

Summary of Modified FIFA Laws of the Game	Towson United Notes
<p>Law 1: The Field of Play For safety reasons, check the field conditions and the integrity of the goals and nets to ensure that they are anchored (MUST use sandbags for portable goals) to the ground, goal posts and crossbar prior to each game and that the nets do not interfere with the goalkeeper. The goal lines, touch lines, penalty area and half line should be well defined. All lines are in play. A ball is not out of play until the entire ball crosses over the line.</p>	<p>Dimensions (Approximate) 3v3/4v4 – 20yd x 15yd 5v5 – 25yd x 20yd 7v7 (small) - 35yd x 25yd 7v7 – 60yd x 40yd 9v9 – 80yd x 45yd 11v11 – 100yd x 55yd</p>
<p>Law 2: The Ball Balls should be properly inflated. Hold the ball head high, after dropping its bounce should reach waist level. Roundness can be determined by tossing it in the air while causing it to spin. No wobble should be seen.</p>	<p>U6 – U8 - Size 3 U9 – U12 - Size 4 U15 - Size 5</p>
<p>Law 3: The Number of Players Each team should start the number of players for its age bracket, with one of those being a goalkeeper. Unlike FIFA governed games, substitutions are unlimited.</p> <p>Both teams may substitute at any stoppage at the discretion of the referee. Substitutes may enter only with the permission of the referee.</p> <p>The referee shall determine whether a substitution will adversely affect the flow of the game. If substitution is being requested simply to gain any unfair tactical advantage or to alter the flow of the game, the substitution will not be permitted. The spirit of substituting on any stoppage is to allow for more player participation. Referees will manage game flow.</p> <p>Substituting because of injury allows for unlimited subs from the bench for both teams.</p> <p>Substitutes remain on the bench until requested to enter the field by the coach. The referee shall be informed of any keeper change.</p> <p>All players will be given the opportunity to play at least 50 percent of the game. Everyone gets equal playing time and ideally, an opportunity to play different positions. The reality during the game, due to substitution opportunities, player fatigue, or injury, may be different. This guideline does not apply to the goalie, because if someone plays the first half in goal, that player can play the second half as one of the field players, subbing or being subbed like everyone else.</p>	<p>Unlimited substitution. All players must have the opportunity to play at least 50% of the game.</p> <p>U6 – 3 v 3 (no GK) U7 – 5 v 5 (no GK) U8-U10 – 7 v 7 U12 – 9 v 9 U15 – 11 v 11</p> <p>Teams must have one fewer than the regular number of starters for their age group within five minutes of the scheduled kickoff or the game is forfeited.</p> <p>Exception: 11v11 games may begin play with only 7 players in accordance with FIFA.</p>

	<p>Teams with the regular number of players are not required to play a player down in order to equalize the teams. The opposing coaches may agree to end an uneven game as a forfeit and play a scrimmage at even strength.</p>
<p>Law 4: Player Equipment The player may not wear anything that could be harmful to himself or another player. Jewelry - watches, earrings, bracelets – are prohibited. Players MUST wear: A shirt, shorts, socks (covering shin guards), shin guards and footwear. If the uniform shirt is unavailable, a shirt of the same color must be worn. Goalkeepers MUST wear colors that distinguish them from the other players and officials.</p>	<p>Soccer cleats (rubber only) are essential for proper play – (though not required).</p> <p>Lax or baseball cleats with a “toe cleat” are not allowed.</p> <p>Socks must fully cover shin guards, and shin guards are MANDATORY.</p>
<p>Law 5: The Referee The referee has full authority to enforce the 17 Laws. The referee’s decisions are final and not subject to appeal. This authority extends to the coaches <u>and other spectators</u>, if needed. The referee has the right to call or not call any foul that is deemed necessary. This extends to the Advantage Rule, which permits the attacking team to keep possession of the ball should there be a defensive foul.</p>	<p>No coach, player, parent or spectator is to challenge the referee’s judgment. Offenders may be red-carded (Law 12), resulting in a disadvantage to the offending team. Spectators also could be asked to leave the area. Dissent is “any</p>
<p>Spirit of the Rules – Soccer games should proceed with as little interruption as possible. FIFA: “Constant whistle blowing for trifling and doubtful breaches produces bad feeling and loss of temper on the part of the players and spoils the pleasure of the spectators.”</p>	<p>public disagreement with the referee” and will not be tolerated.</p> <p>The <u>ONLY appropriate</u> times for coaches to approach referees to address issues or questions is before start of game, half-time, or after match has finished.</p>
<p>Law 6: The Assistant Referees Assistant referees are present to ‘assist’ the referee. They do this by drawing the attention of the referee to situations that he may not have seen. They are also critical in calling the ball in and out of play and alerting the referee to substitutions. And, they alert the referee to offside situations.</p>	<p>Typically, the programs will employ a 2-ref system, with 1 referee on each side of the field using the Diagonal System.</p>

