8</b>	40 x 30 yds (10 yd penalty arc)	<b>#3</b>	<b>4 vs 4</b> (7 max per team)	<b>No</b> 4' x 6' Goals	3 Start 3 Continue	Only at Quarter Breaks	40 minutes (breaks at quarters)	Not Enforced	From top of penalty arc (open goal)	Kick-in replaces Throw-in
<b>U9</b> <b>U10</b>	60 x 40 yds (28 x 10 yd penalty box)	<b>#4</b>	<b>6 vs 6</b> (9 max per team)	<b>Yes</b> (Change at each quarter) 6' x 18' Goals	5 Start 4 Continue	Only at Quarter Breaks	40 minutes (breaks at quarters)	Blatant Only U9 Enforced for U10	From penalty kick mark	2 Chances Given
<b>U11</b> <b>U12</b>	80 x 50 yds (32 x 14 yd penalty box)	<b>#4</b>	<b>8 vs 8</b> (12 max per team)	<b>Yes</b> (Change at each half) 6' x 18' Goals	6 Start 5 Continue	Free (see sub procedures)	50 min U11 60 min U12 (break at	Enforced	From penalty kick mark	1 Chance is Given
<b>U13</b> <b>U14</b>	110 x 70 yds (44 x 18 yd penalty box)	<b>#5</b>	<b>11 vs 11</b> (16 max per team)	<b>Yes</b> 8' x 24' Goals	7 Start 7 Continue	Free (see sub procedures)	70 minutes (break at halftime)	Enforced	From penalty kick mark	1 Chance is Given
<b>U16</b> <b>U19</b>	110 x 70 yds (44 x 18 yd penalty box)	<b>#5</b>	<b>11 vs 11</b> (18 max per team)	<b>Yes</b> 8' x 24' Goals	7 Start 7 Continue	Free (see sub procedures)	80 minutes (break at halftime)	Enforced	From penalty kick mark	1 Chance is Given

