
SOCCER RULES & REGULATIONS

As explained by the Lancaster Youth Soccer Club, Lancaster PA.

www.lysc1.com

Please Note: The rules & regulations contained in the document may have changed since this document was composed. Rules and regulations that pertain to small sided games/teams may vary from what is contained in this document.

The Playing Field

The playing field is rectangular and the touchlines must always be greater than the goal lines. Fields have a minimum & maximum length & width that can be used. EXAMPLE: The field can range from 100 - 130 yards in length, and 50 - 100 yards in width for professional play. Dimensions of the field are smaller for youth soccer. The minimum & maximum sizes depend on the age group and number of players per side.

The Lined Field

Touch Lines - The side lines that run the length of the field.

Goal Lines - The end lines - (where the goals are located). The line running the entire width of the field where the goal is located is referred to as the goal line.

Half Way Line - The line in the center of the field that divides the field in half.

Center Circle - Large circle in the middle of the field. Defending team can not be inside the circle at the kick-off.

Center Spot - The spot where the ball is set for the kick-off.

Penalty Box - The large box in front of the goal. (Referred to as the 18 yard box, or line).

Goal Box - Small box in front of the goal. (Referred to as the 6 yard box, or line).

Corner Arcs - The small arcs on all 4 corners of the field from where corner kicks are taken.

Penalty Arc - The arc directly in front of the penalty box. The opposing team must remain at least 10 yards away from a player taking a free kick, or a penalty kick. The arc is basically the continuation of the 10 yard radius that surrounds the player taking the penalty kick. (from the penalty mark to the outside of the arc is 10 yards)

Penalty Spot - Mark between the goal box & penalty box where penalty kicks are taken.

Penalty Box - The penalty box serves two purposes.

1. If the defending team causes an infraction against the attacking team inside the penalty area, the attacking team is awarded a **penalty kick** (a kick directly into the goal with only the goal keeper to defend the goal). The kick is taken from a mark on the field (penalty spot) that is 1/2- way between the front line of the goal box & the front line of the penalty box. All players with the exception of the goal keeper must be outside the penalty box, and the penalty arc when the kick is taken. The reason for a penalty kick is to discourage the defending team from

"intentionally" causing an infraction to keep the attacking team from scoring at close range (inside the penalty area).

2. **The goal keeper can use his/her hands to pick the ball up** from inside the penalty area. If the ball is kicked into the penalty area by one of the keeper's teammates, the keeper cannot use his/her hands.

Goal Box

The goal box is used for a Goal Kick.

When the attacking team kicks the ball out of bounds (by the ball crossing over the defending team's goal line), the defending team places the ball on the front line of the goal box to kick the ball back into play. The opposing team must be outside of the penalty box, and the ball must travel outside of the penalty box before it can be played.

Playing The Game

The Kick-Off

The ball must travel forward at least the distance (circumference) of the ball, and must be played (touched) by another player before the player who "kicked-off" can touch the ball again.

To Score

The entire ball must pass over the goal line.

Out-Of Bounds

The entire ball must pass over the touch line or goal line to be out of bounds.

Throw-ins

When the ball goes out of bounds along the touch lines, the opposing team throws the ball back into play from where the ball went out of bounds. The player who throws the ball back into play must keep both feet on the ground with both hands on the ball, and the ball must be thrown over his/her head.

Corner Kicks

When the defending team kicks the ball out of bounds at their own goal line, the attacking team is awarded a corner kick. The ball is placed in the arc and the ball is kicked into play by the attacking team. The player kicking the ball into play can not touch the ball after he/she kicks it into play until the ball has been touched by another player.

Free Kicks

A free kick is awarded when an infraction occurs anywhere on the field outside of the penalty boxes. There are two types of free kicks, a **direct** free kick, and an **indirect** free kick. The opposing team must be at least 10 yards from the player taking the free kick.

The type of free kick awarded depends on the type of infraction. Direct kicks are normally awarded if there has been physical contact such as a player being tripped, elbowed, pushed, or held. A handball would be an indirect kick. Keep in mind that soccer is not like basketball when it comes to a foul. *The*

team is awarded the free kick, not the player. In other words, if a player is tripped, the player that was tripped does not have to take the free kick. Any player on the field can take the kick. This is why a coach may utilize a more skilled player to take the kick. The coach is not cheating a player out of the kick like some parents might be thinking - it's a strategic move, not a coach being unfair.

- **Direct Free Kick** - A player can kick the ball directly into the opponents goal to score on a direct kick.
- **Indirect Free Kick** - The player taking the indirect kick can not score directly off of an indirect kick. The ball must be touched by another player first, before it passes into the goal to be counted as a goal. The ball must travel at least the distance of the ball (circumference of the ball) before a teammate can play the ball. The player who takes the free kick can not play the ball again until the ball has been played (touched) by another player.