<p>Law 7: The Duration of the Match</p> <p>The clock does not stop, but the referee has the authority to add time to a match as a result of injuries, substitutions, delays in putting the ball back into play or any other reason deemed necessary. The referee is the sole timekeeper and is the only official who can end a game. If a ball is in flight and the referee signals the end of the game, the ball becomes dead at that point (a dead ball can't be scored). Matches can end in a tie (draw).</p>	<p>U6 – 30 mins (coach's discretion)</p> <p>U7 – 4 12-min quarters with 2-min breaks, no half-time, no timeouts</p> <p>U8-U12 - 25 min halves, 5 minute halftime. No time-outs.</p> <p>U15: 30-min halves, 5 minute halftime. No time-outs.</p>
<p>Law 8: Start and Restart of Play</p> <p>A coin toss is used to determine start of play. The team winning the toss must decide kick-off or side to defend. If coin toss winner chooses kick-off, other team picks side to defend. Teams alternate kickoffs by period. For the second half teams switch ends. A kickoff is a method to start play and to restart play after a goal is scored or at the beginning of a period. A goal may be scored from a kickoff.</p> <p>At kickoff, all players are in their own half of the field. Opponents of the team taking the kickoff must be at least 10 yards from the ball until the ball is put in play. Upon signal by the referee, the ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves in any direction. The initial kicker may not touch the ball a second time until it is touched by another player.</p> <p>Dropped ball is a method of restart used when the game is stopped, and the rules do not specify that a different restart should apply. ALL dropped balls are "uncontested." Dropped balls are awarded to the team who last legally played the ball at the spot it was last played. The dropped ball is retaken if the ball is touched before the ball hits the ground.</p> <p>EXCEPTION: ALL dropped ball restarts in the Penalty Area (including stopping for inadvertent ball hits to head for 7v7 or 9v9 games) are dropped to the goalkeeper who may play it with their hands or feet.</p> <p>The dropped ball in the penalty area always goes to goalkeeper regardless of which team last touched ball. Opposing players must be at least 4.5 yds away. The ball is "in play" when it hits the ground. Dropped ball is retaken if touched before it hits the ground or rolls out of play.</p> <p>If a dropped ball enters the goal without touching at least two players, play is restarted with a goal kick (if it entered the opponents' goal) or a corner kick (if it enters own team's goal).</p>	<p>For learning purposes, referees should allow time and instruct players to get ready for the dropped ball.</p> <p>Player may kick, pass or dribble the dropped ball. Defenders starting at least 4.5 yds away can move towards ball as soon as it touches the ground because it is "in play."</p>

