

2023 Soccer Rules & Guidelines

YMCA YOUTH SPORTS PHILOSOPHY

Over the past few years, the YMCA has noticed some alarming trends in youth sports programs: the pressure for more rigorous competition and higher achievement. These trends come from adult-oriented attitudes and the misconception that youth sports programs are scaled-down versions of professional sports. This is not only false, but also dangerous.

The YMCA stresses child-oriented attitudes by keeping winning in perspective, having fun, improving physical fitness, and working with the whole child. The YMCA wants the quality of play to improve in order to meet the needs of all participants whatever their ability and skills.

The YMCA accomplishes this by training adult volunteers in clinics and workshops. **The YMCA believes that the child is first and winning is second.**

The YMCA does not encourage the elimination of competition or winning. Winning is essential to enjoyable competition. However, it is the “striving to win” that yields the joy of sports.

The key for parents and coaches is to keep winning in perspective. It is this key that holds the YMCA Youth Sports program together. Competition will happen in youth sports without any external pressures. **It is important to keep competition at a level appropriate for the athlete.**

The YMCA would not be whole without its commitment to a Christian emphasis. The goal of the Youth Sports program is to help the child grow to his/her fullest potential in mind, body, and spirit: activity helps the body grow; thinking advances the mind; and belief makes our spirit grow.



The Mission of the YMCA is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.



YOUTH SOCCER LEAGUE RULES

All Recreation Divisions

The leagues and games are played according to FIFA soccer rules and are run in such a manner that children can learn, develop, and reinforce soccer skills as well as enjoy playing the game with their teammates and coach.

AGE GROUPS: Players will determine their division of play by the age they are or will be turning during the season. Any player may play in an older division but no player may play in a division younger than their age.

Divisions:	4/5 yr olds
	6/7 yr olds
	8/9 yr olds
	10/11 yr olds
	12/14 yr olds

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: The YMCA builds teams with no more than double the number of participants allowed on the field at once.

4-5 Yr Olds	5 V 5 (no goalies)
6-7 Yr Olds	5 V 5 (no goalies)
8-9 Yr Olds	7 V 7 (w/ goalies)
10-11 Yr Olds	8 V 8 (w/ goalies)
12 -14 Yr Olds	5 V 5 (w/ Goalies)
	*Spring 2023

** Team and on field numbers may be less based on league size.

GAME:	AGE GROUP	BALL	GAME DURATION
	4-5 Yr Olds	size 3	4 quarters x 6 minutes
	6-7 Yr Olds	size 3	4 quarters x 8 minutes
	8-9 Yr Olds	size 4	4 quarters x 8 minutes
	10-11 Yr Olds	size 4	4 quarters x 10 minutes
	12-14 Yr Olds	size 5	4 quarters x 10 minutes

- 4-5 Yr Olds: Teams are to spend the first 20 minutes of their game time as practice and warm-up time. Working on soccer drills- passing, shooting, dribbling, etc.

Size of the field and goal may be adjusted to the facility. In all games, there will be a break of 1 minute between quarters (if played). In all groups, the half times will consist of 3 minutes.

Substitutions: Either team may substitute, after asking the referee's permission, when the ball stops for:]

1. any goal kick or corner kick
2. after a goal has been scored
3. when a referee stops game for injury
4. after halftime or quarter (no permission needed)

Substitutions will also be allowed to the team in possession of the ball on a throw-in, providing the referee gives permission. Substitutes must report to the midfield line and be ready to enter the game when the referee calls for substitutes, the game will not be held for substitutions.

Throw-Ins:

- 4-5 Yr Olds: Parents should line up around the field to keep the ball in play. Balls that the parents cannot keep in play should be thrown in by a player currently on the field.
- 6-14 Yr Olds: If the ball leaves the playing field along the sidelines, a throw-in will be awarded.

6-7 Yr Old players will be given two chances to perform a legal throw-in. 8-14 Yr Old players will be given one chance to perform a throw-in.

Correct throw-ins consist of both feet planted on the ground, both hands holding the ball, and throwing over the head. Incorrect throw-ins will result in a change of possession and throw-in for the opposing team.

Free Kicks:

- 4-5 Yr Olds: There are no penalties.
- 6-14 Yr Olds: Free kicks will be awarded to the opposing team if a player intentionally pushes, kicks, trips, or hits another player. Free kicks will also be awarded if a player commits a "dangerous" play, or obstructs an opponent.

6-7 Yr Olds - All kicks will be indirect, and there will be no penalty shots.

8-14 Yr Olds - Free kicks will be defined as direct or indirect by the referee. Direct kicks may be shot directly into the goal, while indirect kicks must touch another player (may or may not be on the same team) before the ball goes into the goal. Corner kicks, goal kicks, and penalty shots are to be treated as direct, while the kick-off should be treated as an indirect kick.

Offside:

- 4-5 Yr Olds: No offside.
- 6-9 Yr Olds: The offside rule will be enforced in ***intentional and extreme situations however , players should not intentionally attempt to stay behind the play on the opponent's half of the field or be positioned as**

such during the game. Players are responsible for learning and understanding the offside rule as the season progresses.

- 10-14 Yr Olds: The offside rule will be enforced.
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A player is offside if he or she is nearer to the opponent's goal line than the ball at the time the ball is played unless:

1. The player is on his or her own half of the field.
2. There are two opponents nearer their goal line.
3. The ball was last touched or played by an opponent.
4. The ball is received directly from a goal kick, corner kick, throw-in, or drop by the referee.

Handball:

- 4-5 Yr Old: No handball penalties.
- 6-14 Yr Old: The referee will judge the intent of the player when the ball comes in contact with the arm or hand. A penalty will be called when the player intentionally touches the ball, or accidentally redirects the ball to his team's advantage. Accidental contact with the ball is not necessarily a penalty.

