

WHAT IS

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Futsal

FUTSAL?



# WHAT IS

# FUTSAL?

**Futsal is an exciting, fast-paced small sided football game that originates from South America in the 1930s.**

It is widely played across the world, and is the small sided football format that is officially recognised by both UEFA and FIFA.

The nature of the game places a large emphasis on technical skill and ability in situations of high pressure, and is subsequently an excellent breeding ground for football competencies that can be translated into the 11-a-side format of the game.

Futsal began in Uruguay and Brazil where the large crowded cities and a shortage of playing pitches forced a football mad populace to play small sided football and in 1936 the first rules emerged. Futsal was the name chosen by FIFA, which is simply a combination of the Spanish words for 'hall' (Sala) and 'football' (Futbol): hence 'Futsal'.

**Many of the top world class** footballers played Futsal in their youth and credit it with supporting their footballing development; players of the calibre of Pele, Zico, Ronaldinho, Kaka and Lionel Messi to name but a few of the South American legends who all played and enjoyed Futsal. But Futsal has not just helped produce South American football stars. On the European stage Cristiano Ronaldo, Deco, Xavi and Fabregas, amongst many others, have played Futsal to develop their skills.

*“Futsal was important in helping to develop my ball control, quick thinking, passing... also for dribbling, balance, concentration... Futsal was very, very important, no doubt.”*  
Pele, World Cup Winner: 1958, 1962 & 1970

*“I played Futsal for many years and it helped me to become the player I am today. There you don't have time to think, you are always tightly marked and you develop a sense for performing in small spaces.”*  
Robinho, Brazil

## THE BASIC RULES

Futsal is a five-a-side game, normally played on a flat indoor pitch with hockey sized goals and a size four ball with a reduced bounce. It is played to touchlines and all players are free to enter the penalty area and play the ball over head height. Games are 20 minutes per half, played to a stopping clock (similar to basketball) with time-outs permitted.

There are a number of differences to our traditional version of small sided football, but the dominant elements are the absence of rebound boards and amendments in the laws that encourage and foster skilful, creative play above the physical contact that tends to be a feature of English five-a-side.



# WORLD

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## Futsal is the dominant form of small sided football across the world.

Over 96 countries entered the FIFA Futsal World Cup held in Brazil in 2008. Along with a World Cup for Futsal, there is a UEFA European Futsal Championship for international teams to enter every two years and there is an annual UEFA Futsal Cup which acts as the "Champions League" for Futsal, with national domestic club champions entering. The rapid growth and development of Futsal is acknowledged by FIFA, who claim that it is the "fastest growing indoor sport in the world."

FIFA, UEFA and The FA are keen to support the development of Futsal for a number of reasons, but primarily for the recognised benefits that Futsal offers for the technical development of football players. Many countries that we admire for the technical skills of their players use Futsal as an aspect of their youth development. Ball retention, quick and skilful play, and tactical awareness are all major assets that the game of Futsal helps to promote.

### The Brazilian 2002 World Cup winning coach Luiz Scolari has commented that:

"Futsal is a good starting point for a footballer, we need to take advantage of what Futsal has to offer."

On top of this testament from a respected coach, world-class foreign players that we admire in England for their silky touches, wonderful vision and amazing ball-control openly attribute an important element of their skill development to their involvement in Futsal.

"Futsal is an extremely important way for kids to develop their skills and understanding of the game. My touch and my dribbling have come from playing Futsal."

Ronaldinho, FIFA World Footballer of the Year 2004 & 2005

"In Futsal you have to think quickly and play fast. It's a great environment in which to learn."

Zico, 88 games & 66 goals for Brazil

"I really liked playing Futsal. Futsal helped me a lot."

Luis Fabiano, Brazil



# FUTSAL

## IN ENGLAND

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**Since 2003 The FA have been supporting the introduction of Futsal in England.**

During that time the game has grown rapidly. From humble beginnings within this country, with limited awareness and even more limited structures, The FA has established a framework for promoting and developing the sport.

To support the growth and development of Futsal, The FA has been working closely with schools, teachers and young people across the country to build the awareness and understanding of Futsal. The FA has also introduced a Futsal Referees Course and runs high-quality Futsal Coaching Courses.



**England Senior Men's Team** enters the FIFA Futsal World Cup and UEFA European Futsal Championships as well as playing a number of international friendly matches each season. The England team draws their players from the leading Futsal clubs that play in the FA National Futsal Leagues.



**FA National Futsal Leagues** were established in 2008 and are comprised of three regional divisions (North, Midlands and South) with eight teams in each division that play throughout the season. The top two teams from each league progress to the Grand Finals to contest the title of National Futsal Champions. The National Champions progress into the UEFA European Futsal Cup to represent England.