**See text under Law 12 (Fouls and Misconduct) for additional modifications that apply to various age groups**

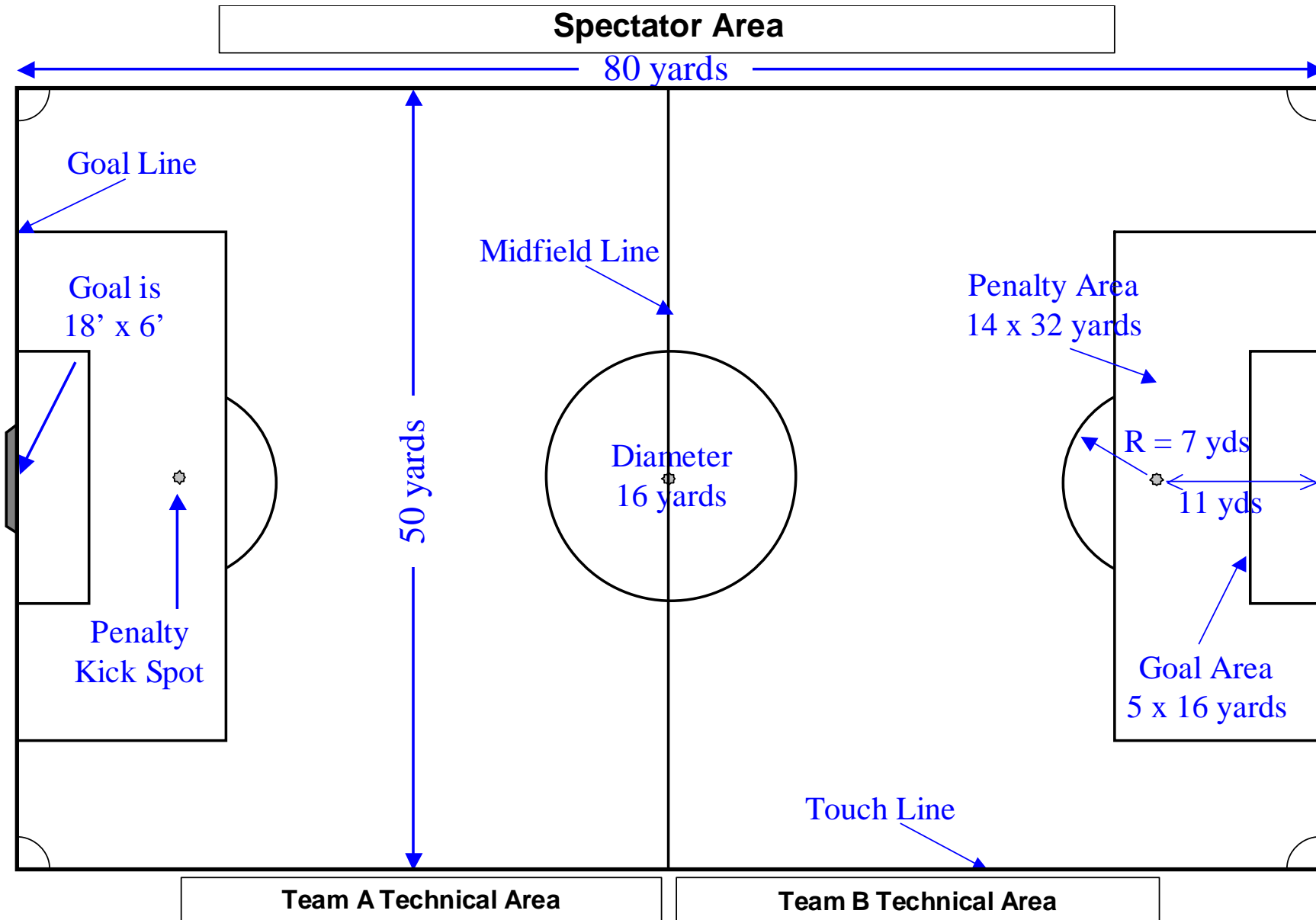
**Figure 1: Large Soccer Field**



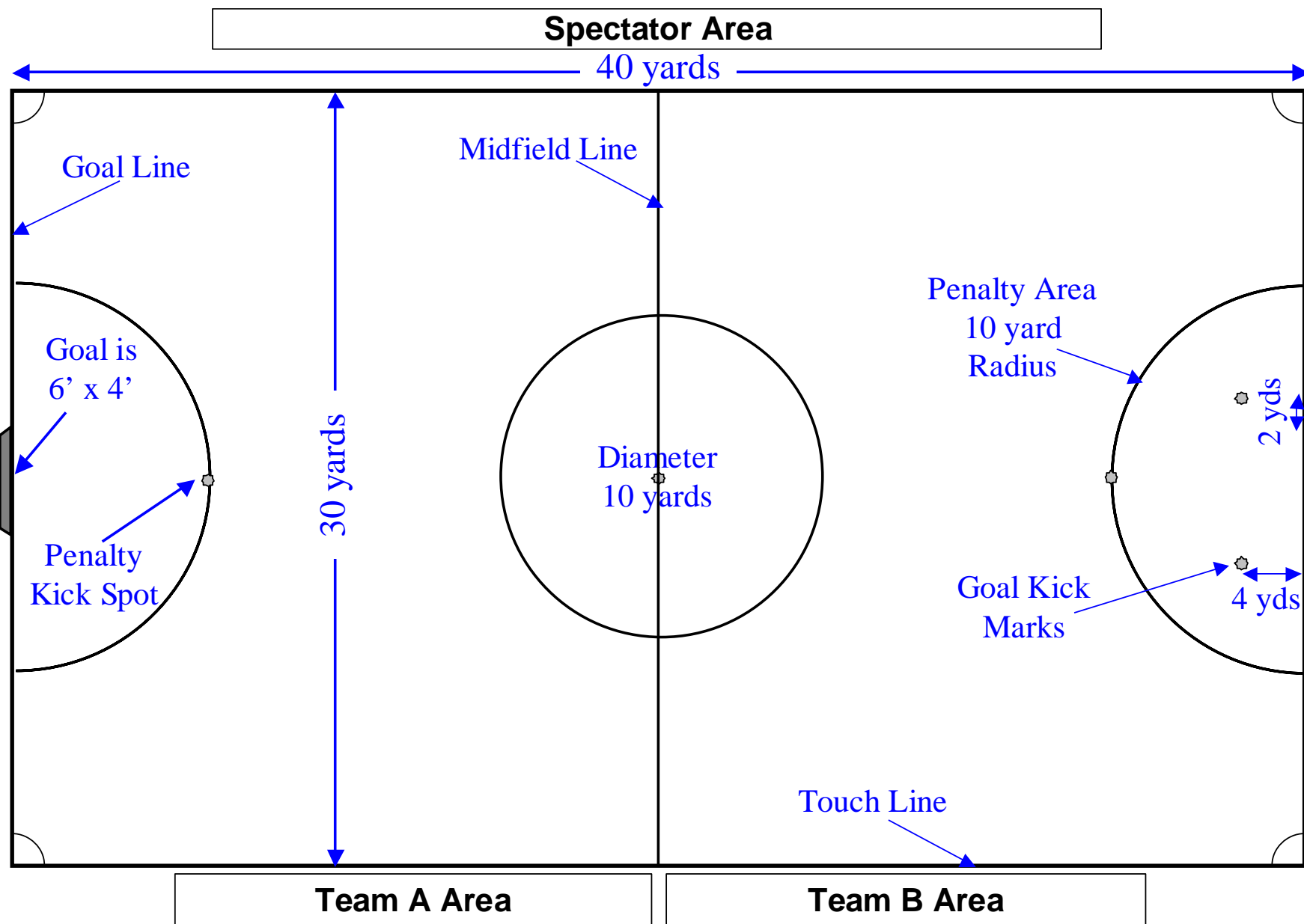
**Figure 2: U9/U10 Soccer Field**



**Figure 3: U11/U12 Soccer Field**



**Figure 4: U7/U8 Soccer Field**



## LAW 1: THE FIELD OF PLAY

**U5 - U6 Fields:** The Field of Play for U5 and U6 will be on a field sized 20 x 30 yards. Games will be played in a dual field format running width-wise on a U7-U8 field.

