



Hagerstown Field House: Youth Soccer League Rules and Policies

The Players

- **U9 & Up:** 7v7, including a goalkeeper
- **Minimum Players:** A team must have two fewer players than the listed number to start and continue play.
- **Roster:**
 - Players and coaches must be on the Field House roster.
 - All participants are subject to the authority and jurisdiction of the Referee.
 - Non-players must be on the spectator side of the field.
- **Coaches:**
 - Youth teams must have at least one coach who is over 18 years of age.
 - The coach is responsible for the actions of the team, both on the field and in the team area.
- **League Fees:**
 - A team with a player who has not paid their league fees will forfeit the game.
- **Substitutions:**
 - Teams may substitute players freely, as long as it doesn't interfere with the flow of the game.
 - A player must exit the field before a substitute enters.
 - The Referee must be notified if a goalkeeper is being substituted.
- **Double Rostering:**
 - Players may be double-rostered on teams in different divisions (leagues), but cannot play down an age group.

The Players' Equipment

- **Uniforms:**
 - Players must wear their team's uniform, consisting of matching color jerseys or t-shirts.
 - Goalkeepers must wear jerseys that differentiate them from their team, the opposing team, and the referee.
 - If both teams have similar-colored jerseys, the home team is required to change into a non-similar color jersey before the start of the match.
 - If the home team does not have multiple jerseys, they will be required to wear pennies provided by the HFH.
- **Team Colors:**
 - **Home Team:** Wears light-colored jerseys.
 - **Away Team:** Wears dark-colored jerseys.
- **Ball Size:**
 - **Size 3** for U8 and below

- **Size 4** for U9 to U12
- **Size 5** for U13 and above
- **Shin Guards:**
 - Age/size-appropriate shin guards are **required** for all players.
- **Footwear:**
 - Flats, turf shoes, or molded cleats are recommended.
 - **Metal or screw-in cleats are not permitted.**
- **Jewelry/Accessories:**
 - Jewelry and other accessories are prohibited, except for medical alert items.

The Referee

- **Authority:**
 - The decisions of the Referee regarding facts connected with play and interpretations of the rules are **final**.
- **Restarts:**
 - Restarts do not require a whistle except at a **ceremonial restart, penalty kick**, or when a player is carded.
 - The whistle may be used at any time at the referee's discretion.

The Duration of the Game

- **Regulation Time:**
 - A regulation game consists of two halves of 20 minutes each, with a two-minute halftime.
 - There are no time-outs.
- **Running Clock:**
 - Except in the case of an unusual delay, as determined by the referee, the game clock counts down continuously through each half or overtime period.
- **Forfeits:**
 - A team that cannot field the minimum number of players within **five minutes** of the official start time of the match will forfeit the match.
 - The score will be recorded as a **4-0 victory** for the opposing team.
- **Game Cancellations:**
 - If an opponent cancels a game or does not show, the other team may use the scheduled game time for their own use.
 - There are **no refunds** for games canceled by opponents.
 - If a team must cancel, they should call the Field House as soon as possible to notify the referees and/or the opposing team.
 - Canceling a game not only short-changes your team but also negatively affects your scheduled opponent.

The Start and Restart of Play

- **Kickoff:**
 - A kickoff from the center mark starts play at the beginning of each half and after every goal.
 - A player who starts the play may not touch the ball a second time until it touches another player.