<p>Law 9: Ball in and out of play The ball is in play following any of the prescribed methods of start and restart. The ball is out of play when it has wholly crossed the goal line or touch line – on the ground or in the air, or when the game has been stopped by the referee.</p> <p>The ball is out of play when the ball touches and Referee AND a team starts a promising attack, ball enters goal directly, or the team in possession changes. Restart with a dropped ball to team last in possession at location of referee interference.</p> <p>Note: If the ball hits the referee, ONLY stop play for the 3 stated reasons above, otherwise play continues.</p>	<p>A ball touching the line is in play. A player outside of the field of play may still play the ball so long as the ball remains within the field of play.</p>
<p>Law 10: The Method of Scoring A goal is scored when the entire ball crosses over the goal line between the goal posts and under the cross bar.</p> <p>If the goalkeeper throws the ball into the opposing goal, a goal kick is awarded.</p>	<p>“Breaking the plane” of the goal line is not a goal.</p>
<p>Law 11: Offside It is not an offense in itself to be in an offside position.</p> <p>A player is in an offside position if they are nearer to the opponents’ goal line than both the ball and the second to last opponent.</p> <p>A player who is in an offside position is only penalized if, at the moment the ball touches or is played by one of his team, or, in the opinion of the referee, involved in active play by (1) interfering with play, (2) interfering with an opponent or (3) gaining an advantage by being in that position.</p>	<p>Offside is the most misunderstood of all of the Laws. The actual determination of offside can be very difficult even for the best referees—because there are so many variables. A player who is <i>even</i> with the 2nd to last defender is to be considered onside.</p>
<p>Law 12: Fouls (Major/Minor) & Misconduct</p> <p>Major Fouls result in Direct Free Kick (DFK): A direct kick is awarded from the point of foul if a player commits any of the following in a manner considered by the referee to be careless, reckless or using excessive force - kicking or attempting to kick, tripping or attempting to trip, striking or attempting to strike, jumping at an opponent, charging (physically moving an opponent away from the ball (whereas, a fair charge is shoulder-to-shoulder while playing the ball), and pushing.</p> <p>Handling (Handballs): _Not every touch of a player’s hand/arm with the ball is an offence. Handling is only an offence when the player deliberately touches the ball with their hand/arm, for example moving the hand/arm towards the ball, OR if the contact of the hand/arm was considered to have made their body unnaturally bigger for a justifiable body movement for that specific situation. By having their hand/arm in such a position, the player takes the risk of their hand/arm being hit by the ball and being penalized.</p> <p>The upper boundary of the arm is in line with the bottom of the armpit. If an ACCIDENTAL arm/hand touches a ball that scores in the opponents’ goal directly from their hand/arm or that player scores in any manner immediately after the ball has touched their hand/arm, the goal is disallowed.</p>	<p>Slide tackles are not permitted under any circumstances. If slide tackle occurs with another player close to the play, result of offense will be direct kick from the point of foul or a PK if the slide tackle occurs in the penalty box.</p> <p>With no foul occurring, slide tackle will result in indirect free kick. Verbal warning will be given by the referee.</p> <p>Players, or coaches, who receive a red card will not be</p>

