**Law 2: Ball:**

Size 4. The home team provides game balls.

**Law 3: Number of Players:**

The Maximum number of players on the field at the start of the match must be seven (7) per team, one of whom must be a goalkeeper. The minimum number of players will be no less than five (5) per team.

For the sake of good sportsmanship, if one team is short of players, for example, only six (6) players attend the game, then the opposing coach may also play with six (6) but is NOT required to do so.

For co-ed teams, at least one (1) female must always be on the field. If only one female is available at a particular game, she may be subbed in and out to avoid exhaustion. If no females are available for a specific game, this rule does not apply.

**Substitutions:**

Play must stop during substitutions, and the substituting coach must signal to the referee their intention to do so and wait for the referee to acknowledge the substitution. There are unlimited substitutions, and either team may substitute players at any dead ball that has gone out of bounds, including corner kicks. Teams must NOT substitute a player in to take a corner kick. No substitutions will be allowed on a free kick. Substitutes only enter the field of play after the replaced players have left the field, and substitutes must enter at the halfway line. Other players may change places with the goalkeeper and are considered a substitution. Keeper substitutions require notification to the referee, even at halftime.

You cannot sub on the fly!

**Law 4: Equipment:**

Shin guards are mandatory and must be covered entirely by socks and adequately sized to provide reasonable protection. You must put the shin guard on first, then put the socks over it. Putting the sock on first and folding the socks over the shin guard is prohibited. Tape or other similar material may be applied externally to the socks.

Cleats are optional when playing on artificial turf fields. Baseball cleats, football cleats, or other types of footwear with metal or toe studs are not allowed.

The players' jersey colors should differ from the opposing team’s jersey. If a conflict arises, the home team is responsible for providing pennies.

The goalkeeper's jersey must be significantly different from the color of any other player, or a pennie must be worn.

All jewelry and metal or hard plastic objects (i.e. barrettes, beads, etc) are strictly prohibited.

Some items are at the referee's discretion based on safety considerations (e.g., leg braces, soft and hard casts). In the case of casts, come prepared with some padding and tape. To be permitted to play, the referee must be satisfied that the cast will not be dangerous to other players on the field.

**Law 5: The Referee:**

At a minimum, games played must be supervised by an official referee or a person designated to act on the referee's behalf.

The absence of an official referee is not a reason for canceling a game.

The referee's authority begins when they arrive at the facility and ends when they depart.

Their power of penalizing extends to offenses committed when play has been suspended when the ball is out of play, and immediately before and after the game.

Their decision on points of fact connected with the play is final regarding the game’s result.

Referees are expected to briefly explain the infraction to the player and coach if asked to do so.

**Law 6: The Assistant Referee:**

Assistant referees are not required.

**Law 7: Length of Game:**

U10 – Two (2) 20-minute halves

The halftime interval must be at most five (5) minutes. The referee controls the official time.

**Law 8: Start and Restart of Game:**

Restarts should be per FIFA rules.

An uncontested drop ball shall restart the game when the referee stops the match for an injured player to be assisted or due to any unusual situation (e.g., baby on the field or the ball deflects off the referee). A goal scored directly from a drop ball will be disallowed.

For the sake of good sportsmanship, it is highly recommended that the team in possession of the ball kick it out of bounds to force a stop in play when an injury occurs on the field. On the restart, the team throwing the ball inbounds will then throw it to the opposing team. The referee is only required to stop the game in the case of a head injury; all other injuries may be stopped at his/her discretion.

After the halftime break, players will switch sides on the field to play in the opposite direction.

**Law 9: Ball in and Out of Play:**

Conforms to FIFA with the following exceptions:

**Goal Kicks:**

All opponents must retreat to the build-out line during goal kicks, regardless of whether the goalkeeper or a teammate takes the goal kick. The goalkeeper's teammates need not retreat to the build-out line. Restarts from within the goal area are not eligible for active play by the opposing team until the ball crosses outside the penalty area or is intentionally played by a teammate of the team in possession.

**Keeper in possession inside the penalty area:**

The ball is still live, and neither team’s players need to retreat to the build-out line.

Goalkeepers can pass the ball (only from inside the penalty area) on the ground using their feet, make an over-arm throw, or roll the ball into play when it is picked up or caught during regular play.

If the keeper places the ball on the ground after gaining possession with their hands, the ball is now live, and the opposing team can attack.

**Punts and Drop Kicks:**

Punts and drop kicks are not permitted. If a goalkeeper punts or drop kicks the ball, an indirect free kick should be awarded to the opposing team on the center spot (halfway line).

**Law 10: Method of Scoring:**

3 Points Win

1 Point Draw

0 Points Loss

Any forfeited game will be scored as a 2-0 win for the opposing team.

In the event of a tie in the standings, the following tiebreakers will be used:

1. Head-to-head

2. Most Shut Outs

3. Goals against

4. Goals for

5. Coin Toss

**Law 11: Offside:**

The blue build-out line will denote where offside offenses can be called. Players cannot be penalized for an offside offense between the halfway and build-out line, but they can be penalized for an offside offense between the build-out and goal lines. Although the build-out line is not usually used for U12 because we are playing small-sided (7v7) games on U10-sized fields, *this allows the lesser experienced players to develop by building out from the back.*

**Law 12: Fouls and Misconduct:**

Conform to FIFA with the following exceptions.

The opposing team will be at least seven (7) yards away from the ball for starts and re-starts.

When a foul is committed, and the referee does not blow the whistle immediately, they are waiting (a couple of seconds) to see if an advantage can be awarded to the fouled team. The referee will typically extend one or both arms in the direction of advancement. This arm signal means an advantage is awarded to the fouled team. If possession or advantage is lost during the waiting period or shortly after the advantage is signaled, the referee can award the appropriate free kick.