**U7 - U8 Fields:** The Field of Play for U7 and U8 will be on a field sized 40 x 30 yards. Refer to figure 4.

**U9 - U10 Fields:** The Field of Play for U9 and U10 will be on a field sized 60 x 40 yards. Refer to figure 3.

**U11 - U12 Fields:** The Field of Play for U11 and U12 will be on a field sized 80 x 50 yards. Refer to figure 2.

**U13 - U19 Fields:** The Field of Play will be the large (standard) field. The dimensions of this field shall be identical to that described in FIFA Law I. In all instances the length of the field will exceed its width. Refer to figure 1.

**Team and Spectator Locations:** Both teams shall be along one touch-line of the field of play and the spectators shall be located along the opposite touch-line of the field of play.

### Additional markings.

- (1) **Corner Kick Encroachment mark.** A suitable mark should be made perpendicular to the goal-line eleven (11) yards [standard field measurement] from the corner flag. The mark shall lie outside the field of play.
- (2) **Team Technical Areas (small and large fields only).** The technical area for each team shall be from the midfield line to the penalty area line (i.e., the 18 yd line on a standard-size field) starting one yard from the touch-line. The actual field markings will be hash marks perpendicular to the touch-line and located at the midfield line and each penalty area line starting one yard behind the touch-line and extending 2 yards in length.
- (3) **Substitution Entry/Exit Areas (U14, U16 and U19 play only).** This is a line segment located on the team side of the field from the midfield line to a point 10 yards towards each goal-line. The actual field markings will be the hash mark at the midfield line mentioned in (c) and two (“10 yard”) hash marks at a point 10 yards towards each goal-line. The “10 yard” hash marks will start one yard behind the touch-line and extend 1 yard in length. All hash marks will be perpendicular to the touch-line.
- (4) **Spectator Line.** A line drawn on the spectator side of the field that is parallel to and located 3 yards from the touch-line and extends between the penalty area lines.
- (5) **Penalty Area (U7 and U8 only).** This will be an arc whose radius is 10 yards and whose center point lies on the goal-line half-way between the two corner posts.
- (6) **Goal kick spots (U7 and U8 only).** In each penalty area there will be two goal-kick spots. The goal kick spots will be located 2 yards to the left and right goal post, respectively and 4 yards into the field of play.

## LAW 2: THE BALL

Ball size for U4 - U8 will be a FIFA size #3 ball. Ball size for U9 - U12 will be a FIFA size #4. The U13 - U19 age groups will use a FIFA size #5 ball.

## LAW 3: THE NUMBER OF PLAYERS

### A. Loudoun Soccer House and SFL Teams

- (1) **U5 and U6 teams** playing on ½ of a micro field, under the dual field format, will consist of three (3) field players on each half side. There will be no designated goalkeeper. No player shall be permitted to use his/her hands anywhere on the soccer field. No official score shall be kept.
- (2) **U7 and U8 teams** playing on a micro field will consist of four (4) field players. There will be no designated goalkeeper. No player will be permitted to use his/her hands anywhere on the field of play. Please refer to the Policy Clarifications for Loudoun Soccer Coaches section for additional details. To prevent a “Blow-out” situation (a score differential of 5 goals) from occurring in U7 and U8 matches, the losing team will be allowed to add one (1) field player when the score differential reaches four (4) goals. The losing team shall continue to play with five (5) field players until the score differential has been reduced to two (2) goals. At that time, the 5<sup>th</sup> player must be removed and the teams will be allowed to continue in the 4 v 4 format. For details on actions and substitution, see paragraph F of this law.
- (3) **U9 and U10 teams** playing on a small field will consist of six (6) players, one of whom must be the goalkeeper.
- (4) **U11 and U12 teams** playing on a small field will consist of eight (8) players, one of whom must be the goalkeeper.
- (5) **U13 - U19 teams** playing on a large field will consist of eleven (11) players, one of whom must be the goalkeeper.
- (6) **Minimum Players on Dual Fields, Micro and Small Fields:**
  - U6 games may not begin or continue with fewer than 3 players (per half of field) on each team. If circumstances warrant, coaches may choose to play only one half of the dual field format. (For example, if you do not have 6 players to put 3 on each side, but have 5, one half of the field can be used while the other two players serve as subs.)
  - **U7 and U8 games** may not begin or continue with fewer than three (3) players on each team.
  - **U9 and U10 games** may not begin with fewer than five (5) players on each team. After a game has started, it may not continue with fewer than four (4) players.
  - **U11 and U12 games** may not begin with fewer than six (6) players on each team. After a game has started, it may not continue with fewer than five (5) players.
- (2) **Minimum Players on Large Fields (U13 - U19):** Games on large fields may not begin with fewer than seven (7) players on each team. After a game has started, it may not continue with fewer than seven (7) players.

