

Parent referee guidelines

These are guidelines for parents refereeing very young soccer players in the 6U/7U range, typically 3v3 or 4v4. Check the game format details for whether the game format is quarters or halves and duration of each. It's important that games are finished ahead of the next game's timeslot, so reduce the length of the halves and breaks if needed.

Don't change directions (switch ends) at half. It's helpful to have the kids point to the goal they are trying to score in at the beginning of each half and quarter.

Don't keep track or comment on the score. Goals are good, regardless of how many.

If the ref notices poor sportsmanship, trash talking, or other poor behavior, please remind the player that we respect the opposite team, without them they don't have a game! If it continues be sure to let the coach know, so the coach can talk to the player. Remember the coaches can't hear or see everything from the sidelines. (This happens most often after a goal)

On the opening kick offs, and after a goal, the ball starts at mid field. The starting team (the one that was scored on) lines up with the ball at the center line. The other team lines up no closer than the white circle painted on the field. Once the ball is kicked, everyone plays.

The ref must stop play whenever the ball goes out. This can either be via a good loud voice or a whistle. Give the ball to the team that did not kick the ball out. Place the ball on the side line where it went out. Choose a player to kick it in for their team. Have everyone else back up at least three big steps away from the ball. Tell the child to kick the ball into play. Try to alternate what player kicks the ball in for their team.

If the attacking team kicks it out over the goal line, the defending team will kick it in from the top of the goal square (like a goal kick). The ref should back up the other team well away from the ball, say 1/4 to 1/3 of the field, to prevent an immediate turnover / goal.

If the defending team kicks it out over the goal line, the attacking team will kick it in from where it crosses the line (rather than in the corner), but no closer to the goal than the edge of the goal box.

Subs are allowed on each stoppage of play. You don't need to ask the ref, but make sure they hold the restart until all the player changes are finished for each team. Coaches are encouraged to make adjustments to keep games as competitive as possible. Although not the preferred approach, adjusting the number of players on the field is one option they can apply.

The ref should stop play if there is deliberate hand contact with the ball. Let the team who didn't handle the ball kick it from the spot. Have everyone else back up three steps. The ref should comment ("Oops, No Hands In Soccer") on accidental hand contact with the ball, but let them play.

The ref should stop play if the kids are on the ground, or if they feel there is too much rough play. Talk to the players and give the least offending team the ball at that spot. Again have everyone else back up three steps.

It is important for refs to quickly and clearly tell the players what is happening when there is a stoppage (out of bounds, or a goal in particular). Remind any younger refs to be loud enough to get the attention of the players. If you're not sure who kicked it out, just guess and get the game going. It ain't the world cup!

Finally, the main thing is simply for the players to be safe and have fun.