**The FA Futsal Cup** was established in 2004 offering competitive Futsal opportunities for both men's and women's Futsal teams through local qualifying leagues, to regional finals and onto the three-day National Finals. In 2009 over 500 teams from across the country entered The FA Futsal Cup.



**British Universities and British Colleges Futsal Championships** are two competitions that have been going from strength-to-strength over recent years with a large number of colleges and universities across Britain entering male and female teams. The growth of university and college Futsal is significantly important for the ongoing development of the game.



**The FA National Youth Futsal Festival** has been running since 2007 to encourage young people to participate in Futsal. Boys' and girls' teams from across the country between the ages of 10 - 16 years old progress through regional festivals to reach the National Youth Futsal Festival. This event is hugely popular and is helping to promote the game within schools and youth clubs.



# PLAYING FUTSAL:

## GETTING STARTED

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**Futsal is still a relatively new sport in England.**



This means you may find difficulties in finding an appropriately sized court or are unable to access proper Futsal goals. But try not to be put off by this; in essence Futsal is a simple game that at a recreational level can be played anywhere.

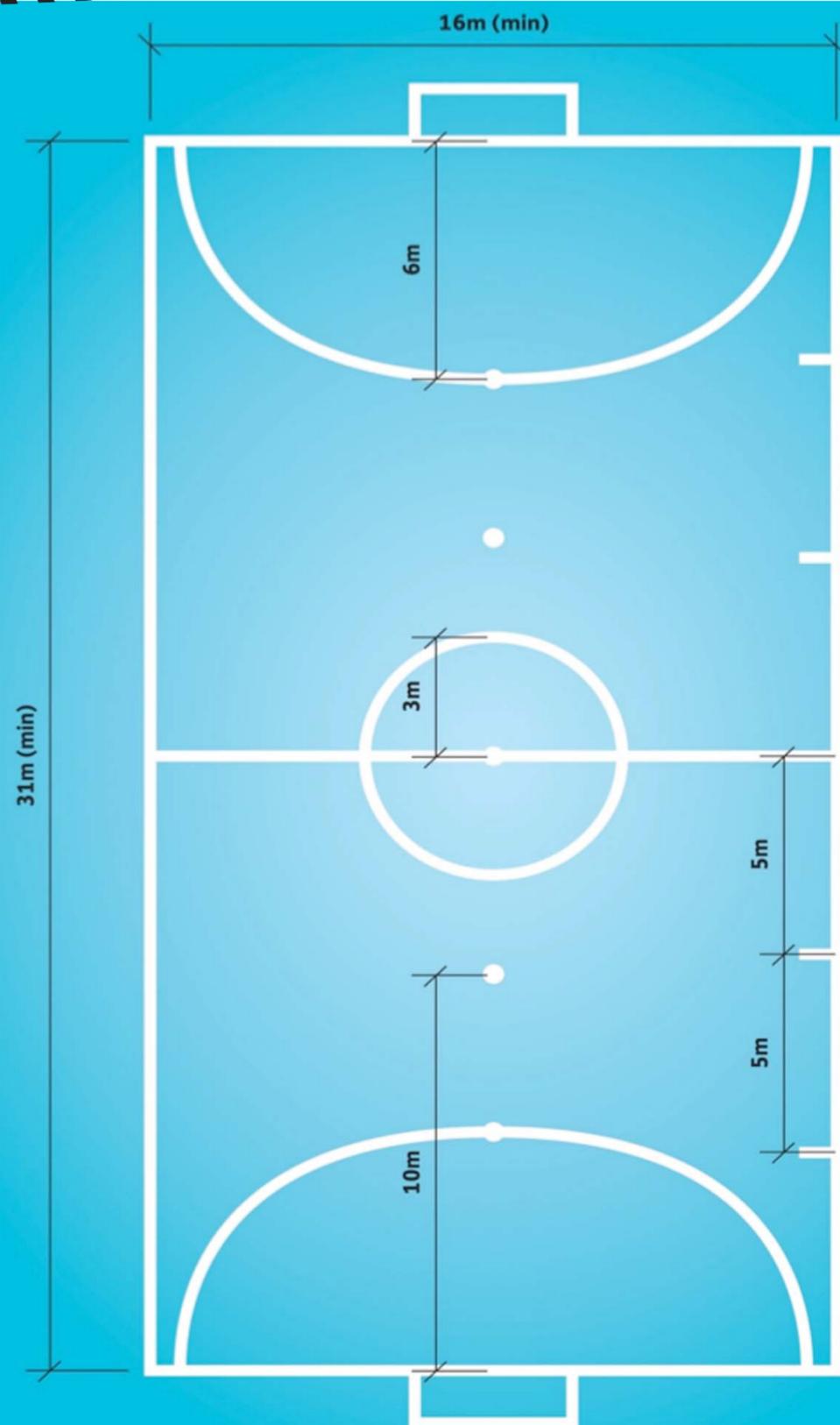
### Futsal Pitch

Ideally the game should be played indoors in any appropriately sized school or community sports hall. At a recreational level we would suggest that the minimum pitch size is 25 metres by 15 metres with a run-off around the pitch of two metres. The floor surface should be wooden or a suitable synthetic floor that is smooth and flat. Pitch markings can be laid down with tape.

Although we would recommend playing the game indoors, at an introductory stage there is no harm in playing outdoors as long as the surface is hard and firm. Futsal can be played on artificial grass, but this surface does slow the pace of the game. For this reason Futsal shouldn't be played on grass.

### Futsal Pitch dimensions

The minimum pitch dimensions are 25m x 15m  
The maximum pitch dimensions are 42m x 25m



# FUTSAL

## EQUIPMENT

**It is important to know what types of equipment are needed when playing Futsal.**

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### Futsal goals

Futsal goals are three metres by two metres in dimension and inflatable goals can be purchased as well as the stronger metal goals. Futsal goals are very similar to hockey or handball goals, and these alternatives could be used if you are struggling to access proper Futsal goals. As with any form of football, do make sure that the goals are safe and secure before you start playing.

### Futsal ball

In order to play a game that truly resembles Futsal you will need a proper Futsal ball, as these are smaller and heavier than a normal football. The Futsal ball is an essential component, and if neglected in favour of a normal 11-a-side football the essence and nature of the game will substantially be altered.