(3) **Player Eligibility to Play:** Every player who attends at least one (1) scheduled practice each week must play at least one half (1/2) of that weeks' scheduled game. Goalkeeper players at the U9 and U10 levels must play at least two quarters in field positions in addition to playing one quarter in the goalkeeper position. Please refer to the Policy Clarifications for Loudoun Soccer Coaches section for additional details.

(4) **Goalkeepers:**

- (a) There will be no goalkeepers on U4, U5, U6, U7, or U8 teams. Please refer to the Policy Clarifications for Loudoun Soccer Coaches section for additional details.
- (b) Goalkeepers on U9 and U10 teams must be changed each quarter of the game. **No goalkeeper will be permitted to play more than one quarter in a particular game.**
- (c) Goalkeepers on U11 and U12 teams must be changed each half of the game. **No goalkeeper will be permitted to play more than one half in a particular game.**
- (d) Goalkeepers on U13 – U19 teams are allowed to play in that position for the entire game. However, although not required, **Loudoun Soccer strongly encourages that no individual goalkeeper play in that position more than one half in a particular game.**

The Loudoun Soccer Board, at its discretion, may modify these game sizes in order to accommodate the actual number of registered players in a particular age group. If done, these modifications would be made prior to the first game of the particular season and proper notice shall be given to all affected individuals.

**B. Select (Travel) league players may not play on Loudoun Soccer SFL or House League teams.**

**C. Free substitution will be permitted in U6\*, U11, U12, U13, U14, U16 and U19 games. Within games at those age levels, free substitution may only occur as follows:**

- (1) Prior to a throw-in, in their favor; the opposing team can make a substitution if the team given the throw-in is making a substitution.
- (2) Prior to a goal-kick in either team's favor;
- (3) After a goal by either team;
- (4) At game half time;
- (5) After a player injury on either team, and then only after the referee stops play. Teams may only substitute one player for each injured player, with the other team also being allowed to substitute an equal number of players as the injured team, even if no injuries occur on the other team.

\* U6 teams play under a dual field format. Free Substitutions should be used to balance play out between both fields. As there are not always clear stops in play at the U6 level, substituting should be done at the discretion of the coaches.

**Procedure for Free Substitution (U11- U19):** The following procedure shall be used when performing a free substitution during a game:

- (1) The Coach performing the substitution will gather team members who will be substituting for players on the field at the substitution entry/exit area (i.e., 10 yards along touch-line from the midfield line on their team's respective side of the field).
- (2) At an appropriate dead ball situation (see C above), the coach will verbally and otherwise signal to the center referee that he wishes a substitution to be made.
- (3) Upon receiving permission from the center referee, the substitutes will enter the field of play to replace the players being substituted for. If permission is not given, no substitution can be made at that time.
- (4) The players being substituted for will exit the field of play through the substitution entry/exit area defined in (1).
- (5) When the last player being substituted for has departed the field, the center referee will restart the game.

**Note:** Both Assistant Referees will give the flag signal for substitution once the center referee gives permission for the substitution. The linesman on the teams' side of the field of play will move to the vicinity of the substitution entry/exit area to supervise the substitution. Once the Referee has given permission and begun the substitution, the AR's may lower their flags.

**Note:** Players substituted for during a game may be allowed to reenter the game during a subsequent substitution.

**Note:** Free substitution **will not** be permitted in U7, U8, U9, and U10 games, except for the welfare of the players during extreme heat conditions or injury. For the U7, U8, U9, and U10 games, substitutions will only be allowed at the first dead ball situation midway through each half (i.e., during quarter breaks), unless a "blow-out" situation has developed in U7 or U8 matches. For actions and substitutions during blow-out situations see paragraph F below. Should play continue past the midway point of the half without a dead ball situation, the referee will stop play for the quarter break at a non-critical point. The halftime break will be no less than (5) minutes and substitutes may be made as described above.

**D. Play Balance (U7 through U12 age groups).** In the event that one or both, teams do not have a full complement of players with which to field a team (e.g., 6 players for U10), the number of players on each team will be "equalized" for that particular game. This equalization must be accomplished in one of two ways:

- (1) The team having more team members (i.e., players and substitutes) lends some of them to the opposing team in order to make the two sides equal.
- (2) The team having more team members elects to "play down"; that is, to field only the same number of players as the team having the shortage in players.

It is recommended that alternative (1) above be implemented. Either alternative (1) or alternative (2) must be implemented in the circumstance described here. This rule applies to all Loudoun Soccer House League age levels in both the spring and the fall season.

