

## Build Out Line for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Grade Leagues

What is a Build Out Line?

- A Build Out Line is part of US Soccer's new player development initiatives which were put in place to help coaches coach players to the best of their abilities. Many leagues across the country are adopting this initiative and it has been received with great success at the 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Grade and below levels.
- The Build Out Line is a line marked on the field (approximately 4ft. in front of the edge of both boxes). This creates kind of a safe zone for players to first receive the ball from their goalkeeper to promote playing out from the back in an unpressured setting.
- When the goalkeeper is in possession of the ball (either during play or on a goal kick) the opposing team must drop behind the Build Out Line allowing the goalkeeper to pass, throw or roll the ball to a teammate.
- Goalkeepers are not allowed to punt the ball as this would defeat the purpose of the Build Out Line and it would reduce the opportunity to play out of the back in an unpressured setting.
- After the ball is put into play and the first player (other than the GK and usually a defender) on the team with possession, touches the ball the opposing team can then cross the Build Out line and play can resume as normal. This allows the player to take a good first touch, lift their head and make a good decision without the usual immediate pressure.
- It is recommended that this player is encouraged to play at game speed and that this should all happen within 10 seconds. This will avoid a slow ball being played and stopping short of the Build Out Line. A player should not deliberately avoid touching the ball in the safe zone to waste time and/or gain an additional advantage.
- A restart from the GK's hands or goal kick will take place if the opposition infringes inside the Build Out Line.

**Rationale:** Players at these younger ages have a hard time starting an attack from the back and connecting a pass. They are likely to lose possession of the ball quickly if full pressure is applied. Tackling these players before the first pass or touch is made does not help them to develop as players. This often results in coaches not focusing on this important aspect of the game and the alternative option that is often resorted to is to punt the ball down the field. The Build Out Line allows coaches to coach the "right way", alleviate some immediate pressure allowing players to make good decisions and developing a good style of play. The alternative that we see all the time is – allow the goalkeeper to punt the ball as far as possible, chase it down and kick it in the goal to score! Yes it's a goal but it's not a goal built from a team effort using skill and strategy. Soccer is called "the beautiful game" for a reason!