- Home Team takes the kickoff for the First Half and any overtime period.
- Visiting Team takes the kickoff for the Second Half.
- The Visiting Team chooses their starting defensive end.
- **Restarts:**
 - Restarts occur by **kickoff, free kick, goalkeeper distribution, or dropped ball.**
 - Except for kickoffs, or as provided below, restarts occur within **three feet** from the spot of the ball at the point of stoppage.
- **Free Kicks:**
 - A team receives a free kick after stoppages other than when a dropped ball or goalkeeper distribution is required.
 - Before taking a free kick, the ball must be stationary.
 - All opposing players must be at least **15 feet** from the spot of the free kick (or, if within 15 feet of the opponent's goal, along the goal line).
 - The spot of the free kick is as provided above, except:
 - **(a) Within Own Penalty Arch:** From any spot within the arch.
 - **(b) Within Opponent's Penalty Arch:** At the **Free Kick Mark** ("Top of the Arch").
 - **(c) Delayed Penalty:**
 - According to the ensuing stoppage, as normally administered, or
 - If the defending team obtains possession of the ball during play, at the spot of the original offense.
 - **(d) Kick-In:** From the point on the touch line nearest where the ball crossed over the Perimeter Wall.
 - **(e) Three-Line Violation:** From the **Midfield line.** *(There are no offsides in indoor soccer.)*
 - **(f) Superstructure Violation:** From a point near where the violation occurred.
 - **(g) Corner Kicks: Indirect kicks.**
 - **(h) Heading the Ball:**
 - Players in **U12 and below** are not allowed to head the ball.
 - Players in **U13+ divisions** are permitted.
- **Dropped Ball:**
 - If neither team has clear possession of the ball at a stoppage, the referee restarts play with a **Dropped Ball.**
 - A dropped ball inside a **Penalty Arch** takes place at the **Free Kick Mark.**
- **Goalkeeper Distribution:**
 - Play restarts with a **Goalkeeper Distribution** anywhere within the **Penalty Arch** after an attacking player has last touched the ball before crossing an end perimeter wall.
 - **Goalkeepers cannot punt or drop-kick.**

The Ball In And Out Of Play

- A **Three-Line Violation** occurs when a player propels the ball in the air across the two red lines and the halfway line toward the opponent's goal without touching the perimeter wall, another player, or a referee on the field of play. The restart will be at midfield.
- A **Superstructure Violation** occurs when the ball contacts any part of the building above the field of play.
- All field wall glass is considered **in play.**

- The Method of Scoring
 - A team scores a goal when the whole of the ball legally passes over the goal line.
 - A goal may be scored indirectly from a kickoff or restart (all kicks are **indirect** except for Penalty Kicks).
 - The ball must cross the goal line before the buzzer sounds to be scored as a goal.

Fouls and Other Violations

- A Foul occurs if a player:
 - Holds an opponent.
 - Handles the ball (except by the Goalkeeper within his Penalty Arch).
 - Plays in a dangerous manner (e.g., commits boarding or a slide tackle); **No sliding or slide tackling allowed.**
 - Impedes the progress of an opponent ("Obstruction").
 - Prevents the Goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his hands.
- A **Foul** occurs when a player commits the following in a manner that the Referee considers careless, serious, reckless, or involving excessive force:
 - Kicks an opponent.
 - Trips an opponent.
 - Jumps at an opponent.
 - Charges an opponent.
 - Strikes or elbows an opponent.
 - Pushes an opponent.

Unsporting Behavior: A Free Kick results for the following offenses:

- **Leverage:** Using the body of a teammate or any part of the field to gain an advantage.
- **Encroachment:** Entering the protected area of an opposing player taking a free kick (after initial warning).
- **Dissent:**
 - Referee Abuse.
 - Breach of Penalty Area Decorum.
- **Other:** Behavior that, in the referee's discretion, does not warrant another category of penalty (e.g., taunting, foul language).

Goalkeeper Violations: The opposing team receives a free kick for the following violations by a goalkeeper:

- **Illegal handling:** Bringing the ball from outside of the penalty arch to his hand within it, or receiving the ball again after a goalkeeper distribution without the ball's having first touched another player (e.g., no drop-kicking or bouncing the ball).
- **Pass Back:** Handling the ball, having been passed deliberately and directly to him by a teammate; except that he may handle a ball which a teammate passes to him by the head, chest, or knee and without "trickery" (the use of a wall or foot to flick the ball to a head, chest, or knee before making the pass).
- **5-Seconds:** Controlling the ball with either his hand or foot inside of his penalty arch for more than five seconds.

Team Violations: The Referee issues a team penalty for the following violations by a team or unidentified person:

- **Leaving Team Bench:** Players leave a team bench to join a fracas or confrontation.
- **Bench Dissent:** After an initial warning, a player or players verbally abuse the referee.
- **Other:** Unsporting behavior, which, in the referee's discretion, does not warrant another category of penalty (e.g., too many players on the field).

Advantage Rule: The referee allows play to continue, notwithstanding the commission of an offense, when the team against which it has been committed will benefit from an existing offensive advantage.