For Loudoun Soccer House league games during the regular season, the intent is to have games whenever possible. Therefore, whenever possible, during the regular season the play balance rule shall be used to field two teams capable of meeting the minimum player requirements for that level of play. Games shall not be abandoned due to lack of players on one team unless applying the play balance rule does not produce two teams with the minimum number of players required. If a team loses a player due to injury, and it reduces the number of players on the field (no other players available), then the opposing team should also “play down” (see (2) above). In the case of a player receiving a red card, the carded player cannot be replaced and the opposing team is not required to play down in order to achieve balance. This statement does not apply to the competitive Loudoun Soccer tournaments at the end of each season.

**E. Play Balance (U13 through U19 age groups).** In the event that one team does not have a full complement of players with which to field a team (11), the opposing team is encouraged to “play down” to the same number of players as the smaller team in order to equalize the game environment. If one team only has seven players, the opposing team is required to play no more than nine players. If one team only has eight players, the opposing team is required to play no more than ten players. If one team has nine or ten players, the other team may play all eleven players if the play down option is not employed.

**F. Substitutions during potential “Blow-out” Situations in U7, U8 and U9 matches.**

(1) Immediately after a team has scored and the score differential has reached four (4) goals, the referee shall inform the coach of the leading team that a blow-out situation is about to occur, and allow the team who is behind to add one (1) additional field player. This addition shall be completed before the kick-off can take place. Only the team behind may add a player. No other players may be substituted until an authorized substitution opportunity has been reached.

(2) The team behind may continue to play with five (5) field players until such time as the score differential reaches two (2) goals. Immediately after the team has scored and the score differential has been reduced to two goals, the referee shall inform the coaches that the team with five (5) players must remove a field player from the field of play. This removal shall be completed before the kick-off can take place. Only the team behind may remove a player. Unless another substitution opportunity has been executed under normal substitution circumstances, the player who came on, as the fifth player, shall be the player removed. No other players may be substituted or removed until an authorized substitution opportunity has been reached.

(3) In the event that the game again enters a potential “Blow-out” situation, the actions in subparagraphs F.(1) and F.(2) shall again be used to mitigate the event.

## LAW 4: THE PLAYER'S EQUIPMENT

The mandatory field equipment that a player must wear consists of a Loudoun Soccer approved jersey or shirt, shorts (of player choice), socks (that cover the entire shin-guard), shin-guards, and soccer footwear (no metal or sharp pointed cleats). If a player chooses to wear headgear, it must be approved by USYSA and the game referee. **Loudoun Soccer jersey color for the HOME TEAM is RED.**

**Other Loudoun Soccer Player Personal Equipment Restrictions:** Personal player equipment that Loudoun Soccer considers dangerous to the wearer and others consists of the following:

- (1) Jewelry or projecting metal of any kind on clothing or person.
- (2) Knee, head, arm, thigh, or hip pads which contain stiff (sole) leather, thick fiber, metal, fiberglass or any inflexible materials, **even though they are covered with soft padding.**
- (3) A medical knee brace or cast may be worn if such is wrapped and adequately padded, subject to the NOTE below.

**NOTE: The game referee will have the final decision at the time of play, as to whether any of the aforementioned equipment or medical cast may be worn during a game even if both Coaches agree to allow a player to wear such equipment. The referee's decision is final.**

- (4) Shoes in conformity with soccer standards are the only shoes allowed on the playing field during any game or practice. These may consist of soccer shoes with or without cleats (cleats must be of the molded sole type) or other types of soft material shoes for running, jogging, or walking; however, no hard soled shoes will be permitted. No metal cleat shoes may ever be worn to play Loudoun Soccer-sponsored soccer games. No shoes with sharp edged cleats or toe cleats (defined as a cleat at the forward-most point of the shoe) will be allowed in Loudoun Soccer. Football, baseball and turf shoes may not meet the requirements of soccer shoes. As soccer is a game where the feet come up off the ground, special care will be taken to ensure the shoes are legal and meet soccer specifications.
- (5) Shin-guards **MUST** be worn during practice and games; **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

## LAW 5: THE REFEREE

- (1) **U7/U8 Micro Field Games.** Loudoun Soccer may provide one (1) USSF certified referee for each game, depending on availability.
- (2) **U9 through U19 Games.** Loudoun Soccer will provide one (1) USSF certified referee for each game.

### **Referee Does Not Appear:**

- (1) **U7/U8 Games:** If an assigned referee fails to appear at the Field of Play within 15 minutes after the scheduled starting time for the game, the **teams by mutual consent** may:
  - (a) Appoint a referee.
  - (b) Have one coach from each team referee one half of the field each.

- (2) **U9 through U19 Games:** If an assigned referee fails to appear at the Field of Play within fifteen (15) minutes after the scheduled starting time for the game, the teams by mutual consent may appoint a referee.

## **LAW 6: THE ASSISTANT REFEREES**

- (1) **U7/U8 Micro Field.** Club (i.e., volunteer) Assistant Referees (ARs) may be used.
- (2) **U9/U10/U11/U12 Small Field Games.** Club (i.e., volunteer) ARs may be used by the Loudoun Soccer-assigned referee for that game.
- (3) **U14, U16 and U19 Large Field Games.** USSF-certified neutral ARs will be assigned by Loudoun Soccer to assist the Loudoun Soccer-assigned referee for that game.