Heading:

- 4-11 Yr Olds: Players shall not engage in heading, either in practice or in games.
- 6-11 Yr Olds: ***When a player deliberately heads the ball in a game, an 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, the indirect free kick should be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred.***
- 12-14 Yr Olds: Intentional heading is permitted in this division.

Slide Tackles:

- 4-7 Yr Olds: No slide tackles are allowed. 6-7 Yr Old players will receive a penalty for infraction as a dangerous play (indirect kick).
- 8-14 Yr Olds: A slide tackle from the back or side will be penalized as a dangerous play. In addition, any player approaching another with the sole of the shoe higher than the ball will be penalized for a dangerous play.

Coaches on the Field:

- 4-7 Yr Olds: One coach per team will be allowed on the playing field but must stay in their own defensive half of the field. 3-5 Yr Olds: Parents should line up around the field to keep the ball in play.
- 8-14 Yr Olds: No coaches will be allowed on the field during game-play. Coaches are restricted to their sideline and should not come within 3 yards of the midfield line. No coaches and or parents may be behind the goal or seated directly on the goal line. **Only one coach and one assistant coach** will be permitted to be on the sideline with their team. Parents should be seated on the sideline opposite the team.

Protecting the Goalkeeper:

- 4-7 Yr Olds: No goalies.

- 8-14 Yr Olds: The referee will make every effort to protect the goalie in dangerous situations. **The referee will blow the whistle anytime that the goalie is making an honest effort to pick up the soccer ball with his hands.** All players around must stop trying to kick the ball and prevent from kicking the goalie while he is in a vulnerable position when the whistle is blown.
- The goalkeeper should not play more than one half of the game unless no alternative can be found and the child wishes to continue in goal.

Safety: All players are **required to wear shin guards and socks at all times.** Shin guards must be worn under the socks.
Without the appropriate gear Players will not be permitted to play.

Playing time:

Every player in attendance **MUST BE ALLOWED TO PLAY** at least one half of each game and **MUST BE ALLOWED TO START** at least half of the games throughout the season. Coaches should make every effort to play each child equally.

Delays/Forfeits:

- All Divisions: If one team does not have the designated number of players at the beginning of the game, a 10 minute grace period will be allowed. The game will then be started with both teams playing with an **equal** number of players, and the amount of time lost will be deducted from the game.
- 10-14 Yr Olds: If after the 10 minute grace period has elapsed a team still does not have the designated number of players present, the game will be listed as a loss in season standing.

**When the referee is ready to begin to play, you should start at that time. The referee may ask the coach to find a volunteer parent to help watch the sidelines during play.

Scoring:

- 4-7 Yr Olds: No score is kept.
- 8-14 Yr Olds: Goals scored will be kept.

Game Officials: Will be on the field and are responsible for game time and making calls. They will also make sure equipment is available.

SEVERE WEATHER:

-The YMCA will decide by 7:00am, the day of the game, if any cancellations are necessary.

-If severe weather occurs during play, a decision will be made by the onsite referee in regards to game cancellations.

- A full season consists of at least 5 games for 6 Season Games, and at least 7 games for 8 Season Games. If additional cancellations occur, games will be rescheduled. If at least half a game has been played, that game will not be rescheduled.

-Any delays/cancellations will be posted on Playerspace.

YOUTH SPORTS PLEDGE:

At the start of each game, all players, coaches, and referees will meet at the center circle to recite the Youth Sports Pledge and address any rule clarifications.

YOUTH SPORTS PLEDGE

**I PLEDGE TO PLAY THE GAME,
THE BEST THAT I CAN,
TO BE A TEAM PLAYER,
TO RESPECT MY OPPONENTS,
THE RULES AND OFFICIALS,
AND IMPROVE MYSELF IN MIND,
BODY, AND SPIRIT.**

Please remember that by volunteering to be a coach, you have chosen to be a role model for all participating children, and that you represent yourself and the YMCA at all games and practices throughout the year.



YMCA of Austin Youth Soccer Guidelines

Age Group	Ball Size	Game Length	Goal Size Size of the field and goal may be adjusted to the facility	Players on Field/Coaches on Field	Special Rules
4-5	3	4 x 6 Minute Quarters (15 - 20 Min. Practice before game)	4x4 Goal Field: 15x30	5v5 1 coach	No Keeper; No penalties; parents keep ball in play; heading not allowed; no score kept; Must have shin-guards/socks
6-7	3	4 x 8 Minute Quarters	4x4 Goal Field: 25 x 35	5v5 1 coach	No Keeper; Free kicks awarded; all kicks indirect; no penalty shots; offside if extreme; throw-ins awarded (2 chances); heading not allowed; must have shin-guards/socks
8-9	4	4 x 8 Minute Quarters	6.5 x 12 Goal Field: 35 x 55	7v7 w/ goalie	Free Kicks awarded; corner/goal/penalty kicks treated as direct; kick-off as indirect; offsides/handball called; heading not allowed; no coaches on the field – only on their half; must have shin-guards/socks
10-11	4	4 X 10 Minute Quarters	6.5 x 18 Goal Field: 45 x 80	8v8 w/ goalie	Free kicks awarded and can be direct/indirect; offsides/handball called; intentional heading not allowed; no coaches on the field – only on their half. Must have shin-guards/socks
12-14	5	4 X 10 Minute Quarters	8/9 Field: 35 x 55 6.5 x 12 Goal	5v5 w/ goalie	Free kicks awarded and can be direct/indirect; offsides/handball called; intentional heading permitted; no coaches on the field – only on their half. Must have shin-guards/socks (Corners are throw ins)

*Field/Goal sizes and amount of players may vary per League