Flagrant Fouls: A penalty kick is awarded for the following fouls committed by a defender in his or her defensive half of the field:

- A **Foul** within the penalty arch or goal for which he receives a time penalty.
- A **Foul** from behind against an attacking player, having control of the ball and one or no defensive players between himself and the goal.
- Any **Foul** where he or she is the last player on the team between the attacking player with the ball and the goal.

Caution Offenses: The Referee issues a yellow card for reckless/serious fouls and:

- **Illegal handling.**
- **Goalkeeper endangerment.**
- **Boarding.**
- **Provoking altercation:** Making physical contact with an opponent (e.g., pushing or poking), short of fighting, or using the ball in doing so.
- **Unsporting behavior by any non-player personnel.**

Ejection Offenses: A person receives a red card for fouls, which the referee considers violent or committed with excessive force, and for:

- **Third-time penalty.**
- **Elbowing:** Intentionally elbowing an opponent above the shoulder.
- **Vicious slide tackling:** A tackle from the side or from behind directly into one or both legs of an opponent, seriously endangering him.
- **Fighting.**
- **Leaving the team bench or penalty area** to engage in a fracas or confrontation with the opposition or a game official.

- **Extreme Unsporting Behavior:** Particularly despicable behavior, including spitting at any other person, persistent use of abusive language or behavior toward a game official, or bodily contact with a game official in dissent.

Time Penalties

- The following penalties apply to offenses for which a card is issued (subject to further action by the administrative authority):
 - **Yellow card:** 3-minute Time Penalty and a warning of the possibility of an ejection.
 - **Red card:** 5-minute Time Penalty and ejection.
- Players are designated by their teams to serve time penalties for their team, their goalkeeper, non-player personnel, and teammates who receive red cards. Otherwise, the person who commits a carded offense serves the penalty.
- Players serving time penalties serve their time penalties seated, until their expiration and the referee permits their release.

Short-Handed Play

- For each time penalty being served by a player, his or her team plays with one fewer field player until its expiration; provided that a team may not have fewer than the minimum required, regardless of the number serving time penalties.
- Should a player receive a time penalty while two or more teammates are already in the penalty area, his or her team continues to play with the minimum while he or she joins his teammates in the area.

Exceptions

- **Powerplay Goal:** If a team is scored upon having fewer players on the field of play due to one or more players serving Time Penalties, a player from the team is released from the Penalty Area into the field of play, unless otherwise prohibited, and the player's Penalty or Penalties are wiped out. If the team has two players in the Penalty Area, only the player with the earlier recorded Time Penalty is affected.
- **Multiple Penalties:** If two teammates are serving time penalties when another teammate is penalized, his time penalty does not begin to count down until at least one of the teammates' time penalties has expired and his or her time penalty is next to begin.
- **Simultaneous Ejections:** When two simultaneous red cards carrying the same time penalties are assessed to opposing players, their time penalties are not served.
- **Maximum Time Penalty:** No player may receive more than 5 minutes for penalties arising at the same time on the game clock, irrespective of the number or nature of accumulated offenses or the fact that one or more teammates may be designated to serve such time.
- **End of Game:** All time penalties carry over between periods and expire at the end of the game.

Coach Ejections:

- If a coach is ejected from any match, a referee's report of the incident shall be turned over to the League Director.
- The minimum penalty for an ejection states that the coach shall not be permitted to coach, remain on the player's bench, or in the facility.
- Upon further review, the League will reserve the right to implement a more severe punishment,

including the coach or team's expulsion from the League.

- There are no refunds for expelled players or teams.

Penalty Kicks

- A **Penalty Kick** proceeds the same as a Shootout except:
 - The ball is placed at the free kick mark.
 - The Goalkeeper has both feet on his goal line until the ball is in play.
 - The player taking the penalty kick may not touch the ball again until after it touches another player.

Season Standings

- The determination within the group standings is as follows:
 - **3 points** – Win
 - **1 point** – Tie
 - **0 points** – Loss
- Forfeited games are recorded as a 4-0 loss for the forfeiting team.
- Depending on league size, each team may not play all other teams in the league.
- Playoff seeding is determined by:
 - Overall record
 - Head-to-head competition
 - Points against
 - Points scored/conceded differential
 - Points scored
 - Coin toss