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Soccer

Soccer is based on 17 main laws, which have been refined since the game's modern beginnings in Great Britain in 1863. The sport was first known in Britain as association football; this was shortened to A-soc, and, finally, soccer. The sport's popularity in the United States lagged until the 1970s, when youth leagues began to flourish. Soccer is a popular sport worldwide, especially in Argentina, Brazil, England, Germany, and Italy. In the United States, it is second only to basketball in youth participation (about 7.7 million U.S. youths play soccer). About 18 million people play soccer at least once a year in the United States, nearly half of those regularly in soccer leagues. The game is popular in the United States both recreationally and at youth and high school levels.

Objective: To score as many points as possible by putting the ball into the opponents' goal.

Number of Players: Eleven per side (for short-sided games, see "Modifications" on page 201).

Scoring: A goal (one point) is scored when the ball completely crosses the goal line under the crossbar and between the goal posts.

Length of Game: Two 45-minute halves with a 5-minute halftime.

Overview: The player who begins the game by kicking off may not touch the ball again until another player has. Players must use their feet, heads, or chests to play

the ball; with the exception of the goalkeeper—and of making a *throw-in*—players may not use their hands or arms. The game proceeds with each team attempting to control the ball, move it down the field, and score a goal.

FIELD

See figure 31.1 for the components and dimensions of a soccer field.

TERMS

An **advantage** refers to a situation in which the referee calls “Play on!” despite a foul—because the team that would be given a free kick already has the advantage of a scoring or passing opportunity.

A **corner kick** is awarded the opposing team when a player kicks the ball over his own goal line. For a corner kick, all opposing players must be at least 10 yards from the ball.

A **direct free kick** occurs after any of nine fouls (see page 200).

A **foul** (see page 200) results in a direct or an indirect free kick for the opposing team at the spot of the foul.

A **goal** (see “Scoring” on page 197) may not be scored directly from a *kickoff*, *goal kick*, or *throw-in*. A goal may be scored directly from a *corner kick*, from an opposing goalkeeper’s punt, or by an attacker carrying the ball in on her chest or between her knees or feet. An attacking player may not use her hands or arms to throw, carry, or propel the ball across the goal line.

A **goal kick** occurs after a player kicks the ball over the opposing team’s goal line. The opposing team is awarded the goal kick. Opposing players must be outside the penalty box; the ball may be kicked by either the goalkeeper or another player. It must be kicked beyond the penalty box area to be put into play. The player who kicks the ball may not touch the ball again until another player has done so.