<p>A penalty kick is awarded if any of the above offenses is committed by a player inside the player’s own penalty area.</p> <p><u>Minor Fouls result in Indirect Free Kick (IFK):</u> Obstruction (impeding the progress of an opponent by not allowing them to get within playing distance of the ball), dangerous play (typically kicking NEAR the head or above opponent’s waist) Playing on the ground is only a foul when in close proximity of opponent(s). Dangerous Play and/or Obstruction are only called if there is NO CONTACT; otherwise it’s not simply dangerous nor obstruction, but a foul and a Direct Free Kick.</p> <p><u>Pass-Back Rule:</u> If goalkeeper <u>intentionally</u> receives a deliberate pass from a teammate via a kicked ball and picks up the ball in the penalty area, an Indirect Free Kick is awarded. To penalize a “deliberate kick to back to keeper” it must truly be judged to be 100% DELIBERATE and KICKED by a FOOT.</p> <p>And, if a goalkeeper clearly kicks or attempts to kick a ball that is deliberately kicked or thrown-in by a teammate but is UNSUCCESSFUL (whiff or miskick), the keeper CAN then handle the ball – and is NOT penalized. However, if the goalkeeper tries to kick the ball but is not satisfied with the result and then handles the ball, the goalkeeper should not be charged with a pass-back offense because “the goalkeeper has clearly kicked or attempted to kick the ball to release it into play.”</p> <p><u>Misconduct:</u> Yellow Card: Caution. (2 yellow cards equal a red card.) It’s possible that a yellow will not be shown immediately, especially when ‘advantage’ is being applied—the ref will show the yellow at the next stoppage in play.</p> <p>Red Card: The individual is sent off the field and not permitted to return. The affected team plays short that player for the remainder of the game. If more than one player from the same team is sent off, that team will play that number down. Red cards are given immediately following the foul.</p>	<p>allowed to participate in the next game and may face suspension.</p> <p>For teams not playing 11v11: When a player deliberately heads the ball in a game, and indirect free kick (IFK) should be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense. If the deliberate header occurs within the goal area, referee proceeds with a dropped ball to the goalkeeper.</p> <p>For teams playing 11v11: There is no penalty for heading the ball during the game.</p>
<p>Law 13: Free Kicks Indirect - The ball must be touched by a second player (any other player from <u>either</u> team) before a goal will be awarded. Signaled by the referee holding one arm straight over head until the second touch takes place.</p> <p>Direct - The kicker can score directly on the kick. Signaled by the referee pointing briefly in the attacking direction.</p> <p>On any free kick, the ball is placed at the site of the foul and must be stationary. Opposing players must be at least 10 yards away. The ball needs to only move in any direction to be considered in play.</p>	<p>Free kicks may be taken immediately. It is not necessary to allow opponents to recover.</p> <p>Opponents must immediately retreat at least 10 yards away from the free kick. Player not retreating is delaying the restart and can be cautioned (yellow card).</p>

<p>A foul or offense within the goal area is moved to the nearest point on the line forming the goal area.</p> <p>No offensive players can be within 1 yard of a defensive “wall” containing 3 or more defenders. Illegal offensive team encroachment would award ball to the other team for an IFK.</p>	
<p>Law 14: The Penalty Kick</p> <p>Awarded to offensive team for a Direct Kick offence committed by the defense within the Penalty Area. The penalty kick is a direct free kick taken 12 yards from the goal – the Penalty Mark. If the mark is unclear, the referee will step-off the 12 yards. All players except the penalty taker and the goalkeeper remain outside the penalty area, including the penalty arc (10 yards from the penalty mark). The ball must be kicked forward, and the goalkeeper must have ONE foot touching or in line with the goal line until the ball is kicked. The ball cannot be touched a second time by the penalty taker until the ball has been touched by another player, meaning if the ball hits the crossbar or goal post, the ball must be touched by someone other than the kicker. Infringement results in an indirect free kick from the spot of the second touch. The penalty taker must wait for the referee’s signal before taking the penalty kick.</p>	<p>U6, U7 – no penalty kicks</p> <p>U8– Fouls that would normally result in a penalty kick will result in a direct free kick from the top of the arc outside the penalty area.</p> <p>All levels U9 and above will utilize penalty kicks.</p>
<p>Law 15: The Throw-In</p> <p>This is a method of restart when the opposing team kicks the ball out over the touch line. The thrower must: Face the field, have part of each foot either on the touch line or on the ground outside the touch line, use both hands and deliver the ball from behind and over their head. The throwing team’s goalkeeper may not handle a ball. The thrower may not touch the ball until the ball has been touched by another player.</p> <p>Opponents must be 2 yds from thrower and may not take any action that will impede the through.</p> <p>Stationing a player 2 yds in front of the thrower is permitted, but that player is not permitted to take any actions that will impede the throw. A violation is Misconduct, and a Caution is given to player interfering with a throw in. The Throw In is re-taken.</p> <p>Referees are encouraged to demonstrate correct throw-in technique in early season play</p>	<p>3v3 – No throw-ins</p> <p>4v4 - Throw-ins may be retaken without penalty. (Note: player is allowed one re-do throw-in per play.)</p> <p>7v7 – During the first 4 games of the season, the referee may allow a player to repeat a technically incorrect throw-in, without penalty. After the 4th game of the season, incorrect throw-ins result in a turnover.</p> <p>9v9 and 11v11 games - Incorrect throw-ins result in a turnover.</p>
<p>Law 16: Goal Kick</p> <p>A method of restart used when the ball, having last been touched by an attacking player, passes over the goal line at any point except between the goal posts. The defending team takes the kick. The ball may be placed anywhere inside the goal area. The ball is in play when it is kicked and moved – ball does NOT have to leave the Penalty Area. Any violation restarts with the goal kick being retaken. Opponents must be outside the penalty area until the ball is in play, but kicker does not have to wait for opponents to leave the penalty area. After the initial kick, the kicker may not play the ball a second time until the ball has been touched by another player. A goal may be scored from a goal kick, but only against the opposing team.</p>	<p>3v3 – no goal kicks</p> <p>U8, U9, U10 – Coaches are strongly encouraged to pull players back to midfield (U8) or to the build-out line (U9 & U10) for goal kicks and GK serves to allow an opposing team to attempt to play it out of the back until the ball crosses out of the box.</p>

