



## Small-Sided Game Rules Highlights (April 2017)

During the years since small-sided games were adopted, there has been confusion regarding some of the rules. Some leagues have chosen to adopt their own rules that differ from national rules. In an effort to improve the small sided game and have consistency US Soccer has provided direction in a 2016 Player Development Initiative document (August 2016). These directions are mandated for 2017.

Deliberate heading is not allowed in U8, U9, U10, and U11 matches and training. If 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.

Free kicks may be either direct or indirect following normal rules. There has been a misstatement in one national rule stating that all free kicks should be direct. This rule has been corrected in the copies of the rules distributed by WMYSA. In addition for direct and indirect free kicks opponents are at least 8 yards from the ball until it is in play. Penalty kicks for U9–U10 are taken from 8 yards from goal. Penalty kicks for U11-U12 are taken from 10 yards from goal.

In the past there was no offside rule at ages U10 and under. Some leagues have been calling it anyway. WMYSA has advised officials to begin to enforce offside rule. **WMYSA has adopted the new US Soccer rules starting Fall of 2016. Offside will be in effect in U9/U10 with only 1 referee intended for calling very obvious offenses.**

**WMYSA has adopted the Build Out Lines with offside implications starting Fall of 2017.** The buildout line does two things to help the development of young players. First it promotes playing the ball out of the back in a less pressured setting. Second it allows an entry level introduction to the offside rule.

When the goalkeeper has the ball in his or her hands during play from the opponent the opposing team must move behind the build out line until the ball is put into play. This also applies to the taking of a goal kick. However the keeper / goal kick taker does not need to wait until the opposing team moves behind the line. They can begin play earlier without penalty and at their own risk.

Once the opposing team is behind the build out line, the goalkeeper can pass, throw or roll the ball into play (punts and drop kicks are not allowed). After the ball is put into play by the goalkeeper, the opposing team can cross the build out line and play resumes as normal. The opposing team must also move behind the build out line during a goal kick until the ball is put into play.

If a goalkeeper punts or drop kicks the ball, an indirect free kick should be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense. If the punt or drop kick occurs within the goal area, the indirect free kick should be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the nearest point to where the infringement occurred

The build out line will also be used to denote where offside offenses can be called. Players cannot be penalized for an offside offense between the halfway line and the build out line. Players can be penalized for an offside offense between the build out line and goal line.

Substitutions are allowed on any stoppage of play and are unlimited. The referee must still notice the substitutions and stop play to allow them. If a coach abuses this rule by attempting to delay the game during the final minutes, the referee may issue a warning and add stoppage time. The purpose of allowing frequent substitution is to avoid long delays preventing a player from entering a game considering that games for younger players are relatively short and there is a minimum playing time rule for U10 and under.

**In 2017 spring punting and/or drop kicks are still allowed by the goalkeeper in WMYSA league play.** However, an indirect kick is awarded to the opposing team at the center spot on the halfway line if a goalkeeper punts or drop-kicks a ball in the air all the way from one penalty area into the opponent's penalty area. Throwing the ball into the opponent's penalty area by the goalkeeper is permitted.

**WMYSA adopts small sided US / US Youth Soccer Field Sizes starting Fall 2017.** Beginning Fall 2017 WMYSA will be requiring all field venues to comply with the US Youth Soccer recommendations for field sizes:

- U9 & U10 Divisions will need to be: Length 55 – 65 yards, Width 35 – 45 yards.
- U11 & U12 Divisions will need to be: Length 70 – 80 yards, Width 45 – 55 yards.
- Full Size Divisions will need to be: Length 100 – 120 yards, Width 65 – 75 yards.

**WMYSA adopts small sided Goal Size US / US Youth Soccer gradually starting Fall 2017.** WMYSA we will be requiring all field venues to comply with the US Youth Soccer recommendations for goal sizes based on the following timeline.

- U9 & U10 Divisions will be utilizing 6'x12' goals beginning Fall 2018. Venues which acquire the correct size goals may not begin utilizing this size prior to the required by date.
- U11 & U12 Divisions will be utilizing 6'x18' goals by Fall 2018. Venues which acquire the correct size goals may begin utilizing this size prior to the required by date

There is a minimum playing time rule of 50% of the game for U12 and under. This rule has not yet been adopted by WMYSA. Depending upon the team roster size, the 50% rule may not be achieved in an individual game but it is expected to be followed on average over the full season. This is guidance to the coach and not expected to be enforced by the referee.

**Michigan State Youth Soccer Association (MSYSA) has adopted the US Soccer Build Out Lines with its implications to goal keeper distribution, goal kicks, and offside for 2016 -2017 seasonal year. MSYSA has also adopted new field and goal sizes. THESE will be adopted in WMYSA beginning in 2017-2018 seasonal year.**