## **LAW 7: GAME DURATION**

Duration of games is to be as follows:

- (1) **U7 through U10.....40 minutes**, with a two-minute break at each quarter, and a five-minute break at the half. Player substitutions may only occur during these breaks, unless a potential “blow-out” situation exists in U7 or U8 matches. For actions and substitutions during a potential “blow-out” situation, see Law 3, paragraph F.
- (2) **U11 .....50 minutes**, with a five-minute break at the half; free substitutions
- (3) **U12..... 60 minutes**, with a five-minute break at the half; free substitutions
- (4) **U13 / U14..... 70 minutes**, with a five-minute break at the half; free substitutions
- (5) **U16 / U19..... 80 minutes**, with a five-minute break at the half; free substitutions

## **LAW 8: THE START AND RESTART OF PLAY**

**A game may be suspended if:**

- (1) A team fails to field enough players to start the game within 15 minutes of the scheduled start time (see Law 3 modifications).
- (2) In the opinion of the referee, a team coach, player or spectator causes or participates in a situation which tends to make a travesty of the game;
- (3) In the opinion of the referee, a team coach, player or spectator participates in an unsportsmanlike conduct of such magnitude to warrant suspending the game;
- (4) Any game reaching the half time shall be declared a completed game if it has to be stopped because of weather or other unforeseen circumstances. Note that Loudoun Soccer procedures permit the Loudoun Soccer Executive Board (EB) to review game suspensions and that the EB may determine if a game should be replayed in its entirety, resumed at the point of suspension, or declared a forfeit.

## LAW 9: THE BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY

*No Loudoun Soccer Modifications*

## LAW 10: THE METHOD OF SCORING

- (1) **Scoring a game that is forfeited:**
  - a) The official score for a scoreless game declared a forfeit will be one to zero, in favor of the offended team.
  - b) The official score for a game in which the leading team forfeits will be one to zero in favor of the offended team.
  - c) The official score for a game in which the team behind forfeits shall be the same as the score was at the time the game is forfeited.

## LAW 11: OFFSIDE

- (1) **U7 / U8 Play:** No offside will be called.
- (2) **U9 through U19 Play:** The normal FIFA offside rules apply. Only blatant offside situations will be called at the U9 level.

## LAW 12: FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

- (1) **Cautioned Player Suspension:** A player receiving a caution (i.e., shown the yellow card) may be removed from the field of play at the discretion of the player's coach at the time the caution is issued (and with permission granted by the referee). The player's coach may immediately substitute another player for the cautioned player only. If this option is exercised, the opposing team's Coach may also substitute for one player.

**Note:** A player who is ejected from a game (i.e., shown the red card) cannot be replaced, and the team is required to continue with one less player for the remainder of that game.

- (2) **Coach or Spectator Misconduct.** In order to discourage violent or unsportsmanlike conduct exhibited by Coaches or Spectators, the Referee will have the following powers:

**Coach Misconduct.** A Coach shall be Cautioned (i.e., shown a yellow card) as an official indication that he/she is guilty of unsportsmanlike conduct (including actions of dissent) and is liable to be ejected from the game. A Coach shall be ejected (i.e., shown a red card) when the Referee determines that he/she has engaged in either violent misconduct or continued unsportsmanlike conduct. The Referee **is encouraged, but not required**, to warn a Coach about his/her misconduct prior to a Caution or Ejection.

**Spectator Misconduct.** A Coach shall be responsible for any misconduct exhibited by spectators associated with their team. In such instances, a Coach shall be Cautioned (i.e., shown a yellow card) as an official indication that one, or more, of his/her spectators are guilty of unsportsmanlike conduct. A Coach shall be Ejected (i.e., shown a red card) when the Referee determines that one, or more, of his/her spectators has engaged in either violent misconduct or continued unsportsmanlike conduct. The Referee **is encouraged, but not required**, to warn a Coach about his/her spectator misconduct prior to his/her

being Cautioned or Ejected. Note: the intent of this paragraph is to ensure that the Coach, as the central authority figure for the team, exerts proper control over the team's spectators. Note: a Referee, using his/her authority specified in Law V, may also remove spectators from the vicinity of the Field of Play for that game.

