

# LAWS OF THE GAME

## U9 and Older

Here are the basic Laws of the Game (not Rules) that a referee bases his/her decisions from. The Law Book is only about a 35 page small handbook. It is the framework and how to apply the laws is found throughout many documents from USSF and FIFA. The main document used by referees is Advice to Referees. This document is > 96 8 x 11 inch pages. Obviously recreational soccer is refereed differently from a pro game. Even within recreational, the Laws are applied differently by age and ability. We also must abide by our parent organization (North Texas) Playing Rules.

This will cover a lot of situations where the referee uses his/her discretion in applying some of the Laws. The goal of this handout is to help you, the coach, to see things from the referee's viewpoint and understand why a call may be made or may not be called. We referees do not want to turn the game into a whistle fest, but do understand player safety is our first goal. It is BISA's aim to have coach and the referees work together. Please realize a referee does not "owe" you an explanation for a call. Most will be willing to give a quick response, if asked politely, but will not enter into a debate over the call or lack of calls. No one can change a referee's call except the referee and it must be done prior to the game restarting. Please refrain from eating the referee, do not approach the referee after the game to discuss calls.

Your team will travel to Mansfield for games. The referees there deserve as much respect as ours. A coach's or spectators poor behavior will be reported to the home association.

- Law I Field of play: The size varies by age group and each association
- Law II The ball: States the size per age group, size 4 for U10 & 12 and 5 for U14 and up
- Law III Number of players: U10 is 7 (minimum of 5), U12 is 9 (minimum of 7) and U13 and up is 11 (minimum of 7). **ALL** players must play 50% of the game. Substitutions are made prior to a kick off, at either team's goal kick, at your team's throw in (not on the other team's throw-in), an injury (then either team may substitute), and at water breaks. The coach must alert the center referee when he/she wants to substitute a player and the player must be ready at the half line. The new player **MUST** wait for the player to leave the field before entering. The coach **MUST** notify the center referee that he/she is substituting the goalkeeper, even if he/she is switching a field player and the goalkeeper. In the case of substituting the goalkeeper, the coach **MUST** tell the center referee that he/she is changing goalkeepers or both players could receive a yellow card.
- Law IV Player's Equipment: uniforms, shin guards under the socks, and NO jewelry
- Laws V/VI The Referee & Ass't Referee: outlines the duties of each. The center referee is in charge and **can** overrule the assistant on any call.
- Law VII Duration of the match: U9/10-25 minute halves, U11/12-30 minute halves, U13/14-35 minutes, U15/16-40 minutes, and U17 and up is 45 minutes
- Law VIII Start of Play and restart: Each half starts with a kick off. Kick offs may now go in any direction, not just forward. Free kicks restart play after a foul and drop balls restart play when there is no clear reason to give a free kick when play was stopped.
- Law IX Ball in and out of play: The ball must be wholly over the goal line or touchline to be out. This is job of the Assistant Referee. **PLEASE** stay back off the touchline so the AR can see.
- Law X Method of scoring: The ball must completely cross the goal line. It matters not where the goal keeper is in relation to the goal line, it is the ball's position.
- Law XI Offside: There must be 2 defenders between an attacker when he/she receives the ball. It is where the **player is** when the **ball is kicked, not where he/she receives/plays** the ball. If a player comes from the offside position to play the ball then he/she is offside. Offside also applies if an offside player interferes with play. The Assistant Referee is in line with the next to last defender and watches/listens to when the ball is played. This is the hardest Law to understand as it has many variables. Below are some variables. A player is not offside in their own half of the field or for U9/10, the buildout line begins defining offside instead of the halfline.
- Law XII Fouls and Misconduct: direct kicks\* and indirect kicks +. Direct can be kicked straight into the goal and an indirect kick means the ball must be touched by another player before it goes into the goal.
- \*Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent-player not playing the ball results in this call.
- \*Trips or attempts to trip an opponent- player not playing the ball results in this call.
- \*Jumps at an opponent-jumps into player and is not playing the ball results in this call.