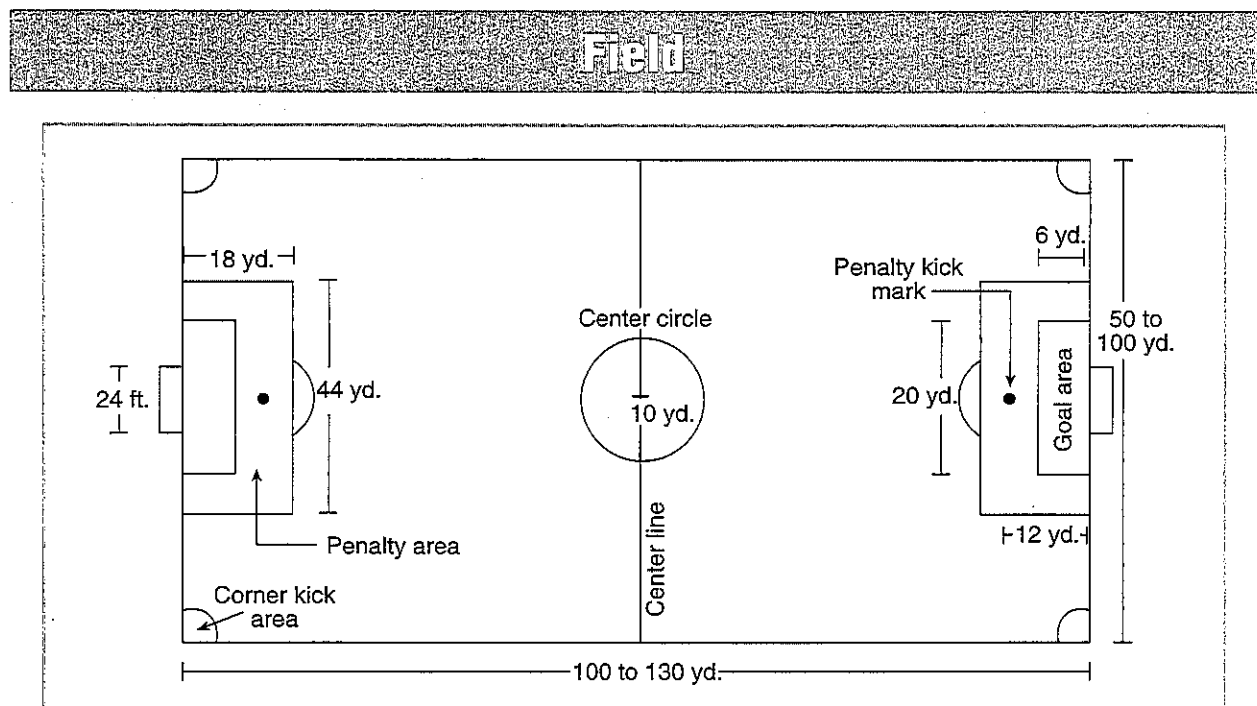


Figure 31.1 The components and dimensions of a soccer field.

Adapted from American Coaching Effectiveness Program 1991.

A player **heads the ball** by hitting it with her head. It is not a foul if a player who jumps and heads the ball bumps into an opponent on the way down.

An **indirect free kick** is awarded for various violations (see page 200).

The **offside** rule is explained later on this page.

The ball is not **out of play** (out of bounds) until the entire ball has crossed over the touch line or goal line. A player may go out of bounds to keep the ball in play. A ball is in play once it bounces back onto the field after hitting a goal post, crossbar, or corner post, and once it hits an official who is in bounds.

A team is awarded a **penalty kick** when an opposing player commits an intentional foul. All players except the kicker and the goalkeeper must stand outside the penalty area, at least 10 yards from the ball. The goalkeeper must stand on his goal line and not move his feet until the kick is made. If the ball is stopped by the goalkeeper and rebounds into the field, play continues. If a goal is not scored and the ball goes out of bounds after being touched by the goalkeeper, the attacking team gets a corner kick.

A **shoulder charge** is the only body contact allowed. It occurs when two players press shoulders while attempting to gain possession of the ball. For a shoulder charge to be legal, players must be within playing distance of the ball and have at least one foot on the ground.

A **sliding tackle** occurs when a player slides to kick the ball away from an opponent.

A team is awarded a **throw-in** when the ball goes over the sideline, last touched by an opponent. A player throws the ball in from over her head, with both feet on the ground at the moment of release. At least part of each foot must be on or behind the sideline. If the throw-in is done incorrectly, the opposing team is awarded a throw-in.

A referee may issue a player a **warning** (yellow card) for misconduct or **eject** a player

(red card) for violent conduct, a serious foul, or abusive language.

PLAYERS

Each team has up to 11 players; one is the goalkeeper. The other players are known as defenders, midfielders, and forwards, or strikers. In major competitions, a team may not use more than 3 substitutes in a game. In other competitions, up to 5 may be used. Any player, with the referee's approval and when play is stopped, may substitute for the goalkeeper.

A substitute must be summoned onto the field by the referee and must enter the field at the center line after the player she is replacing has left the field. Once a player has been replaced, she may not return to the game. (Different soccer associations have variations of this substitution rule for youth, women's, and senior competitions.)

PLAY

Some of the basic play is governed by the rules concerning offside, free kicks, and goal-keeping.

Offside

A player is offside if he is closer to the opponents' goal line than the ball is, unless the player is still in his own half of the field or at least two opponents are closer to the opponents' goal line. Offside is determined by the player's position at the moment of the pass, not at the moment he receives the pass.

A player is *not* offside when he receives a ball that bounces off a defender who had possession of the ball; that comes at him directly from a goal kick, corner kick, or throw-in; that was deflected by the goalkeeper; or that was shot at the goal and bounces off a defender. Nor is a player offside when he is in line with a defender at the moment of the pass.

A player is not called offside for merely being in an offside position. The player must be participating in the play to be ruled offside.

When a player is offside, the opposing team receives an indirect free kick at the point of the infraction.