Every situation is unique, and although the following examples may help give a general idea of how advantage may be applied, ALL advantage decisions are at the referee's discretion. No player or team has a fundamental right to receive an advantage after a foul has been committed.

**Examples:**

The referee extends their arms, signaling advantage, and the attacking team immediately loses possession. A free kick is awarded for the initial foul.

The referee signals for advantage, and the ball is played to a teammate who loses possession after being adjudged to have gained possession. The foul is not awarded, and the play continues.

The foul is committed; a teammate attempts to possess the ball and loses control, or the ball rolls out of bounds. The referee waits to determine if an advantage can be applied; if not, a free kick is awarded for the initial infraction.

The foul is committed, and the ball slowly rolls toward the boundary line. A teammate controls the ball, dribbling forward, and then loses control. The referee waits, signals for advantage, a foul is not awarded, and play continues.

The foul is committed, and the ball is played safely backward to a teammate who begins the attack. The referee can award an advantage or a free kick at his discretion.

**Slide Tackling:**

No slide tackling is allowed. Slide tackles will be penalized with an indirect free kick to the opposing team.

**Heading of the Ball:**

No heading of the ball is allowed. The intentional heading of the ball will be called a foul, and an indirect free kick will be given. Play may be stopped after a ball strikes a player's head to assess possible injury at the referee's discretion.

**Law 13: Free Kicks:**

**Direct Free Kick:**

A direct free kick is awarded to the opposing team when a player commits a foul. This can include tripping, pushing, or holding an opponent and dangerous tackles, handballs, and other infractions.

The player taking the direct free kick must place the ball on the ground at the spot where the foul occurred.

The opposing team must be at least 7 yards away from the ball until it is kicked.

After the referee’s whistle, the player taking the kick can shoot directly at the goal or pass the ball to a teammate.

If the ball goes out of play or a goal is scored, the game will resume with a goal kick or kick-off, respectively.

**Indirect Free Kick:**

An indirect free kick is awarded for non-foul offenses such as offside, obstruction without contact, dangerous play (high foot, etc), and other technical offenses.

The ball must be stationary when the kick is taken, and the referee will blow their whistle to signal the start of play.

The opposing team must be at least 7 yards away from the ball until it is kicked.

The kicker must touch the ball before another player can touch it, and the ball must visibly move before being considered in play. Should the kicker play the ball a second time before it is touched by a teammate or opponent, an indirect free kick will be awarded to the opponents. A goal may not be scored directly from an indirect free kick without a player other than the kicker touching the ball - this can include a touch from an opponent, e.g., if it hits the goalkeeper before entering the goal, a goal will be awarded. If the ball enters the goal directly from an indirect free kick a goal kick is awarded.

**Law 14: Penalty Kick:**

Conform to FIFA.

**Law 15: Throw In:**

Conform to FIFA. No redoes!

**Law 16: Goal Kick:**

A goal kick is awarded when the ball crosses the goal line and is touched last by the attacking team. The kick can be taken from anywhere inside the goal area by anyone on the goalkeeper’s team.

**Law 17: Corner Kick:**

A corner kick is awarded when the ball crosses the goal line and is last touched by a defensive player. The kick is taken from the corner on the side nearest to where the ball went out (as indicated by the direction of the referee’s arm). The kicker may not touch the ball again unless it first touches another player. Once it has been kicked and moved, the ball is deemed in play.

Corner kicks will follow FIFA laws, except that the opposing team must be 7 yards away from the ball when kicked (as opposed to the normal distance of 10 yards). This is due to playing on a much smaller field.

**Sidelines:**

The home team's players, coaches, and spectators will sit on the north side of the field, and the away team’s players, coaches, and spectators will sit on the south side of the field.

All spectators shall remain 6 feet from the sidelines and halfway line during the game.

No spectators or coaches will be permitted along the goal lines or behind the goal.

**Playing Time:**

Each player must play at least 50% of the total playing time. If a player refuses to go on the field, a parent must be notified to avoid conflict between parents and coaches about playing time. The only exception to this rule is if a player has disciplinary issues or is not attending practice regularly (without coach notification) and shows up for games expecting to play. If there is a disciplinary or no-show issue, playing time must be discussed with the parents.

**Sportsmanship:**

If a goal differential exceeds five (5), the team with fewer goals MUST add another player. The opposing team MUST remove a player if there is no player to add. If the goal differential exceeds seven (7), the winning team WILL NOT score from inside the penalty area. As the goal difference decreases, the extra player will be removed, or the removed player will be added back in, and the team with the higher score may again score from inside the penalty area. The referee is not responsible for notifying the relevant coach when this goal differential is met. The coaches are responsible for ensuring that players are added and removed per this rule. Any goals scored after the seventh will not be used in tie-break calculations.

***Coaches are responsible for the conduct of their assistant coaches, players, parents, and spectators. No coach, parent, player, or spectator shall yell, belittle, degrade, or threaten the referee, opposing coach, players, or fans. The referee has the authority to issue a yellow or red card to any coach, parent, spectator, or player for continued misconduct after a warning. If a coach is red-carded and no assistant coach is available, the game will be called in favor of the opponent. If a coach, parent, or spectator refuses to leave the field after being issued a red card, the referee will call the relevant authorities. Should physical contact be directed at the referee, the club will determine whether the person will be allowed at any future games, and a police report will be filed. No coaches or fans shall run up and down the sidelines during the game. After the game is over, players and coaches will line up and shake hands with the opposing team and referees along the centerline.***