- \*Charges an opponent-runs into player whether has ball or not
- \*Strikes or attempt to strike an opponent-self-explanatory. This will result in a red card.
- \*Pushes an opponent-**pushing is extending the arm with force**. As you watch soccer, you will see players with arms out & touching an opponent, but are not forcing the player away from the ball. Usually it is both players doing it to each other so how do you call that? The referee will usually try to talk with the players while play is going on.
- \*Tackles an opponent-takes out a player without playing the ball or after the ball is gone, plays the player
- \*Spits at an opponent- self-explanatory. Can be your own teammate. Results in a red card.
- \*Holds an opponent-grabbing and holding jersey, shorts, or body part.
- \*Handles the ball deliberately-this means the player **plays the ball** with any part of the arm from the shoulder down to the hand. If the ball is kicked into the player's arm/hand, this is not called. Think this way, ball to hand-no call, but hand to ball-will be called. But it is the referee's discretion.
- +GK- holding ball > 6 seconds, 2 touch (picks up the ball after having released the ball from possession), picks up ball thrown to the GK by teammate or picks up a ball deliberately kicked to The GK by a teammate
- +Playing in a dangerous manner-known by most as "high kick" or playing the ball on the ground. Again this is the discretion of the referee if it put a player in danger.
- +Impedes progress of opponent-gets in front of a player to stop them from getting to a ball and the ball is not within playing distance-again referee discretion.
- +Prevents GK from releasing the ball-stands in front of the GK or keeps moving in front of the GK to keep them from kicking or throwing the ball.

A call may not be made right away if the referee applies "Advantage". Advantage is if the ball goes to a teammate, the original player is able to continue playing and the team is attacking and could possibly score. If "Advantage" does not develop, then the call can be made. Advantage is shown by the referee extending his/her arms forward in a sweeping motion.

Fouls can result in the player receiving a yellow or red card depending on the offense. If a player receives 2 yellows in a game, then a red is shown. That player **must leave** the game and **not be replaced**. The player **may play** in the next game as he/she is carrying. However a straight red card results in the ejection of the player without replacement and must sit out the next game.

Law XIII Free Kick: how to handle direct & indirect kicks. This directs the referee on the restart

Law XIV Penalty Kick: how to handle a Penalty kick, which results from a direct foul committed in the Penalty area

Law XV Throw-In: proper procedure-the ball must come from behind the head, feet outside the playing field (one foot on the line with part of it outside the field is a good throw) and both feet on the ground at the time of the release of the ball. The receiving player may be in the offside position and not be penalized if not touched by another player first. There are no redo's if the throw is improper. The ball will go to the opponent.

Law XVI Goal Kick: proper procedure-the ball is not live till it clears the penalty area and must be kicked from within the goal area. Note: a player is not offside if they receive the ball directly from a goal kick in the attacking side of the field. Told you offside is complicated.

Law XVII Corner Kick: proper procedure-ball must be inside the arc and move forward-not just touched. The receiving player may be in the offside position and not be penalized if not touched by another player first.

Referees are a necessary part of the game. Through the use of our presence, our voice, our whistle, and if necessary the showing of a card is how a referee controls the game. The referee is much closer to the play and may see the play differently from the sideline view. The coach and the sidelines' behavior can be a negative influence on the players and how they play. When the sidelines get loud, it influences the players. Help your referee by controlling your behavior and your sidelines. It is about the players. They just want to have fun and not get yelled at. Please accent the positives they do and let them learn from their mistakes. They know they made a mistake.

Feel free to email the Referee Director any questions (currently is [ginny.ciriot@bisasoccer.com](mailto:ginny.ciriot@bisasoccer.com)) or ask her/him at the field if they are not working a game or assisting in training. Just realize that no board member can change a referee's call and neither can the referee if play has resumed.

**REMINDER: HEADING IS ONLY ALLOWED IN U13 AND UP.** An indirect free kick for the other team will be given if the referee determines it is an intentional heading.