



Recreational Youth Soccer League Rules
V03.04.26

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GENERAL LEAGUE POLICIES (ALL DIVISIONS)

Policy Details

Philosophy	The league prioritizes player development, fun, sportsmanship, and equal participation.
Ruling Disclaimer	Not all rules or situations that occur in the City of Maricopa's Youth Soccer League Games will be covered within these rules. Any rule or situation not listed will be governed by commonly known FIFA Standard rules as understood by the officials.
Player Eligibility	All players must be approved by Maricopa Sports Staff with paid registration to participate (including practice). Random roster checks will occur.
Playing Time	Every registered player present at the game must play at least 50% of the total game time. "Three-Quarter" Rule: No player may play the entire game (four quarters) until every other player on the roster has played at least three quarters. *Exceptions: The 50% rule is only waived in cases of injury, illness, or a player's explicit request to come off the field.
Player Equipment	Mandatory: Shin guards (must be covered by socks). Allowed: Cleats (no toe or metal cleats). Not Allowed: All jewelry (necklaces, rings, bracelets, earrings, etc.) must be removed. Taping is not acceptable (Exception: Taped-down medical ID bracelets). Hard casts must be covered in 1/2-inch thick foam with tape. Glasses to be secured with a sports strap.
Coaches	Maximum of two (2) coaches per team on the sideline. Coaches must always follow the Code of Conduct and stay on the team's appointed side of the field. Coaches must meet before each game to discuss inclusion accommodations.
Spectators	Must stay on their team's side of the field and three (3) yards off the sidelines. Must remain off the goal lines. Spectators are responsible for securing shade structures with weights - no metal stakes allowed. Tents may be asked to be removed on a windy day.
Side Assignment	"Home" Team: North side (Copper Sky/Pond side). "Away" Team: South side. Schedules and maps will be posted on Team Sideline.
Mandatory Fouls	No Slide Tackling (except by the goalkeeper, if applicable, playing the ball). No Deliberate Handballs. No Intentional Heading of the ball is allowed for players in U5 through U13 divisions. (See specific division rules below).
Behavior	Music is not permitted during practice or games. Coaches and spectators must adhere to the Code of Conduct.
Post-Game	Teams line up, walk by the opposing team, and say "Good game!" Coaches congratulate each other. Issues or problems only to be discussed after a mandatory cooling off period of 24 hours.
Game Count	All divisions have Seven (7) games total (Six (6) regular season + One (1) playoff game for U11+; Seven (7) regular season games for U5/U7). No rescheduled or make-up games are allowed.

U5 (4 YRS) & U7 (5-6 YRS) CO-REC

Game Structure

Game Format	4v4 for U5, 5v5 for U7, No Goalkeepers.
Field Size	30 yds. (L) × 20 yds. (W)
Goal Size	6 ft. × 4 ft. Pop-up goals (PUGs)
Ball Size	Size 3
Game Length	Two (2) × 20-minute halves. 5-minute halftime.
Water Breaks	Mandatory two (2) × 2-minute water breaks at 10 minutes into each half.
Referees	Coaches or Assistant Coaches from both teams will serve as the Referees on the field.
Substitutions	Unlimited and can occur at any time (on-the-fly).

Game Restarts & Fouls

Out-of-Bounds	Dribble-ins ONLY. No throw-ins, goal kicks, or corner kicks.
Dribble-in	Ball is placed on the line. Designated player dribbles it back into play. Opponents must be at least five (5) yards away.
Goal Line Restart (Defense)	If the ball crosses the goal line last played by the attacking team, the defending team gets a dribble-in from anywhere on the goal line.
Goal Line Restart (Offense)	If the ball crosses the goal line last played by the defending team, the attacking team gets a dribble-in from the corner.
Offside	No Offside penalties will be called.
Penalty Kicks	No Penalty Kicks can occur.
Scoring	No scores are recorded.
Playoffs	No playoffs for this age division.
Fouls	Intentional Handballs, Slide Tackling, and Intentional Heading are fouls.

U9 (7-8 YRS) BOYS & GIRLS

Game Structure

Game Format – BOYS	9 vs 9 (8 players + Goalkeeper)
Game Format – GIRLS	7 vs 7 (6 players + Goalkeeper)
Field Size	70 yds. (L) × 45 yds. (W)
Goal Size	6 ft. × 12 ft
Ball Size	Size 4
Game Length	Two (2) × 20-minute halves. 5-minute halftime.
Water Breaks	Mandatory two (2) × 2-minute water breaks at 10 minutes into each half.
Referees	Center Referee with two (2) Assistant Referees, if available.
Substitutions	Unlimited and can occur at any stoppage of play.

