



# **Recreational Soccer**

## **Condensed Rules of Soccer**

The FIFA Laws of the Game apply except where explicitly overridden by these Condensed Rules of Soccer for North Star FC Recreational Soccer Grades K-9

Last update: April 10, 2026

North Star FC  
380 Woodlake Drive SE  
Rochester, MN 55903  
507-280-7584

# Rules for Grades K-2

**The Field of Play:** The field is rectangular. It's size can vary depending on the space available.

**The Ball:** Size 3

**Number of Players:** 4 – no goalkeeper, 2 simultaneous games.

In the interest of good sportsmanship, if a team does not have enough players to field a team (i.e. 4), North Star FC requires that opponents also play shorthanded. Players may not be borrowed from another team without the permission of the opponent's coach.

**Substitutions:** In the interest of smooth game flow, coaches should substitute at the quarter breaks, after a goal or in cases of an injury. However, in order to give players equal playing time, substitutions can be done during play if they can be done without interrupting the flow of the game.

**Playing Time:** Coaches are REQUIRED to play every child at least half of every game except for disciplinary reasons. Players should not lose playing time just for missing some practices. If you have any questions about this rule please contact the North Star FC office.

**Player's Equipment:** Each player must wear shoes, socks, shin guards, shorts or long pants and a team shirt. The shin guards must be completely covered by the player's socks and protect the entire shin. Soccer shoes are strongly recommended but shoes are not required to have cleats. Tennis shoes are allowed. If the shoes are not soccer shoes but they do have cleats, they must not have any sharp edges. Shoes with toe cleats are not allowed. Glasses must be secured by a strap and no jewelry can be worn.

**Coaches:** At least 2 per team

- A coach or parent should be a field monitor for each game. In most cases a coach or parent from each team will monitor the game

**Monitor:** Duties of the monitor are:

1. Keep the time
2. Start the game and keep it going
3. Stay clear of the goal
4. Do **NOT** coach from the field
5. Instruct players on the appropriate game restart but let the players retrieve and place the ball to restart the game
6. Control any fouls or misconduct

**Duration of the Game:** Four 10-minute periods  
2 minutes between quarters

5 minutes at half-time. Switch ends of the field.

**The Start of Play:** The team winning the coin toss (or the team chosen) will kick off to start the 1st and 3<sup>d</sup> quarters. The other team will kick off to start the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters. Each player stays on their own half of the field with the defending players outside the center circle until the ball has been kicked. The ball may be kicked in any direction and must be touched by another player before the kicker can touch it again. A goal may NOT be scored directly from a kickoff. After a goal, the team that was scored upon kicks off. After the half-time break, the teams change ends. If the monitor stops the game for an injured player, restart play with a dropped ball.

**Ball In and Out of Play:** The ball is out of play when the ENTIRE ball crosses over the entire goal line or touch line, whether on the ground or in the air.

**Method of Scoring:** A goal is scored when the ENTIRE ball crosses over the entire goal line into the goal.

**Goal Area During Play:** Players should not stand in front of the goal during active play unless they are currently playing the ball. A player may pass the goal only to get from one side of the field to the other. No player should be "camped" in front of the goal at any time. NO GOALIES!

**Kick In:** The ball is put back into play where it crossed the touch line. A goal may not be scored directly from a kick in. The kick is taken by a player from the team opposite to that of the player who touched the ball last. Opponents must be at least 6 yards from the ball until it is kicked.

**Goal Kick:** A goal kick is taken when the ball completely crosses the goal line on either side of the goal and was last touched by the attacking team. The ball is placed on the ground anywhere on the half-circle in front of the goal mouth and is kicked by one of the players on the defending team. Members of the attacking team must be 6 yards from the ball. The kicker may not kick the ball again until it is touched by another player.

**Corner Kick:** A corner kick is taken when the ball completely crosses the goal line on either side of the goal and was last touched by the defending team. The ball is placed within 1 yard of the corner of the field, nearest to where it went out. The kick is taken by a player from the attacking team. Opponents must be 6 yards from the ball. The kicker may not kick the ball again until it is touched by another player. A goal MAY be scored directly from a corner kick.

**Offside:** There is no offside in grades K-2

**Heading:** Formal Statement from US Soccer (Spring 2016): "As part of U.S. Soccer's Player Safety Campaign, players 10 years old and younger are prohibited from heading the ball in practice and in games"

**Bleeding:** Any player that starts to bleed while playing must leave the field until the bleeding stops. The player should not re-enter the field with blood on any part of their uniform; that piece of the uniform should be changed. This rule applies to practices as well as games.

**Fouls and Misconduct:** Must be deliberate

1. Hitting, kicking, tripping, pushing, holding, jumping into or spitting at an opponent
2. Handling the ball deliberately (not just the ball hitting a player's hand or arm)
3. Playing dangerously. Sliding tackles are considered dangerous play for grades K-2
4. Charging an opponent carelessly, recklessly or with excessive force.

All penalties assessed are an Indirect Free Kick (After the ball is kicked, another player must touch the ball before a goal can be scored). Opponents must be at least 6 yards from the ball until it is kicked.

# Rules for Grades 3-4

**The Field of Play:** The field is rectangular. It's size may vary depending on the space available. The small rectangle at the end of the field is the penalty area.

*US Soccer mandate (Fall 2017):* There will be a Build Out line on each end of the fields that is equidistant between the top of the penalty area and the midfield line.

**The Ball:** Size 4

**Number of Players:** 7 – one must be the goalkeeper, minimum of 5

In the interest of good sportsmanship, if a team does not have enough players to field a full team, North Star FC requires that opponents also play short handed. Players may not be borrowed from another team without the permission of the opponent's coach.

**Substitutions:** Any number of substitutions is allowed during the game. A substitution may be made at any stoppage of play. Players that are ready to sub in should be at the midfield line and wait there until the referee signals for them to come in.

**Playing Time:** Coaches are REQUIRED to play every child at least half of every game except for disciplinary reasons. Players should not lose playing time just for missing some practices. If you have any questions about this rule please contact the North Star FC office.

**Player's Equipment:** Each player must wear shoes, socks, shin guards, shorts or long pants and a team shirt. Goalkeepers must wear shirts that distinguish them from the other players. The shin guards must be completely covered by the player's socks and protect the entire shin. Soccer shoes are strongly recommended but shoes are not required to have cleats. Tennis shoes are allowed. If the shoes are not soccer shoes but they do have cleats, they must not have any sharp edges. Shoes with toe cleats are not allowed. Glasses must be secured by a strap and no jewelry can be worn.

**Sidelines:** Teams should be on the opposite side of the field as the spectators. The team bench areas should be between the fields being used for games and the spectators should be on the opposite sides.

**Referee:** The duties of the referee include, but are not limited to:

1. Enforcing the laws of the game in a consistent manner

2. Refraining from penalizing where he/she is satisfied that by doing so the offending team would be given an advantage
3. Stopping the game, if in his/her opinion, someone is injured
4. Keep the time

**Assistant Referees:** Assistant referees are not used at this level

**Duration of the Game:**

Grades 3-4 = 25 minute halves (*updated Spring 2021*)

5 minutes at half-time. Switch ends of the field.

**The Start of Play:** The team winning the coin toss (or the team chosen) will kickoff to start the 1st half. The other team will kickoff to start the 2<sup>nd</sup> half. Each player stays on their own half of the field with the defending players outside the center circle until the ball has been kicked. The ball may be kicked in any direction and must be touched by another player before the kicker can touch it again. A goal may NOT be scored directly from a kickoff. After a goal, the team that was scored upon kicks off. After the half-time break, the teams change ends. If the referee stops the game for an injured player, restart play with a dropped ball.

**Ball In and Out of Play:** The ball is out of play when the ENTIRE ball crosses over the entire goal line or touch line, whether on the ground or in the air or when the game is stopped by the referee.

**Method of Scoring:** A goal is scored when the ENTIRE ball crosses over the entire goal line into the goal.

**Throw-In:** When the ball completely crosses the touch line, the ball is put back into play by a throw-in from the spot where the ball went out, by a player from the team opposite to that of the player that touched it last. The player must face the field of play, have both feet on the ground on or outside the touch line and throw the ball with both hands from behind and over their head. The thrower may not play the ball again until it has been touched by another player. A goal may not be scored directly from a throw-in.

**Goal Kick:** A goal kick is taken when the ball completely crosses the goal line on either side of the goal and was last touched by the attacking team. The ball is put back into play by a kick from anywhere within the goal area by a player from the defending team. If no goal area is marked on the field, the kick should be taken from anywhere within 5 yards of the goal. All members of the attacking team must be behind

the Build Out line until the kick is taken. The ball must go outside the penalty area before it may be played again by either team. If the ball does not go outside the penalty area, the goal kick is retaken. The kicker may not touch the ball again until it is touched by another player. A goal MAY be scored directly from a goal kick.

**Build Out Zone:** *US Soccer mandate (Fall 2017):* When a team is awarded a goalkick, a free kick inside their own Build Out line or the goalie gains possession of the ball, all opposing players must drop behind the Build Out line to facilitate playing out of the back. Once the ball is back in play, (i.e. the goal kick is taken or the goalie releases the ball from his/her hands) the defending players may cross the line.

The goalie/kick taker can put the ball in play before the opponent has retreated to the Build Out line if they choose to. Play resumes as normal once the ball is put into play.

**Punting:** *US Soccer mandate (Fall 2017):* Goalies are not allowed to punt or drop kick the ball. If the goalie punts the ball, an indirect free kick will be awarded from the top of the penalty area.

**Corner Kick:** A corner kick is taken when the ball completely crosses the goal line on either side of the goal and was last touched by the defending team. The ball is placed within 1 yard of the corner of the field, nearest to where it went out. The kick is taken by a player from the attacking team. Opponents must be 8 yards from the ball. The kicker may not kick the ball again until it is touched by another player. A goal MAY be scored directly from a corner kick.

**Heading:** *US Soccer mandate (Spring 2016):* "As part of U.S. Soccer's Player Safety Campaign, players 10 years old and younger are prohibited from heading the ball in practice and in games. To this end, when a player deliberately heads the ball in a game, an indirect freekick should be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense. If the deliberate header occurs in the goal area, the indirect freekick should be taken outside the goal area line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred. If a player does not deliberately head the ball, then play should continue."

**Offside:** *US Soccer mandate (Fall 2017):* A player is in an offside position when the player is closer to the other team's goal line than both (a) the ball and (b) the second-to-last opponent, unless the attacking player is on their own side of the Build Out line. A player should only be penalized for being in an offside position when

the ball is played to them by a teammate and they are or become actively involved in the play.

A player shall not be declared offside (a) merely because they are in an offside position or (b) if they receive the ball directly from a goal kick, corner kick or throw-in. Offside shall be judged from the moment the ball is kicked by one of their teammates, not when the player receives the ball.

**Fouls and Misconduct:** All penalties assessed are an Indirect Free Kick (After the ball is kicked, another player must touch the ball before a goal can be scored). Opponents must be at least 8 yards from the ball until it is kicked.

An Indirect free kick shall be given to the other team when a player commits any of the following 6 offenses in a careless or reckless manner or with excessive force:

1. Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent
2. Trips or attempts to trip an opponent
3. Jumps at an opponent
4. Charges an opponent
5. Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent
6. Pushes an opponent

Or a player commits any of the following 3 offenses:

1. Spits at an opponent
2. Holds an opponent
3. Handles the ball deliberately (not just the ball hitting a player's hand or arm)

Additionally, an Indirect free kick shall be given to the other team when a player commits any of the following:

1. Plays in a manner considered dangerous by the referee. Dangerous play will include (a) sliding tackles, (b) charging the goalie after the goalie has control of the ball. The goalie is considered to have control of the ball by touching it with any part of his/her hands or arms.
2. When not playing the ball, impedes the progress of an opponent
3. Prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his/her hands
4. As the goalkeeper, and having possession of the ball in his/her hands, takes more than 6 seconds to release the ball
5. As the goalkeeper, after releasing the ball into play, touches the ball again with his/her hands before it touches a player from the other team
6. Deliberately kicks (or on a throw-in) throws the ball to their own goalkeeper and the goalkeeper touches the ball with his/her hands

**Misconduct:** A player shall be cautioned and shown a yellow card if they:

1. Are guilty of unsporting behavior
2. Show dissent by word or action
3. Persistently violate the laws of the game
4. Delay restart of play
5. Fail to yield the required distance on a free or corner kick (8 yards)
6. Enter or re-enter the field without the referee's permission
7. Deliberately leave the field without the referee's permission

A player shall be sent off the field and shown a red card if they:

1. Are guilty of serious foul play
2. Are guilty of violent conduct
3. Use offensive, insulting, or abusive language and/or gestures
4. Spit at any person
5. Deny a goal or obvious goal scoring opportunity by an illegal action
6. Receive a second caution (yellow card) in the same match

**Free Kick:** All free kicks are indirect and must be taken at least 8 yards from the goal

**Penalty Kick:** No penalty kicks. Free kicks for any foul committed inside the penalty area will be indirect and will be moved to the edge of the penalty area.

**Bleeding:** Any player that starts to bleed while playing must leave the field until the bleeding stops. The player should not re-enter the field with blood on any part of their uniform; that piece of the uniform should be changed. This rule applies to practices as well as games.

**THE REFEREE IS THE FINAL AUTHORITY**

# Rules for Grades 5-9

**The Field of Play:** The field is rectangular. It's size may vary depending on the space available. The small rectangle at the end of the field (if there is one) is the goal area. The larger rectangle is the penalty area.

*US Soccer mandate (Fall 2017) – 5<sup>th</sup> grade only:* There will be no Build Out lines painted on the field but it is considered to be in line with the bottom of the center circle on each half. Markers/cones may or may not be placed on each sideline to indicate the location of the Build Out line.

**The Ball:** Grades 5-6 = size 4, Grades 7-9 = size 5

## Number of Players:

Grades 5/6 = 9, one must be the goalkeeper, minimum of 7  
Grades 7/9 = 11, one must be the goalkeeper, minimum of 7

In the interest of good sportsmanship, if a team does not have enough players to field a full team, North Star FC requires that opponents also play short handed. Players may not be borrowed from another team without the permission of the opponent's coach.

**Substitutions:** Any number of substitutions are allowed during the game. Players that are ready to sub in should be at the midfield line and wait there until the referee signals for them to come in.

Grades 5-6: A substitution may be made at any stoppage of play.

Grades 7-9: A substitution may be made (a) before any kick-off, (b) before either team's goal kick, (c) prior to a throw in, by the team with possession of the ball, if the team in possession is substituting, both teams may substitute, and (d) whenever the referee stops play for an injury.

**Playing Time:** Coaches are REQUIRED to play every child at least half of every game except for disciplinary reasons. Players should not lose playing time just for missing some practices. If you have any questions about this rule please contact the North Star FC office.

**Player's Equipment:** Each player must wear shoes, socks, shin guards, shorts or long pants and a team shirt. Goalkeepers must wear shirts that distinguish them from the other players. The shin guards must be completely covered by the player's socks and protect the entire shin.

Soccer shoes are strongly recommended but shoes are not required to have cleats. Tennis shoes are allowed. If the shoes are not soccer shoes but they do have cleats, they must not have any sharp edges. Shoes with toe cleats are not allowed. Glasses must be secured by a strap and no jewelry can be worn.

**Sidelines:** Teams should be on the opposite side of the field as the spectators. The team bench areas should be between the fields being used for games and the spectators should be on the opposite sides.

**Referee:** The duties of the referee include, but are not limited to:

1. Enforcing the laws of the game in a consistent manner
2. Refraining from penalizing where they are satisfied that by doing so the offending team would be given an advantage
3. Stopping the game, if in their opinion, someone is injured
4. Keep the time

**Assistant Referees:** The assistant referees assist the referee by signaling the referee when the ball goes out of bounds or when an offside violation occurs. They may also signal for other fouls or misconduct which occurs out of the view of the referee.

**Duration of the Game:** Grades 5-6 = 30 minute halves  
Grades 7-9 = 35 minute halves

All grades, 5 minutes at half-time. Switch ends of the field.

**The Start of Play:** The team winning the coin toss (or the team chosen) will kickoff to start the 1st half or can choose which end to defend. The other team will either kickoff first or choose which end to defend. The team that did not kickoff to start the game will kickoff to start the 2<sup>nd</sup> half. Each player stays on their own half of the field with the defending players outside the center circle until the ball has been kicked. The ball may be kicked in any direction and must be touched by another player before the kicker can touch it again. A goal may NOT be scored directly from a kickoff. After a goal, the team that was scored upon kicks off. After the half-time break, the teams change ends. If the referee stops the game for an injured player, restart play with a dropped ball.

**Ball In and Out of Play:** The ball is out of play when the ENTIRE ball crosses over the entire goal line or touch line, whether on the ground or in the air or when the game is stopped by the referee.

**Method of Scoring:** A goal is scored when the ENTIRE ball crosses over the entire goal line into the goal.

**Throw-In:** When the ball completely crosses the touch line, the ball is put back into play by a throw-in from the spot where the ball went out, by a player from the team opposite to that of the player that touched it last. The player must face the field of play, have both feet on the ground on or outside the touch line and throw the ball with both hands from behind and over their head. The thrower may not play the ball again until it has been touched by another player. A goal may not be scored directly from a throw-in.

**Goal Kick:** A goal kick is taken when the ball completely crosses the goal line on either side of the goal and was last touched by the attacking team. The ball is put back into play by a kick from anywhere within the goal area by a player from the defending team. All members of the attacking team must be outside the penalty area while the kick is being taken. The ball must go outside the penalty area before it may be played again by either team. If the ball does not go outside the penalty area, the goal kick is retaken. The kicker may not touch the ball again until it is touched by another player. A goal MAY be scored directly from a goal kick.

**BuildOutZone:** *US Soccer mandate (Fall 2017)*  
*5<sup>th</sup> grade only:* When a team is awarded a goal kick, a free kick inside their own Build Out line or the goalie gains possession of the ball, all opposing players must drop behind the Build Out line to facilitate playing out of the back. Once the ball is back in play, (i.e. the goal kick is taken or the goalie releases the ball from his/her hands) the defending players may cross the line.

The goalie/kick taker can put the ball in play before the opponent has retreated to the Build Out line if they choose to. Play resumes as normal once the ball is put into play.

**Punting:** *US Soccer mandate (Fall 2017)–5<sup>th</sup> grade only:* Goalies are not allowed to punt or drop kick the ball. If the goalie punts the ball, an indirect free kick will be awarded from the spot of the offense. When it occurs in the goal area (if there is one), then the indirect free kick is taken on the goal area line nearest the offense.

**Corner Kick:** A corner kick is taken when the ball completely crosses the goal line on either side of the goal and was last touched by the defending team. The ball is placed within 1 yard of the corner of the field, nearest to where it went out. The kick is taken by a player from the attacking team. Opponents must be at least the

required distance from the ball until it is kicked. The kicker may not kick the ball again until it is touched by another player. A goal MAY be scored directly from a corner kick.

**Heading:** *US Soccer mandate (Spring 2016):*  
“As part of U.S. Soccer’s Player Safety Campaign, players in 5<sup>th</sup> grade or younger are prohibited from heading the ball in practice and in games. To this end, when a player deliberately heads the ball in a game, an indirect free kick should be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense. If the deliberate header occurs in the goal area, the indirect free kick should be taken outside the goal area line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred. If a player does not deliberately head the ball, then play should continue.”

**Offside:** A player is in an offside position when the player is closer to the other team’s goalline than both (a) the ball (b) the second-to-last opponent, unless the attacking player is in their own half of the field. A player should only be penalized for being in an offside position when the ball is played to them by a teammate and they are or become actively involved in the play.

A player shall not be declared offside (a) merely because they are in an offside position or (b) if they receive the ball directly from a goalkick, corner kick or throw-in. Offside shall be judged from the moment the ball is kicked by one of their teammates, not when the player receives the ball.

**Fouls and Misconduct:** a direct free-kick shall be given to the other team when a player commits any of the following 6 offenses in a careless or reckless manner or with excessive force:

1. Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent
2. Trips or attempts to trip an opponent
3. Jumps at an opponent
4. Charges an opponent
5. Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent
6. Pushes an opponent

Or a player commits any of the following 3 offenses:

1. Spits at an opponent
2. Holds an opponent
3. Handles the ball deliberately (not just the ball hitting a player)

If a player commits any of these fouls in their own penalty area, the other team will be given a penalty kick.

Additionally, an indirect free kick shall be given to the other team when a player commits any of the following:

1. Plays in a manner considered dangerous by the referee. Dangerous play will include (a) sliding tackles, (b) charging the goalie after the goalie has control of the ball. The goalie is considered to have control of the ball by touching it with any part of his/her hands or arms.
2. When not playing the ball, impedes the progress of an opponent
3. Prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his/her hands
4. As the goalkeeper, and having possession of the ball in his/her hands, takes more than 6 seconds to release the ball
5. As the goalkeeper, after releasing the ball into play, touches the ball again with his/her hands before it touches a player from the other team
6. Deliberately kicks (or on a throw-in) throws the ball to their own goalkeeper and the goalkeeper touches the ball with his/her hands

**Misconduct:** A player shall be cautioned and shown a yellow card if they:

1. Are guilty of unsporting behavior
2. Show dissent by word or action
3. Persistently violate the laws of the game
4. Delay restart of play
5. Fail to yield the required distance on a free or corner kick
6. Enter or re-enter the field without the referee's permission
7. Deliberately leave the field without the referee's permission

A player shall be sent off the field and shown a red card if they:

1. Are guilty of serious foul play
2. Are guilty of violent conduct
3. Use offensive, insulting, or abusive language and/or gestures
4. Spit at any person
5. Deny a goal or obvious goal scoring opportunity by an illegal action
6. Receive a second caution (yellow card) in the same match

**Free Kick:** Free kicks are classified into two categories: direct, from which a goal can be scored directly; and indirect, from which a goal cannot be scored unless the ball is first touched by another player from either team. For all free kicks, the offending team must be the required distance from the ball until the ball is kicked and the kicked may not play the ball again until it has been touched by another player. The ball is in play when it has been kicked and moves.

Required distance:

Grades 5-6 = 8 yards  
Grades 7-9 = 10 yards

**Penalty Kick:** The penalty kick is a direct free kick taken from the penalty spot/mark. All of the players from both teams, except the kicker and goalkeeper, must stay outside the penalty area, behind the penalty spot/mark and 10 yards away from the ball until it is kicked. The goalkeeper must stand on the goal line and may not move forward, but may move sideways, until the ball is kicked.

Required distance:

Grades 5-6 = 8 yards  
Grades 7-9 = 10 yards

**Bleeding:** Any player that starts to bleed while playing must leave the field until the bleeding stops. The player should not re-enter the field with blood on any part of their uniform; that piece of the uniform should be changed. This rule applies to practices as well as games.

NOTE: As stated above, the US Soccer mandated rule changes only apply to 5<sup>th</sup> graders. However, when 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders are combined for the season, then those teams will play using the rules for 5<sup>th</sup> graders.

## THE REFEREE IS THE FINAL AUTHORITY