Free Kicks

There are two types of free kicks: direct free kicks, awarded for any of nine fouls committed by the other team, and indirect free kicks, awarded for other violations made by the opposing team. Opposing players must be at least 10 yards from the ball during a free kick. Any free kick awarded to the defending team within its own goal area may be taken from any point within the goal area. An indirect free kick awarded to the attacking team within the opponents' goal area will be taken from the goal-area line nearest to the point where the infraction occurred. A goal may be scored on a direct free kick with no other player touching the ball; on an indirect free kick, another player must touch the ball first before a goal can be scored.

A *direct free kick* is awarded to a team's opponents when that team

- kicks, trips, or pushes an opponent;
- jumps into an opponent;
- violently or dangerously charges an opponent, or charges an opponent from behind;
- strikes an opponent with the hand, arm, or elbow;
- holds an opponent's body or clothing; or
- plays the ball anywhere on the arm, from the shoulder to the fingertips (except for the goalkeeper).

An *indirect free kick* is awarded the opposing team when a player

- is offside;
- obstructs an opponent by deliberately blocking his path, instead of playing the ball;
- kicks too high, thus putting an opponent in danger;
- bends low, putting himself in danger;

- conducts himself in an unsporting manner;
- charges an opponent when the ball is more than one step away; or
- charges into the goalkeeper while in the goal area, preventing the goalkeeper from playing the ball or retaining possession.

An indirect free kick is also awarded when a goalkeeper takes more than four steps before releasing the ball.

Goalkeepers are also governed by the following rules.

Goalkeeping

These rules address the use of hands and of time-delaying tactics: The goalkeeper must release the ball before taking more than four steps. She may not touch the ball again with her hands before another player touches it outside of the penalty area. A goalkeeper may use her hands to field a ball that has been deliberately headed or kned to her by a teammate, but she may *not* use her hands to field a ball that has been intentionally kicked to her by a teammate.

A goalkeeper may not delay the game by holding the ball before punting. (Penalty: An indirect free kick is taken from the spot of the violation, or, if it occurred within the goalkeeper's area, the kick is taken from the goal-area line that runs parallel to the goal line, nearest the spot of the infraction.)

EQUIPMENT

The ball is round, is covered in leather or a leather-like material, and is between 27 and 28 inches in circumference. It must weigh 14 to 16 ounces and have 14 pounds of air pressure. Players dress in team shirts, shorts, shin guards, and socks. Shoes may have studs if they are rounded, no longer than .75 inch, and no less than .5 inch in diameter. Goalkeepers often wear elbow and knee pads and gloves. The goalkeeper wears a different-colored uniform from that of his teammates. Any equipment deemed dangerous to players may not be worn. This

includes earrings, glasses, necklaces, bracelets, watches, and casts and braces that the referee considers dangerous.