Game Restarts & Fouls

Out-of-Bounds	Throw-ins for the touchlines (sidelines). Goal kicks and Corner kicks are in play.
Throw-in	Player must use both hands, bring the ball from behind the head, and keep both feet on the ground. Opponents must be at least five (5) yards away .
Goal Kicks	Defending players must retreat to their half of the field . The ball can be placed anywhere in the goal box.
Corner Kicks	Opponents must be at least five (5) yards away .
Goalkeeper Play	The Goalie is only allowed to roll the ball into play . If they kick, punt, or throw, they must attempt to roll it again. If still unable, they perform a Pass-in from where they gained control (opponents 5 yards away).
Fouls in Penalty Area	Result in a Direct or Indirect Free Kick at the top of the penalty area, depending on the foul. No Penalty Kicks will be taken.
Offside	No Offside penalties will be called.
Scoring	No scores are recorded.
Playoffs	No playoffs for this age division.
Fouls	Intentional Handballs, Slide Tackling, and Intentional Heading are fouls.

U11 (9-10 YRS) BOYS & GIRLS
 U13 (11-12 YRS) BOYS & GIRLS
 U17 (13-16 YRS) CO-REC

Game Structure

Rule Category	U11 (9/10)	U13 (11/12)	U17 (13-16) Co-Rec
Game Format		Boys: 9 vs 9 (8 players + Goalkeeper) Girls: 7 vs 7 (6 players + Goalkeeper)	
Field Size		75 yds. (L) × 50 yds. (W)	
Goal Size	7 ft. × 18 ft.	20 ft. × 8 ft. (or Regular Goal)	20 ft. × 8 ft. (or Regular Goal)
Ball Size	Size 4	Size 5	Size 5
Game Length	Two (2) × 20-minute halves	Two (2) × 22-minute halves	Two (2) × 25-minute halves
Water Breaks	2×2 minutes at 10 minutes/half	2×2 minutes at 10 minutes/half	2×2 minutes at 12.5 minutes/half
Referees	Center Referee with two (2) Assistant Referees, if available.		
Substitutions	Unlimited and can occur at any stoppage of play.		
League-wide Penalties & Fouls	Slide tackling, deliberate handballs, and intentional heading are fouls.		Slide tackling and deliberate handballs are fouls.

Game Restarts & Fouls

Out-of-Bounds	Throw-ins for the touchlines (sidelines). Goal kicks and Corner kicks are in play.
Goal Kicks	Defending players must retreat to their half of the field . The ball can be placed anywhere in the goal box.
Corner Kicks	Opponents must be at least five (5) yards away .
Goalkeeper Play	The Goalie is allowed to roll and throw the ball into play.
Fouls in Penalty Area	Result in a Penalty Kick or Indirect Kick , depending on the foul (Standard FIFA rules apply).
Offside	Players in an offside position will be called (Standard FIFA rules apply).
Scoring	Scores are recorded . Referees must have both coaches sign the score sheet immediately post-game.
Playoffs	Single Elimination Game, week 7
Deliberate Heading	Allowed only in U17 division.

Playoff Structure

Last Game	The last game day of the season is the playoff game.
Seeding	Teams are matched based on regular season points: 1st vs 2nd, 3rd vs 4th, 5th vs 6th, etc.
Regular Season Points	Two (2) points for a win, One (1) point for a tie, Zero (0) points for a loss.
Awards	1st through 3rd place will be awarded medals immediately after the playoff games.

Penalty Kicks (If Game is Tied)

Coin Toss: Referee flips a coin. Visiting Team player/captain calls Heads/Tails. Winner decides to kick first or second.

Goal Selection: Referee selects the goal to be used.

Round 1:

Each team selects five (5) players to take the penalty kicks.

The opposing team chooses one goalkeeper for all five shots.

Teams alternate kicks.

Tiebreaker (Sudden Death):

If tied after five kicks, teams proceed to a single-round shootout.

New Coin Toss: Home team coach calls Heads/Tails. Winner decides to kick first or second.

- Each team selects one player to kick (must be a player who has not kicked in the prior round).
 - If still tied, repeat the single-round shootout with different players. Teams must alternate who kicks first each round.
 - The defending team can keep the same goalkeeper or choose a new one.
 - The first team to score when the other team misses wins the game.
2. **Observation Area:** Teams and coaches must observe from the Half-line only. **Spectators must remain on the sidelines. No one can observe from behind the goal.**

U9, U11, U13, & U17 | GOALKEEPER RULING

A goalkeeper is considered to be in **control (or possession) of the ball** with their hand(s)/arm(s) when:

- The ball is **between their hands/arms**, or between their hand(s)/arm(s) and **any surface** (e.g., the ground, their own body, or the goalpost).
- They are **holding the ball in their outstretched open hand(s)**.
- They are **bouncing it on the ground or throwing it in the air** (as part of a release/distribution attempt).