Challenge

Confronting the opponent to win the ball

Tackle

A challenge & winning the ball from an opponent

Slide Tackle

A challenge to win the ball while sliding on the ground. Although a challenging player might trip the opponent who has the ball, **the "trip" is not a tackle**, and the challenger may be called for tripping. The timing required to execute a "slide tackle" and win the ball without being penalized for tripping, or dangerous play, can be difficult for even advanced players.

The Ref Is In Charge

of not only the soccer field once the game begins, but the immediate area surrounding the soccer field from the time he or she enters the area until he or she leaves the area after the game has ended.

Yellow Card

A warning normally for borderline unsportsmanlike conduct or an accidental infraction that could have caused injury. Two yellow cards equal a red card.

Red Card

Deliberate unsportsmanlike conduct, or a deliberate act that could have or did cause injury. If a player is red carded, he/she must leave the field of play & immediate area surrounding the field. A player that receives a red card is also not allowed to play in the next game. Not only can a ref red card a player, but an unruly coach or a fan. If a red carded coach or fan refuses to leave the field of play area, the ref can stop the game until the person leaves the area. If the person will not vacate the area, the ref can end the game.

Off Sides

as explained by "Fédération Internationale de Football Association" website. <http://www.fifa.com>

[Direct link to the "Laws Of The Game" page](#)

[View A Video That Explains & Shows Offsides \(YouTube\)](#) ◀◀ (Turn On Your Speakers)

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 penalized 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.

An Example Of Off Sides

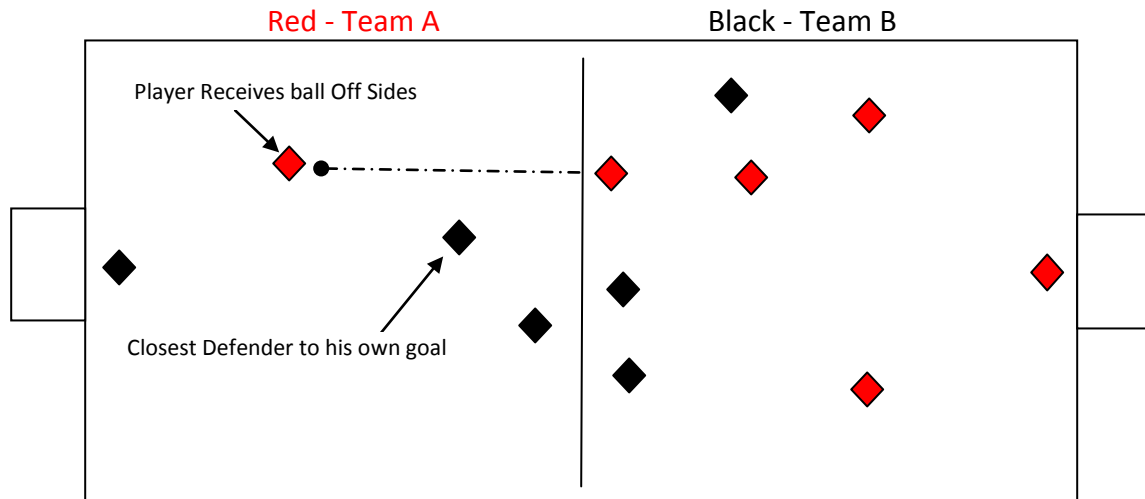
If an attacking player passes the ball to a teammate who's position on the field is closer to the opponents goal than the closest defender is to his own goal, the attacking player who receives the ball would be off sides. Although a player can be in a position that is "technically" off sides, an off sides position does not always constitute an off sides penalty.

See Diagram Below

If a player on team "A" were to pass the ball to his teammate, and this teammate was closer to the opponent's goal than the closest defender on team "B" was to his own goal, the player receiving the ball on team "A" would be off sides if he touched the ball, or interfered with that play. If the player who is in the off sides position does not touch the ball, and, "**in the ref's opinion**", not giving the attacking team an advantage & did not interfere with the play, the ref will not call this player off sides.

OFFSIDE PENALTY

In this diagram, if the red team player receives the ball while he is closer to the opponents goal than the black team player is to his own goal, the red team player would be off sides when he receives the ball.



"IN OFFSIDE POSITION", BUT NOT A PENALTY

In this diagram, although the red team player is well off sides, **as long as he does not play the ball, interfere with the play, or in the ref's opinion, does not give his team an advantage** by being in an offside position, the ref would not deem this player off sides. In other words, if he stayed where he was, and the player who kicked the ball off sides dribbled the ball down on his own and scored on his own, this should be counted as a goal. - By being in the off sides position, the red player basically put him self out of this play.