OFFICIALS

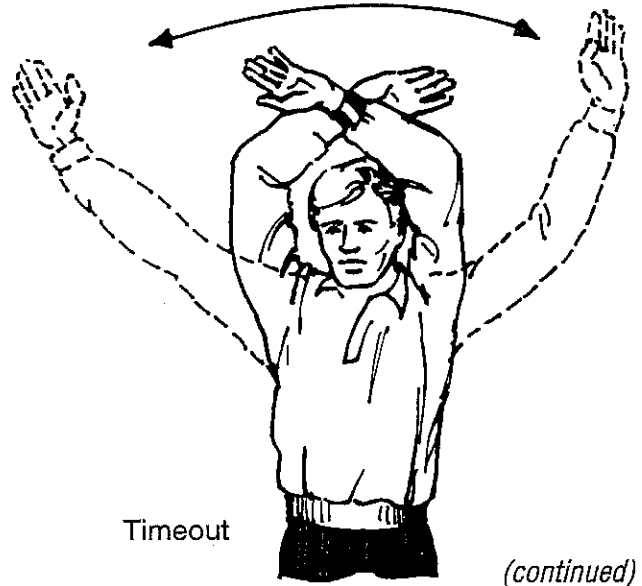
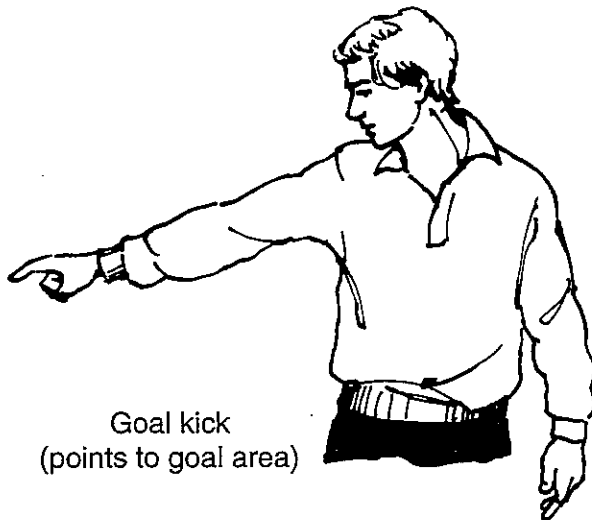
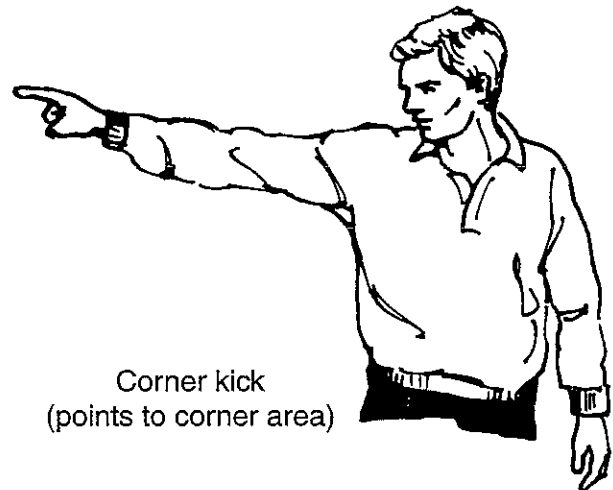
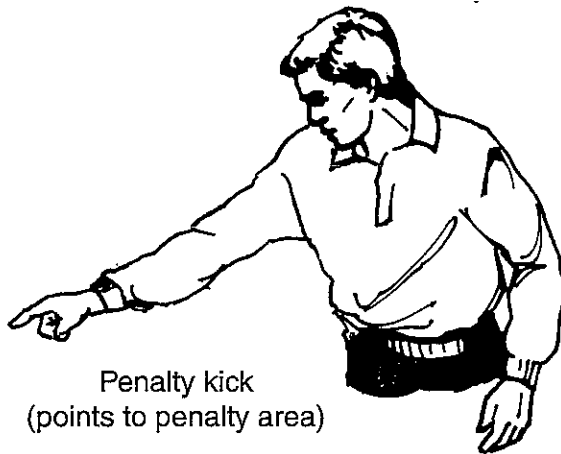
One referee and two assistant referees control the game. The referee is responsible for enforcing the rules, keeping the time and score, and issuing warnings and ejecting players and coaches. The referee signals the start and end of the game.

The assistant referees indicate when and where a ball goes out of bounds and determine

which team is awarded a throw-in, goal kick, or corner kick. They also call offside plays and flag other violations that the referee misses. For various officials' signals, see figure 31.2.

MODIFICATIONS

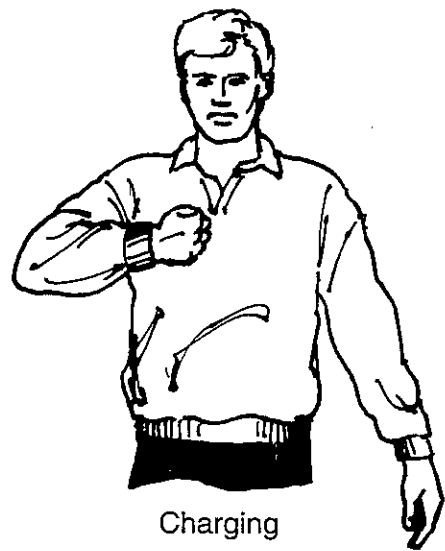
Different organizations modify the sport in different ways; in essentially all cases, younger players don't play 11 on 11, but play short-sided games ranging from 3 on 3 through 9 on 9. Following are general recommendations that can be used as is or further modified for youngsters playing soccer.



► Figure 31.2 Common soccer officials' signals.