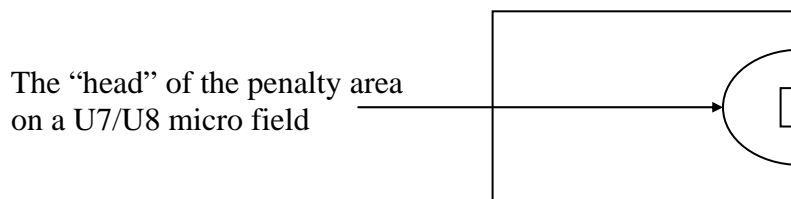
- (3) **Player and Coach “Next Game” Suspension.** A Player or Coach who has been ejected from a game (i.e., shown a red card) shall be automatically ejected from the remainder of the game and the next game. In the event that an ejection occurs during the last game in the regular season, at the discretion of the R&D Committee the ejected player, coach, or spectator will be suspended for either: (1) the first game of the Loudoun Soccer end-of-season tournament or (2) the first game of the next Loudoun Soccer regular season, as appropriate.
- (4) **Ejection Reporting Requirements.** In instances where a Player or Coach has been ejected from a game (i.e., shown a red card), the Referee shall make a verbal report (e.g., phone call) of the ejection(s) to the Referee Coordinator the same day that the ejection(s) occurred. In addition to the verbal report, the Referee shall include an explanation of the ejection(s) in his/her game report (i.e., in the comment section of the game card).
- (5) **Caution Reporting Requirements.** In instances where Players or Coaches have been cautioned in a game (i.e., shown a yellow card), the Referee shall include an explanation of the Caution(s) in his/her game report (i.e., in the comment section of the game card).
- (6) **Slide Tackling (U7 through U12 age groups only).** Slide tackling by U7 through U12 players in Loudoun Soccer is prohibited. Its usage shall be considered a form of dangerous play and result in the award of an indirect free kick (IFK) to the opposing team. Please refer to the Policy Clarifications for Loudoun Soccer Coaches section for additional details.

### LAW 13: FREE KICKS

**U7 and U8 Play:** Any indirect free-kick awarded to the attacking team less than 3 yards from the opponent's goal mouth (i.e., that portion of the goal line between the two goal posts) shall be taken from a point 3 yards from the goal mouth on a line perpendicular to the goal line and going through the point of infraction (i.e., going through where the foul occurred).

### LAW 14: THE PENALTY KICK

**U7 and U8 Play:** Law 14 does apply to U7 and U8 play. The restart for one of the ten (10) “direct free kick-type” fouls that is flagrantly committed by the defending team in its own penalty area shall be a penalty kick taken from the head of the semi-circular penalty area into an open goal. The “head” of the semi-circular penalty area is shown in the figure below.



The restart for one of the ten “direct free kick-type” fouls committed by the defending team in their own penalty area that is not flagrant shall be an indirect free kick where the penal foul occurred, subject to the conditions of LAW XIII.

## **LAW 15: THE THROW IN**

- (1) **U7 and U8 Play:** Throw-ins are replaced with kick-ins by placing the ball on the touchline at the point where the ball left the field and allowing the team gaining possession to kick the ball into the field of play. This kick is treated as an indirect kick, so another player must touch the ball before a goal can be scored and before the kicker can touch the ball again.
- (2) **U9 and U10 Play:** Each player is given two (2) chances to correctly throw-in the ball. After an incorrect throw-in on the second chance, change of possession occurs. The Referee may temporarily suspend this rule if in his/her opinion a team abuses the second chance privilege. **Only one (1) chance** is given **in U11, U12 and large field games**.

## **LAW 16: THE GOAL KICK**

**U7 and U8 Play:** Goal kicks shall be taken at one of the two Goal Kick Marks located within the penalty area belonging to the team taking the goal kick. These marks are located 3 yards from the center of the end line and 4 yards into the field of play from the end line.

## **LAW 17: THE CORNER KICK**

*No Loudoun Soccer Modifications*

## **POLICY CLARIFICATIONS FOR LOUDOUN SOCCER COACHES**

Loudoun Soccer is providing this document to coaches as a means of emphasizing particular points of concern with issues that often arise during a season. This advice mostly deals with topics related to good sportsmanship in order to set standards that Loudoun Soccer coaches should strive to achieve.

### **No Goal Keepers in U7 and U8 Matches**

At the U7 and U8 levels, Loudoun Soccer does not allow goalkeepers to be played. Using smaller goals compensates for the lack of a keeper. This rule is intended to provide the maximum opportunity for the players to get touches on the ball in both offensive and defensive dynamic play. Players are not to position themselves as goalkeepers in their own end of the field, and coaches should not allow them to do so. Loudoun Soccer wants its coaches to enforce the “no goalkeeper” rule as an expression of good sportsmanship and to promote maximum player development.

### **Advice to Loudoun Soccer Coaches**

Coaches need to encourage their defensive players to play out from the goal and meet attackers before they get close to the goal. When the ball is in the offensive half of the field, defensive players should be closer to the midfield line so that they have more opportunities to participate in the action. Having one player stand directly in front of the goal while the rest of his or her teammates are at the other end of the field does not help that player develop good soccer skills. Coaches who encounter another coach who positions a player directly in front of the goal should remind that coach that Loudoun Soccer considers this action to be unsportsmanlike conduct, and ask him to move his players away from the goal.

### **Referee Actions**

Referees have been instructed to warn a coach if he/she is violating the spirit of the game by allowing players to play as goalkeepers. If the coach refuses to correct the problem, and his/her players continue to guard the goal, then the Referee will note that fact in the Referee Game Report. The Referee Game Report will be submitted within 48 hours so the assignors can contact the appropriate league officials who will take the necessary corrective action against the offending coach or coaches.