The moment the referee determines the goalkeeper has possession, **opponents are legally prohibited from challenging or interfering** with them. Any attempt to kick the ball or charge the goalkeeper at this point is a foul (usually resulting in an Indirect Free Kick).

Key Situations Where Control is NOT Established

If the referee decides the goalkeeper is **not** in possession, the goalkeeper is treated just like any other field player and can be legally challenged for the ball.

Situation	Control Status	Explanation
Parrying a Shot	No Control	The ball rebounds accidentally off the goalkeeper's hands, chest, or leg from a save, and they haven't yet secured it. An opponent can challenge the loose ball.
Trapped Briefly	No Control	The ball is briefly trapped between the goalkeeper's legs or knees but not secured by a hand.
Releasing the Ball	Control Lost	Once the goalkeeper intentionally releases the ball into play (e.g., by placing it on the ground to kick or dribble it), they lose their special protection and cannot pick it up again until another player has touched it.

The Time Limit (The Six/Eight-Second Rule)

Once the goalkeeper is deemed to be in control of the ball with their hands, they are only allowed to keep it for a maximum of **six seconds** (though this is often loosely enforced at lower levels). *Referee's discretion.

REFEREE AUTHORITY & LEAGUE DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

Game Safety and Development

Referees as Educators	Especially in younger divisions, referees are encouraged to explain calls to the players. A whistle is an opportunity to learn the rules of the game. Coaches and parents should respect these moments as "teaching timeouts" rather than disruptions.
The Liaison	Only the Head Coach and the On-field Captain are permitted to address the referee during the match. All other players, assistant coaches, and spectators are prohibited from speaking to the official regarding any calls or non-calls. <i>Examples:</i> The Team Captain May politely ask for clarification on a rule (e.g., "Sir, was that a push or a trip?") during a natural stoppage in play. The Head Coach May ask for the remaining time in the game or request a substitution.
Tone	All communication must be a polite question (e.g., " <i>Can you clarify that foul?</i> "), never a statement of dissent.
"No-Video Review"	The referee's decision is final and binding. Under no circumstances will video footage (cell phones, Veo, etc.) be used to contest or overturn a call.
24-Hour Rule	Coaches and parents must wait 24 hours after a match before filing a formal complaint regarding officiating.

Disciplinary Procedures & Match Authority

Yellow (Official Warning)	A Yellow Card serves as a formal verbal and visual warning to immediately cease offending behavior. This includes but is not limited to dissent by word or action, sideline coaching, or a coach's failure to manage their spectators.
Double Yellow / Red Card (Immediate Ejection)	Any individual (player, coach, or spectator) receiving two Yellow Cards or a single Red Card in a match must leave the program area immediately (out of sight and sound of the field). The match will not resume until the offending person(s) have vacated the area. * Note: A Red Card carries an automatic minimum one-game suspension for the following week.
Forfeiture Authority	The Referee has the power to abandon a match if player/coach/spectator behavior becomes unsafe or uncontrollable. The "offending" team will be recorded as losing 3-0.
Game Stoppage Authority	The Referee has absolute authority to pause the match for the following: Educational Stoppage: Especially for younger divisions, to explain a rule or foul so that players may learn from the mistake. Sideline Management: To require a Head Coach to address spectator behavior. Cooling-Off Period: To allow emotions to settle if the game's intensity exceeds the "Fair Play" standard.

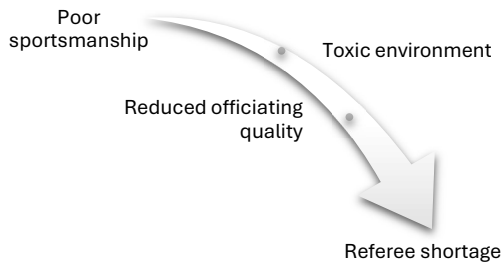
Post-Match Review & Supplemental Discipline

Monday Review Process	All cards, ejections, and game stoppages are recorded in the Referee's Match Report.
Mandatory Review	All infractions are reviewed by the Recreation Department the following Monday.
Supplemental Discipline	The Recreation Department reserves the right to impose additional infractions or penalties following this review. This may include extended suspensions, mandatory sportsmanship training, or permanent removal from the program.
Finality	While the referee's on-field call is the final word for the game result, the Recreation Department has the final word on participant standing and future eligibility.

League Mission - "Humanizing Referees"

"Humanizing refs" is an effort to improve how athletes, coaches, and fans treat sports officials by reminding them that referees are human beings who are subject to intense pressure, can make mistakes, and deserve respect. This movement addresses widespread verbal abuse, disrespect, and even physical violence directed at officials, especially at the youth sports level.

The negative consequences of disrespect:



Key aspects of humanizing referees include:

