Guidance for Officials

Officiating Youth Football
(Mini Soccer, 9 v 9 & 11 v 11)

June 2025

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This guidance is provided to support Referees within Hampshire who officiate Youth Football at Mini Soccer, 9 v 9 & 11 v 11. This guidance will assist referees in understanding the differences in the types of football that they may be asked to officiate. This document should be read along side the FA Mini-Soccer Handbook 2024.

This can be downloaded using the following QR Code:

At the rear of this guidance document is an overview of the types of football.

Referees are reminded that unless otherwise stated the Laws of the Game 2025/26 take precedence.*

*** Law 4 – The Players' Equipment**

In terms of Law, the compulsory equipment of a player comprises the following separate items:

- **A shirt with sleeves**
- **Shorts**
- **Socks**
- **Shinguards**
- **Footwear**

[Referees should exercise common sense in regard to the provision of undershirts, undershorts/tights when officiating youth football]. In that whilst law specifies that these items should be the same colour as the team's colours. As match officials we have a duty of care to ensure players remain warm and comfortable, and therefore players should be allowed to play if their undergarments do not conform.

Respect Code of Conduct – Match Officials

We all have a responsibility to promote high standards of the game.

The behaviour of the match officials has an impact, directly and indirectly, on the conduct of everyone involved in the game – both on the

Pitch and on the sidelines.

Play your part and observe the FA's Respect Code of Conduct of match officials at all times.

I will:

- Be honest and completely impartial at all times.
- Apply the Laws of the Game and competition rules fairly and consistently.
- Manage the game in a positive, calm, and confident manner.
- Deal with instances of violence, aggression, unsporting behaviour, foul play, and other misconduct.
- Never tolerate offensive, insulting, or abusive language or behaviour from players and officials.
- Support my match official colleagues at all times.
- Set a positive personal example by promoting good behaviour and showing respect to everyone involved in the game.
- Communicate with the players and encourage Fair Play.
- Respond in a clear, calm, and confident manner to any appropriate request for clarification by team captains.
- Prepare physically and mentally for every match.
- Complete and submit, accurate and concise reports with the time limit required for games in which I officiate.
- If you have a Safeguarding Concern this should be reported Immediately to: Safeguarding@HampshireFA.Com

I understand that if I do not follow the Code, any/all of the following actions may be taken by the County FA or the FA:

- ***I may be:***
    - Required to meet with The FA/County FA Refereeing Official.

Referees Department
Hampshire FA
Winklebury Football Complex
Winklebury Way
Basingstoke
Hampshire
RG23 8BF

Except where other provisions in these Laws are made, the Laws of the Game 2025/26 apply. Each Law is numbered to correspond with the appropriate Law of the Game.

Law 1: The Field of Play

Size of Pitch – the dimensions shown below are the Maximum Dimensions.

Width	Length
30 Yards	40 Yards
27 Metres	36 Metres

Penalty Area

Width	Length
16 Yards	9 Yards
14.63 Metres	8.22 Metres

Penalty Mark

The penalty mark is 7.00 Yards (6.40 Metres) from the midpoint between the goalposts.

Halfway Line

The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line. The centre mark is indicated at the mid-point of the halfway line. This is also used as the retreat line when restarting play with a goal kick.

Goal Size

The distance between the posts is 3.6m (12 feet) and the distance between the lower edge of the crossbar and the ground is 1.88m (6 feet).

WARNING

In view of a number of accidents that have occurred, it is necessary to ensure that portable goals of any size are either pinned or weighted down to prevent them from toppling over.

Law 2: The Ball

The ball should be Size 3 for U7 & U8. It should be made of leather or other suitable material.

Law 3: The Players

Maximum number per team including Goalkeeper	
Under 7 and Under 8	5 v 5

The above table indicates the maximum number of players per team at that age group. If the competition would like to have smaller numbers, e.g. 4 v 4 at U7 or U8, this is allowed within this framework.

A match may not START if either team consists of fewer than FOUR players. The minimum number of players in a team required for a match to CONTINUE is also four. Matches can begin with 5 v 4 but the importance and ethos of Mini-Soccer should be upheld whenever possible, and the development of the children should come before the score line.

Players must play with and against players only from their own age range, as per Football Association and Competition rules. Each team must not have a squad greater than double the size of the team per age.

Any number of substitutes, without being named, may be used at any time with the permission of the referee. A player who has been replaced may return to the playing area as a substitute for another player. All team members should receive equal playing time where possible, with a best practice recommendation of at least 50% per player for each game.

Law 4: The Players' Equipment

Goal keepers must wear a distinguishing playing top. Players must wear Shin Guards which must be covered entirely by the socks. Players must wear the appropriate clothing dependant on the weather.

Correct footwear must be worn for the surface of the pitch e.g., no metal studs on artificial grass pitches.

Law 5: The Referee

The Authority of the Referee

Each match is controlled by a referee who has full authority to enforce the Laws of the Game in connection with the match to which they have been appointed.

Leagues and Clubs are reminded - that they may be appointed a young referee to officiate their matches and must remember that the young referee like the players is developing his/her skills just the same as players. Please therefore support your referee.

A competition may include in its regulations a provision by which a person who is not a registered Match Official may carry out the duties of a Match Official in a specific Match but only in circumstances where a registered Match Official cannot be appointed to or officiate in that Match. In these circumstances the appointed unregistered and/or unqualified match Official will carry the same powers and duties of an appointed registered Match Official for the purpose of that match.

Furthermore, referees should also recognise their role is to facilitate the learning of the players, for example, allow young children to take a second attempt at a throw-in if the first attempt is not with the Laws of the Game.

Law 6: The Other Match Officials

Assistant Referees are not required.

Law 7: The Duration of the Match

In any one day, no player shall play more than 40 minutes. It is the responsibility of the parent/carer or organisation to ensure that the child does not exceed this. Each league/competition will determine its own playing time with the maximum time permitted, however, the maximum duration will be two halves of 20 minutes.

It is permitted during development matches that the periods of play can be split into equal quarters. The half time interval must not exceed five minutes. Please refer to the Standard Code of Rules for Youth Competitions.

Law 8: The Start and Restart of Play

Procedure

A kick-off is taken at the centre of the playing area to start the game and after a goal has been scored. Opponents must be five yards away from the ball and in their own half of the field of play. The ball can be kicked in any direction. In Mini Soccer a goal CANNOT be scored directly from a start or restart of play.

Dropped Ball

A dropped ball is a way of re-staring the match when the referee stops play and Law does not require a Direct/Indirect Free Kick to take place.

Procedure:

- The ball is dropped for the defending team goalkeeper in their penalty area if, when play was stopped:
  - The ball was in the penalty area.
  - The last touch of the ball was in the penalty area.
- In all other cases, the referee drops the ball for one player of the team that last touched the ball at the position where it last touched a player, an outside agent, or as outlined in Law 9.1, a match official.
- All other players (of both team) must remain at least 4m (4.5 yds) from the ball until it is in play.
- The ball is in play when it touches the ground.

Law 9: The Ball in and Out of Play

As per The Laws of the Game 2025/26.

Law 10: Determining the Outcome of a Match

As per The Laws of the Game 2025/26.

Law 11: Offside

There is NO offside.

Law 12: Fouls and Misconduct

Normal rules apply, as per The Laws of the Game 2025/26. However, in Mini Soccer all free kicks are DIRECT, expect when a deliberate header has occurred.

- A goalkeeper is not allowed to pick up the ball from a back pass or a throw in.
- If this happens a free kick should be given on the penalty area line closest to where the incident occurs.
- **For Under 7s to Under 10s (2025/26 season);**

- Deliberately heading the ball is an offence punishable by an indirect free kick. The indirect free kick is taken at the point where the ball was deliberately headed, except; Where a player deliberately heads the ball within their own penalty area, the referee will stop the game and restart with an indirect free kick to the opposition from the nearest side line of the penalty area where the offence took place.



Law 13: Free Kicks

For ALL Free Kicks opponents must be five yards from the ball.

Law 14: The Penalty Kick

As per The Laws of the Game 2025/26.

Position of the Ball and Players – All players except the defending goalkeeper and the kicker must be outside the penalty area and at least 5 yards from the penalty mark. The ball must be kicked forward.

Law 15: Pass or Dribble-In

Please review Mini Soccer Handbook 2024 (and accompanying video).

- Pass or Dribble-In U7-U10 (2025/26)
  - Traditional throw-ins will no longer take place and will be replaced by a pass or dribble-in.
- When the whole of the ball passes over the touchline, on the ground or in the air, instead of a throw-in, a pass-in or dribble-in is awarded.
- A kicker taking a pass-in may choose to touch the ball again before it is touched by any other player.

Procedure

- At the moment of delivering the ball:
  - The ball must be stationary on the touchline at the point where it left the pitch; only the kicker may be off the pitch.
  - All opponents must stand at least 5 yards from the point on the touchline where the pass-in or dribble-in is taken from.
  - A goal cannot be scored directly from a pass-in.

        - Players can score directly from a dribble in (expectation they will touch the ball more than once (dribble) before attempting to score).
    - The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves.
- If from a **kick in** the ball is kicked directly into the opponent's goal (then a goal kick is awarded).

Laws 16: The Goal Kick

Procedure

A player of the defending team kicks the ball from any point within the penalty area. Opponents **must** retreat to their own half until the ball is in play. This is known as the Retreat Line.

Once the ball is in play, the team without the ball can try and win it back.

Law 17: The Corner Kick

The opposing players must remain at least five yards from the ball until it is in play.

The kicker may not touch the ball again until it has touched another player. If he/she does, a free kick is awarded to the opposing team.

The ball is in play immediately when it is kicked and moves.

Except where other provisions in these Laws are made, the Laws of the Game 2025/26 apply. Each Law is numbered to correspond with the appropriate Law of the Game.

Law 1: The Field of Play

Size of Pitch – the dimensions shown below are the Maximum Dimensions.

Width	Length
40 Yards	60 Yards
36 Metres	54 Metres

Penalty Area

Width	Length
18 Yards	10 Yards
16.47 Metres	9.15 Metres

Penalty Mark

The penalty mark is 8.00 Yards (7.32 Metres) from the midpoint between the goalposts.

Halfway Line

The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line. The centre mark is indicated at the mid-point of the halfway line. This is also used as the retreat line when restarting play with a goal kick.

Goal Size

The distance between the posts is 3.6m (12 feet) and the distance between the lower edge of the crossbar and the ground is 1.88m (6 feet).

WARNING

In view of a number of accidents that have occurred, it is necessary to ensure that portable goals of any size are either pinned or weighted down to prevent them from toppling over.

Law 2: The Ball

The ball should be Size 3 for U9 and size 3 for U10. It should be made of leather or other suitable material.

Law 3: The Players

Maximum number per team including Goalkeeper	
Under 9 and Under 10	7 v 7

The above table indicates the maximum number of players per team at that age group. If the competition would like to have smaller numbers, e.g. 5 v 5 at U9 or U10, this is allowed within this framework.

A match may not START if either team consists of fewer than FIVE players. The minimum number of players in a team required for a match to CONTINUE is also five. Matches can begin with 7 v 6 but the importance and ethos of Mini-Soccer should be upheld whenever possible, and the development of the children should come before the score line.

Players must play with and against players only from their own age range, as per Football Association and Competition rules. Each team must not have a squad greater than double the size of the team per age.

Any number of substitutes, without being named, may be used at any time with the permission of the referee. A player who has been replaced may return to the playing area as a substitute for another player. All team members should receive equal playing time where possible, with a best practice recommendation of at least 50% per player for each game.

Law 4: The Players' Equipment

Goal keepers must wear a distinguishing playing top. Players must wear Shin Guards which must be covered entirely by the socks. Players must wear the appropriate clothing dependant on the weather.

Correct footwear must be worn for the surface of the pitch e.g., no metal studs on artificial grass pitches.

Law 5: The Referee

The Authority of the Referee

Each match is controlled by a referee who has full authority to enforce the Laws of the Game in connection with the match to which they have been appointed.

Leagues and Clubs are reminded - that they may be appointed a young referee to officiate their matches and must remember that the young referee like the players is developing his/her skills just the same as players. Please therefore support your referee.

A competition may include in its regulations a provision by which a person who is not a registered Match Official may carry out the duties of a Match Official in a specific Match but only in circumstances where a registered Match Official cannot be appointed to or officiate in that Match. In these circumstances the appointed unregistered and/or unqualified match Official will carry the same powers and duties of an appointed registered Match Official for the purpose of that match.

Furthermore, referees should also recognise their role is to facilitate the learning of the players, for example, allow young children to take a second attempt at a throw-in if the first attempt is not with the Laws of the Game.

Law 6: The Other Match Officials

Assistant Referees are not required.

Law 7: The Duration of the Match

In any one day, no player shall play more than 60 minutes. It is the responsibility of the parent/carer or organisation to ensure that the child does not exceed this. Each league/competition will determine its own playing time with the maximum time permitted, however, the maximum duration will be two halves of 25 minutes.

It is permitted during development matches that the periods of play can be split into equal quarters. The half time interval must not exceed five minutes. Please refer to the Standard Code of Rules for Youth Competitions.

Law 8: The Start and Restart of Play

Procedure

A kick-off is taken at the centre of the playing area to start the game and after a goal has been scored. Opponents must be five yards away from the ball and in their own half of the field of play. The ball can be kicked in any direction. In Mini Soccer a goal CANNOT be scored directly from a start or restart of play.

Dropped Ball

A dropped ball is a way of re-staring the match when the referee stops play and Law does not require a Direct/Indirect Free Kick to take place.

Procedure:

- The ball is dropped for the defending team goalkeeper in their penalty area if, when play was stopped:
  - The ball was in the penalty area.
  - The last touch of the ball was in the penalty area.
- In all other cases, the referee drops the ball for one player of the team that last touched the ball at the position where it last touched a player, an outside agent, or as outlined in Law 9.1, a match official.
- All other players (of both team) must remain at least 4m (4.5 yds) from the ball until it is in play.
- The ball is in play when it touches the ground.

Law 9: The Ball in and Out of Play

As per The Laws of the Game 2025/26.

Law 10: Determining the Outcome of a Match

As per The Laws of the Game 2025/26.

Law 11: Offside

There is NO offside.

Law 12: Fouls and Misconduct

Normal rules apply, as per The Laws of the Game 2025/26. However, in Mini Soccer all free kicks are DIRECT, expect when a deliberate header has occurred.

- A goalkeeper is not allowed to pick up the ball from a back pass or a throw in.
- If this happens a free kick should be given on the penalty area line closest to where the incident occurs.
- **For Under 7s to Under 10s (2025/26 season);**

- Deliberately heading the ball is an offence punishable by an indirect free kick. The indirect free kick is taken at the point where the ball was deliberately headed, except; Where a player deliberately heads the ball within their own penalty area, the referee will stop the game and restart with an indirect free kick to the opposition from the nearest side line of the penalty area where the offence took place.



Law 13: Free Kicks

For ALL Free Kicks opponents must be five yards from the ball.

Law 14: The Penalty Kick

As per The Laws of the Game 2025/26.

Position of the Ball and Players – All players except the defending goalkeeper and the kicker must be outside the penalty area and at least 5 yards from the penalty mark. The ball must be kicked forward.

Law 15: Pass or Dribble-in – Throw-in for Under 10s permitted as per the Laws of the Game 2025/26

Please review Mini Soccer Handbook 2024.

- Pass or Dribble-In - U7-U10 (2025/26)
  - Traditional throw-ins will no longer take place and will be replaced by a pass or dribble-in.
- When the whole of the ball passes over the touchline, on the ground or in the air, instead of a throw-in, a pass-in or dribble-in is awarded.
- A kicker taking a pass-in may choose to touch the ball again before it is touched by any other player.

Procedure

- At the moment of delivering the ball:
  - The ball must be stationary on the touchline at the point where it left the pitch; only the kicker may be off the pitch.
  - All opponents must stand at least 5 yards from the point on the touchline where the pass-in or dribble-in is taken from.
  - A goal cannot be scored directly from a pass-in.

- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves.

Laws 16: The Goal Kick

Procedure

A player of the defending team kicks the ball from any point within the penalty area. Opponents must retreat to their own half until the ball is in play.

The defending team does not have to wait for the opposition to retreat and has the option to restart the game before the kick is taken; should they choose to do so.

The ball is in play when it is kicked.

Law 17: The Corner Kick

The opposing players must remain at least five yards from the ball until it is in play.

The kicker may not touch the ball again until it has touched another player. If he/she does, a free kick is awarded to the opposing team.

The ball is in play immediately when it is kicked and moves.

Except where other provisions in these Laws are made, the Laws of the Game 2025/26 apply. Each Law is numbered to correspond with the appropriate Law of the Game.

Law 1: The Field of Play

Size of Pitch – the dimensions shown below are the Maximum Dimensions.

Width	Length
50 Yards	80 Yards
45 Metres	73.125 Metres

Penalty Area

Width	Length
32 Yards	13 Yards
29.26 Metres	11.88 Metres

Halfway Line

The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line. The centre mark is indicated at the mid-point of the halfway line.

Goal Size

The distance between the posts is 4.87m or 6.40m (16 feet) and the distance between the lower edge of the crossbar and the ground is 2.13m (7 feet).

WARNING

In view of a number of accidents that have occurred, it is necessary to ensure that portable goals of any size are either pinned or weighted down to prevent them from toppling over.

Law 2: The Ball

The ball should be Size 4 for U11 / U12. It should be made of leather or other suitable material.

Law 3: The Players

Maximum number per team including Goalkeeper	
Under 11 / U12	9 v 9

The above table indicates the maximum number of players per team at that age group. If the competition would like to have smaller numbers, e.g., 7 v 7 at U11, this is allowed within this framework.

A match may not START if either team consists of fewer than SIX players. The minimum number of players in a team required for a match to CONTINUE is also SIX. Matches can begin with 9 v 8 but the

importance and ethos of Mini-Soccer should be upheld whenever possible, and the development of the children should come before the score line.

Players must play with and against players only from their own age range, as per Football Association and Competition rules. Each team must not have a squad greater than double the size of the team per age.

Any number of substitutes, without being named, may be used at any time with the permission of the referee. A player who has been replaced may return to the playing area as a substitute for another player. All team members should receive equal playing time where possible, with a best practice recommendation of at least 50% per player for each game.

Law 4: The Players' Equipment

Goal keepers must wear a distinguishing playing top. Players must wear Shin Guards which must be covered entirely by the socks. Players must wear the appropriate clothing dependant on the weather.

Correct footwear must be worn for the surface of the pitch e.g., no metal studs on artificial grass pitches.

Law 5: The Referee

The Authority of the Referee

Each match is controlled by a referee who has full authority to enforce the Laws of the Game in connection with the match to which they have been appointed.

Leagues and Clubs are reminded - that they may be appointed a young referee to officiate their matches and must remember that the young referee like the players is developing his/her skills just the same as players. Please therefore support your referee.

A competition may include in its regulations a provision by which a person who is not a registered Match Official may carry out the duties of a Match Official in a specific Match but only in circumstances where a registered Match Official cannot be appointed to or officiate in that Match. In these circumstances the appointed unregistered and/or unqualified match Official will carry the same powers and duties of an appointed registered Match Official for the purpose of that match.

Furthermore, referees should also recognise their role is to facilitate the learning of the players, for example, allow young children to take a second attempt at a throw-in if the first attempt is not with the Laws of the Game.

Law 6: The Other Match Officials

Two Assistant Referees may be appointed whose duties, subject to the decision of the referee, are to indicate:

- When the whole of the ball leaves the field of play.
- Which team is entitled to a corner kick, goal kick or throw-in.
- When a play may be penalised for being in an offside position.
- When a substitution is requested or when any other incident occurs out of the view of the referee.
- When offences have been committee whenever the assistant referee have a better view than the referee (this includes, in certain circumstances, offences committed in the penalty area).
- Whether, at penalty kicks, the goalkeeper moves off the goal line before the ball is kicked and if the ball crosses the line.

(The Referee is the sole Judge; Assistant Referees are there to assist the Referee NOT insist).

Law 7: The Duration of the Match

Each league/competition will determine its own playing time with the maximum time permitted, however, the maximum duration will be two halves of 30 minutes.

It is permitted during development matches that the periods of play can be split into equal quarters. The half time interval must not exceed 15 minutes. Please refer to the Standard Code of Rules for Youth Competitions.

Law 8: The Start and Restart of Play

Procedure

A kick-off is taken at the centre of the playing area to start the game and after a goal has been scored. Opponents must be seven yards away from the ball and in their own half of the field of play. The ball can be kicked in any direction

Dropped Ball

A dropped ball is a way of re-staring the match when the referee stops play and Law does not require a Direct/Indirect Free Kick to take place.

Procedure:

- The ball is dropped for the defending team goalkeeper in their penalty area if, when play was stopped:
    - The ball was in the penalty area.
    - The last touch of the ball was in the penalty area.
- In all other cases, the referee drops the ball for one player of the team that last touched the ball at the position where it last touched a player, an outside agent, or as outlined in Law 9.1, a match official.
- All other players (of both team) must remain at least 4m (4.5 yds) from the ball until it is in play.
- The ball is in play when it touches the ground.

Law 9: The Ball in and Out of Play

As per The Laws of the Game 2025/26.

Law 10: Determining the Outcome of a Match

As per The Laws of the Game 2025/26.

Law 11: Offside

As per The Laws of the Game 2025/26.

Law 12: Fouls and Misconduct

As per The Laws of the Game 2025/26.

Law 13: Free Kicks

For ALL Free Kicks opponents must be 10 yards from the ball.

Law 14: The Penalty Kick

As per The Laws of the Game 2025/26.

Position of the Ball and Players – All players except the defending goalkeeper and the kicker must be outside the penalty area and at least 7 yards from the penalty mark. The ball must be kicked forward.

Law 15: The Throw-In

As per The Laws of the Game 2025/26.

Laws 16: The Goal Kick

Procedure

A player of the defending team kicks the ball from any point within the penalty area.

The ball is in play when it is kicked.

Law 17: The Corner Kick

As per The Laws of the Game 2025/26.

Except where other provisions in these Laws are made, the Laws of the Game 2025/26 apply.

Law 1: The Field of Play

Size of Pitch

As per The Laws of the Game 2025/26.

Law 2: The Ball

The ball should be (Size 4 Under 13's – Under 14's). The ball should be (Size 5 Under 15's – Under 16's). It should be made of leather or other suitable material.

Law 3: The Players

Maximum number per team including Goalkeeper	
Under 13 / U16	11 v 11

A match may not START if either team consists of fewer than SEVEN players. The minimum number of players in a team required for a match to CONTINUE is also SEVEN.

Any number of substitutes, without being named, may be used at any time with the permission of the referee. A player who has been replaced may return to the playing area as a substitute for another player.

Law 4: The Players' Equipment

Goal keepers must wear a distinguishing playing top. Players must wear Shin Guards which must be covered entirely by the socks. Players must wear the appropriate clothing dependant on the weather.

Correct footwear must be worn for the surface of the pitch e.g., no metal studs on artificial grass pitches.

Law 5: The Referee

The Authority of the Referee

Each match is controlled by a referee who has full authority to enforce the Laws of the Game in connection with the match to which they have been appointed.

Leagues and Clubs are reminded - that they may be appointed a young referee to officiate their matches and must remember that the young referee like the players is developing his/her skills just the same as players. Please therefore support your referee.

A competition may include in its regulations a provision by which a person who is not a registered Match Official may carry out the duties of a Match Official in a specific Match but only in circumstances where a registered Match Official cannot be appointed to or officiate in that Match. In these circumstances the appointed unregistered and/or unqualified match Official will carry the same powers and duties of an appointed registered Match Official for the purpose of that match.

Furthermore, referees should also recognise their role is to facilitate the learning of the players, for example, allow young children to take a second attempt at a throw-in if the first attempt is not with the Laws of the Game.

Law 6: The Other Match Officials

Two Assistant Referees may be appointed whose duties, subject to the decision of the referee, are to indicate:

- When the whole of the ball leaves the field of play.
- Which team is entitled to a corner kick, goal kick or throw-in.
- When a play may be penalised for being in an offside position.
- When a substitution is requested or when any other incident occurs out of the view of the referee.
- When offences have been committee whenever the assistant referee have a better view than the referee (this includes, in certain circumstances, offences committed in the penalty area).
- Whether, at penalty kicks, the goalkeeper moves off the goal line before the ball is kicked and if the ball crosses the line.

(The Referee is the sole Judge; Assistant Referees are there to assist the Referee NOT insist).

Law 7: The Duration of the Match

The maximum duration will be two halves as follows:

- U13's and U14's – 2 x 35 minutes
- U15's and U16's – 2 x 40 minutes

The half time interval must not exceed 15 minutes. Please refer to the Standard Code of Rules for Youth Competitions.

Law 8: The Start and Restart of Play

Procedure

A kick-off is taken at the centre of the playing area to start the game and after a goal has been scored. Opponents must be 10 yards away from the ball and in their own half of the field of play. The ball can be kicked in any direction

Dropped Ball

A dropped ball is a way of re-staring the match when the referee stops play and Law does not require a Direct/Indirect Free Kick to take place.

Procedure:

- The ball is dropped for the defending team goalkeeper in their penalty area if, when play was stopped:
    - The ball was in the penalty area.
    - The last touch of the ball was in the penalty area.

- In all other cases, the referee drops the ball for one player of the team that last touched the ball at the position where it last touched a player, an outside agent, or as outlined in Law 9.1, a match official.

- All other players (of both team) must remain at least 4m (4.5 yds) from the ball until it is in play.
- The ball is in play when it touches the ground.

Law 9: The Ball in and Out of Play

As per The Laws of the Game 2025/26.

Law 10: Determining the Outcome of a Match

As per The Laws of the Game 2025/26.

Law 11: Offside

As per The Laws of the Game 2025/26.

Law 12: Fouls and Misconduct

As per The Laws of the Game 2025/26.

Law 13: Free Kicks

As per The Laws of the Game 2025/26.

Law 14: The Penalty Kick

As per The Laws of the Game 2025/26.

Position of the Ball and Players – All players except the defending goalkeeper and the kicker must be outside the penalty area and at least 10 yards from the penalty mark. The ball must be kicked forward.

Law 15: The Throw-In

As per The Laws of the Game 2025/26.

Laws 16: The Goal Kick

As per The Laws of the Game 2025/26.

Law 17: The Corner Kick

As per The Laws of the Game 2025/26.

Mini Soccer at a Glance

2025/26 Season:

	U7	U8	U9	U10
Max permitted format	5v5	5v5	7v7	7v7
Ball Size	3	3	3	3
Offside	No	No	No	No
Throw Ins	No	No	No	Yes
Pass or Dribble In	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Back Pass Rule	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Corners	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Retreat Line	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Power Play*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Deliberate Heading Allowed	No – if occurs an indirect free kick to the opposition	No – if occurs an indirect free kick to the opposition	No – if occurs an indirect free kick to the opposition	Yes unless league has opted to include U10s

*Power Play:

- If a team goes on to be losing by a six-goal difference a further additional player can be added – so 6v5 becomes 7v5.
- The main aim of the Power Play option is that all players are being challenged and enjoying the game.
- Power pay is available through all mini soccer football formats 5v5 and 7 v 7.

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Youth Appointment Secretaries – Hampshire

Aldershot Youth (Saturday and Sunday) – North East Hants Youth League

Phil Rush
Mobile: 03456520637
Email: referees@pr-neh.org.uk

Andover Youth (Saturday) – Testway Youth League

Tracy Jackson
Mobile: 07570 793928
Email: tjacksonpfc@aol.com

Basingstoke Youth (Sunday) Peter Houseman Youth League

Gary Smith
Mobile: 07885 807323
Email: refsec@phyl.co.uk

Bournemouth Youth (Sunday) Bournemouth Youth League

Duncan Lewis
Mobile: 07515 451641
Email: byflfixtures@aol.com

Hampshire Combination & Development League U18s (Sunday)

Sean Ridley
Mobile: 07812 419163
Email: refereeridley@gmail.com

Hampshire Girls Youth League (Saturday)

David Simpson
Mobile: 07952 242717
Email: hgyflrep1516@gmail.com

Isle of Wight Youth League

Chris Cass
Mobile: 07538 520561
Email: footballunited1234@gmail.com

Mid Solent Youth League

Joe Crockett

Mobile: 07498451942

Email: joecrockett2002@gmail.com

Portsmouth Youth League

Sean Ridley
Mobile: 07812 419163
Email: refereeridley@gmail.com

City of Southampton Youth League

Albert Astbury
Mobile: 07956 990464
E-Mail: aa_referee@btinternet.com

Eastleigh & District Mini Soccer League

Scott Baddams
Mobile: 07741 245434
E-Mail: scott.baddams@edmsl.org.uk

Southampton & District Tyro (Sunday) Youth Football League

Albert Astbury
Mobile: 07956 990464
E-Mail: aa_referee@btinternet.com