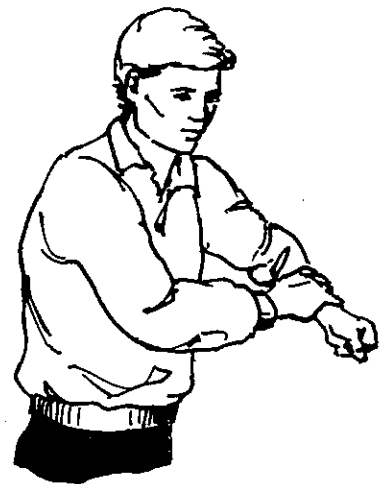
Misconduct



Charging



Offside



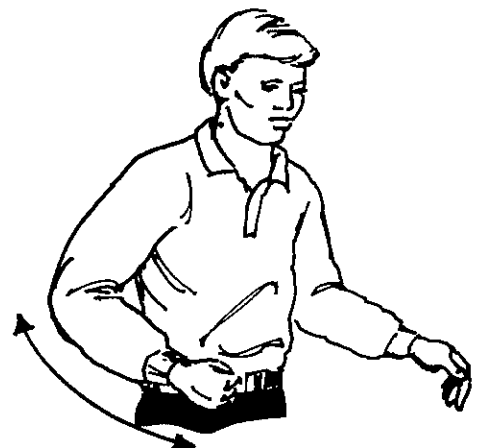
Holding



Charging violently



Indirect goal kick



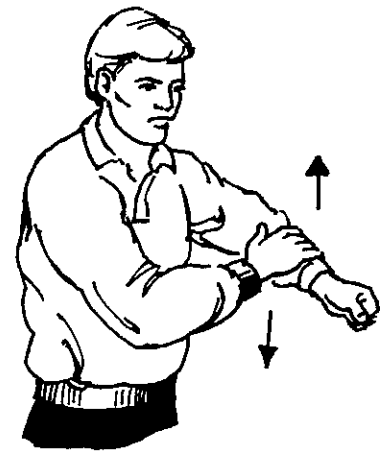
Striking

(continued)

▼ Figure 31.2 (continued)



Pushing



Handling ball



Tripping



Kicking

➤ Figure 31.2 (continued)

9 on 9

This is often played by 12-and-under leagues; a goalie is required for this level. Field size is 90 yards long by 45 yards wide. Ball size is 4. The goals are 2.7 yards high by 8 yards wide. Game length is four 15-minute periods. The basic rules of the game remain the same.

7 on 7

This is often played by 10-and-under leagues. Goalies are allowed but not required. Field size is 80 yards long by 40 yards wide. Ball size is 4. The goals are 2.3 yards high by 7 yards wide. Game length is four 12-minute periods. The basic rules are the same, except that in starting play and on free kicks and penalty kicks, opponents must be at least 8 yards away from the ball.

5 on 5

This is often played by 8-and-under leagues. Goalies are allowed but not required. Field size is 50 yards long by 25 yards wide. Ball size is 3. The goals are 2 yards high by 6 yards wide. Game length is four 10-minute periods. The basic rules are the same, except for these differences:

- On kickoffs, opponents must be at least 6 yards away from the ball.
- On fouls, players get direct free kicks, with opponents at least 6 yards away.
- Offside is not called.
- All kicks are direct free kicks.
- There are no penalty kicks.
- A player who fouls on the first throw-in gets a second chance.
- A goal kick is taken from any point within the goal area with opponents at least 6 yards away.
- Opponents must be at least 8 yards away on corner kicks.

3 on 3

This is often played by 6-and-under leagues. Goalies are not used. Field size is 30 yards long by 15 yards wide. Ball size is 3. The goals are

1.3 yards high by 2 yards wide. Game length is four 5-minute periods. The basic rules are the same as those for 5 on 5, with these exceptions:

- Play begins with a free kick with opponents at least 5 yards away.
- Direct free kicks are awarded for all fouls, with opponents 5 yards away.
- When the ball goes over a touch line, it is put back into play with a throw-in where the ball crossed the line.
- When a ball goes over the goal line (but is not a goal), it is kicked back into play where it crossed the line.

ORGANIZATIONS

American Youth Soccer Organization
12501 S. Isis Avenue
Hawthorne, CA 90250
800-872-2972
www.soccer.org

Cosmopolitan Soccer League
7800 River Road
North Bergen, NJ 07047
201-861-6606
www.newyorksoccer.com

Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)
FIFA House
Hitzigweg 11
P.O. Box 85
8030 Zurich, Switzerland
+41-1/384 9595

National Soccer Coaches Association of America
6700 Squibb Road, Suite 215
Mission, KS 66202
913-362-1747
www.nscaa.com

Soccer Association for Youth
4050 Executive Park Drive, Suite 100
Cincinnati, OH 45241
513-769-3800
www.saysoccer.org

United States Soccer Federation
www.ussoccer.com