### **METHODS TO AVOID “BLOW-OUT” GAMES**

Even though Age Group Coordinators make every attempt to balance the relative strength of teams in a particular age group, there are frequently cases where relatively weak teams play games against considerably stronger teams. Running up the score by a margin greater than five goals lessens the enjoyment of the game for the opposing team, and in an effort to promote good sportsmanship, Loudoun Soccer prohibits its coaches from “blowing-out” other teams in all age

groups. While Loudoun Soccer recognizes it is hard to keep the stronger team engaged in the game, it is much more important that they learn good sportsmanship. Please note that only at the U7, U8 and U9 age groups are more players added on the field when a “blow-out” occurs (see Law 3 Paragraph F in the Loudoun Soccer Modifications to FIFA Laws of the Game).

### **Advice to Loudoun Soccer Coaches**

There are several methods that coaches of stronger teams can employ when it appears that the game score is getting out of hand before the goal differential is 5.

- Have all players exclusively use their “weaker foot” for passing, ball control, and shooting
- Designate players who have not yet scored goals as the only ones who are allowed to shoot (other players have to feed them the ball).
- Place stronger players in primarily defensive positions and encourage them to pass to the weaker players.
- Set special conditions for their players before they are allowed to score (i.e., complete three to five passes before shooting).
- Limit the number of players in your offensive half of the field.

### **Referee Actions**

Referees have been instructed to remind coaches of the “blow out” rule so they can make every attempt to prevent the situation from worsening. If a coach refuses to correct the problem then the Referee will note that fact in the Referee Game Report. The Referee Game Report will be submitted within 48 hours so that the assignors can contact the appropriate league officials who will take the necessary corrective action against the offending coach. During a potential “Blow-out” situation in U7 or U8 matches, Referees will use the procedures in Law 3, Paragraph F to attempt to mitigate the “Blow-out.” Actions taken by a coach to avoid the blow out will still be a matter of record in the Referee’s game report.

All U13-U19 teams are expected to abide by this rule. While enforcement is only possible on Loudoun fields, it is expected that all teams carry the spirit of good sportsmanship with them as they match with teams outside of Loudoun County.

### **LATE PLAYER ADDITIONS TO TEAMS**

Coaches are often approached by parents at the beginning of a season and asked to let their unregistered sons or daughters play on their teams. Coaches should never allow any unregistered players to participate on their teams, or make promises to parents regarding player placements. Loudoun Soccer has a first-come/first-serve policy that is strictly enforced. Any team openings must be filled by players who have registered and are already on a waiting list. Coaches should never accept late registration forms and fee payments from parents. They should instead instruct the parents to mail the forms to the Loudoun Soccer PO Box for processing by the League Administrator.

## **PAID COACHES/TRAINERS**

Loudoun Soccer Recreational Coaches and/or parents shall not hire paid coaches or trainers for Recreational or All-Star teams. Those interested in higher-level training, are encouraged to contact the Director of Coaching at CoachEdu@loudoun soccer.com. The Director of Coaching will assist you in determining your exact needs and work with you to develop a plan to meet those needs.

## **EQUALIZATION OF PLAYING TIME**

Loudoun Soccer modification to FIFA Law 3 states that players who attend at least one practice per week must play at least half of the next game. Coaches should strive to equalize playing time in each game, or between two successive games in order to give all players an equal amount of game- time experience. Providing excessive playing time to the best players on a House or SFL team in order to win games is considered to be unsportsmanlike conduct on the part of the coach. For U9 or U10 games that require goalkeepers to be changed at each quarter, players who play the goalkeeper position must be allowed to play at least two other quarters of the game in other defensive or offensive positions.

## **RULES OF CONDUCT VIOLATIONS**

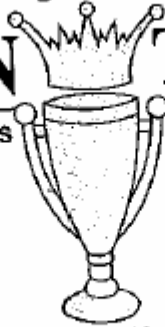
Each season Loudoun Soccer receives a number of complaints from coaches or parents who have experienced unsportsmanlike conduct during a game or tournament. Loudoun Soccer expects its coaches to behave in accordance with the conduct policies that are documented in the rules and procedures guide, and to ensure that their team players and parents do so as well. If coaches experience any serious unsportsmanlike conduct from an opposing team during the season, they should do the following:

- Calmly request the referee to note the incident in the after-game report
- Attempt to learn the name(s) and affiliation of the offending person(s)
- Document the incident in an E-Mail message and to the Vice President and Referee Dir. Their email addresses can be found on the website.
- Be specific in documenting the incident (i.e. names, dates, times, field location, etc.)

For cases involving SFL teams from other clubs, information regarding unsportsmanlike conduct should be sent to the Loudoun Soccer SFL Commissioner. SFL Commissioner will follow up with the SFL and representatives from the other clubs to make sure the complaint is addressed.

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