Law 17: Corner Kick	
A method of restart used when the ball, having last been touched by the defending team, passes over the goal line at any point except between the goal posts. The attacking team takes the kick from the corner nearest to where the goal crossed the goal line. Goal kicks are direct kicks, and there is no offside on the initial kick. The attacking team is permitted to station players near the goalkeeper, but they are not permitted to interfere with a keeper’s attempt to get the ball.	Corner flags may not be held, touched, or removed.

LAW 18 – The Unofficial Law

There is no “Law 18”, but just the same, you’ll sometimes hear referees refer to it as the most important of all the Laws of the Game (LOTG), because it overrides all the others. It’s simply the application of common sense in interpreting and applying the Laws to ensure that a referee’s decisions don’t go against the Spirit of the Game (SOTG). “Law 18” provides that common sense and SOTG are always more important than the letter of the law. The “spirit of the game” is something that all referees must judge for themselves based on their experience and their conception of what soccer is, but for most referees a number of factors are important:

Two factors need to be stressed, because they help to distinguish soccer from other common team sports, and because they can lead to decisions by officials that are mystifying for spectators who are unaware of the basic differences between soccer and other sports.

1. Natural justice—it’s important not to penalize players unfairly by applying the letter of law when that would contravene the spirit or the intention of the law;
2. Flow of the game—a good referee lets the players play with the minimum number of interruptions but without losing control of the match; and letting the players determine the outcome of the match.

Tradition—Much of soccer is based on letting the game be played as it evolved, and the LOTG simply are intended to give referees a basis on which to mediate disputes. A basic difference between soccer and other sports is that the referee is a “judge” who interprets the LOTG and applies them as needed to settle disputes between players and teams, not a policeman who applies every LOTG exactly as written to every single violation.

Intent of the Law—Many soccer laws are intended to control certain things (time wasting, for instance) but could be misapplied to other things. It is important for every coach, player, and referee to understand the history and intent of each law to understand the true SOTG

Learn the Laws – and Understand the Traditions of Soccer

Perhaps the most notable aspect of the Soccer Laws is that they are not as codified as many other sports (e.g., in baseball one might look up Rule 7 Paragraph 8 Section 3, line a, variation 4, etc.). Because of this, many people who are unfamiliar with Soccer do not understand why a referee may make a call in one instance, and not in the next. Or, why one referee will call a foul that another won’t. This is the nature of soccer – and although the interpretations may seem inconsistent to the uninformed, the traditions of the game allow for more interpretation than in most other sports. Once players, coaches, and fans understand this, they should be better able to appreciate soccer as its own sport—they will know the game and its traditions. And, they will realize that football, basketball and baseball traditions may not work on the soccer field. Just as soccer traditions are not appropriate on the gridiron, court, or diamond.