### Futsal Referees

At elite levels of the game, three referees and a timekeeper are required to officiate a Futsal match. At a recreational level this is not essential but the job of effectively refereeing a game and managing the time can be challenging for one person to do on their own.



# FUTSAL LAWS

## OF THE GAME

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The official Laws of Futsal are available to download from the FIFA website, [www.FIFA.com](http://www.FIFA.com)



Here is an abridged version to provide a simple introduction to the principles of Futsal, and to assist in differentiating the game from other versions of 5-a-side football.

For further information on Futsal, visit the following sites:

[www.TheFA.com](http://www.TheFA.com)  
[www.FIFA.com](http://www.FIFA.com)  
[www.Uefa.com](http://www.Uefa.com)  
[www.futsalplanet.com](http://www.futsalplanet.com)

### The Pitch

Futsal is played on a marked pitch and the ball can go out of play.

### Head Height

There are no height restrictions.

### Substitutions

Up to 12 players can be used in one match and there is no limit on how long a player must stay on or off the pitch. Players must enter and leave the field of play from in front of the respective team's bench.

### Goalkeepers

Goalkeepers are allowed to come out of, and players are allowed to go into, the penalty area.

### Kick In

In order to restart the game after a ball has gone out of play the ball is kicked back into play from the touchline and from corners. The ball must be placed stationary on the touchline and the feet of the player taking the kick in must not cross the line.

### The Five Metre Rule

Players are required to keep five metres from the player in possession of the ball on free kicks, corners, goal clearances, kick ins and penalties.

### Red Cards

If a player is sent off then the team to which the player belongs must remain with four players until either two minutes have passed, or the opposition have scored a goal.

### The Four Second Rule

For kick ins, free kicks, goal clearances and corner kicks the player in possession of the ball has four seconds to restart play which the referee will count with their fingers in the air. If play isn't restarted within four seconds an indirect free kick will be awarded to the opposing team. The goalkeeper is not allowed to control the ball for more than four seconds in his own half.

### Back Passes

A goal clearance must be thrown out and the goalkeeper cannot touch the ball again unless an opposition player has touched the ball or if the goalkeeper is passed the ball in the opponents' half.

### Accumulated Fouls

Each team will be allowed to give away five direct free kicks in each half of the game, then on the sixth foul a direct kick will be awarded to the opposing team and the defending team is not allowed to position any players (other than the goal keeper) between the ball and the goal. The kick may be taken from the 10 metre mark or, if the foul was committed closer to the goal than the 10 metre mark, then the kick may be taken from the position where the foul took place.

### Duration

Matches are played with a stopping clock (real time) whereby the clock will be stopped whenever the ball goes out of play or when there is a stoppage in the game. Futsal games consist of two halves of 20 minutes.

### Timeouts

Each team is permitted one timeout of 60 seconds each half.

