**Law 2: Ball:**

U12 - Size 4.

The home team provides game balls.

**Law 3: Number of Players:**

The Maximum number of players on the field at the start of the match must be nine (9) per team, one of whom must be a goalkeeper. The minimum number of players will be no less than seven (7) per team.

For the sake of good sportsmanship, if one team is short of players, for example, only eight (8) players attend the game, then the opposing coach MAY also play with eight (8) but is NOT required to do so.

Two (2) females must always be on the field for co-ed teams. If only one or two females are available at a particular game, they may be subbed in and out to avoid exhaustion. If no females are available for a specific game, this rule does not apply.

**Substitutions:**

Play must stop during substitutions, and the substituting coach must signal their intention to do so and wait for the referee to acknowledge the substitution. There are unlimited substitutions, and either team may substitute players at any dead ball that has gone out of bounds, including corner kicks. Teams must NOT substitute a player in to take a corner kick. No substitutions will be allowed on a free kick. Substitutes only enter the field of play after the replaced players have left the field, and substitutes must enter at the halfway line. Other players may change places with the goalkeeper and are considered a substitution. Keeper substitutions require notification to the referee, even at halftime.

You cannot sub on the fly!

**Law 4: Equipment:**

Shin guards are mandatory and must be covered entirely by socks and adequately sized to provide reasonable protection. Shin guards must be placed on first, then put the socks over it. Putting the sock on first and folding the socks over the shin guard is prohibited. Tape or other similar material may be applied externally to the socks.

Cleats are optional when playing on artificial turf fields. Baseball or football cleats or other types of footwear with metal studs or toe studs are prohibited.

The players' jersey colors should differ from those of the opposing team. If a conflict arises, the home team is responsible for providing pennies.

The keeper's jersey must be significantly different from the color of any other player, or a pennie must be worn.

All jewelry and metal or hard plastic objects (i.e., barrettes, beads, etc) are strictly prohibited.

Some items are at the referee's discretion based on safety considerations (e.g., leg braces, soft and hard casts). Hard casts must be bubble-wrapped or wrapped with another appropriate material so as not to harm other players. It is ultimately up to the referee to determine whether the material is appropriate.

**Law 5: The Referee:**

At a minimum, games played must be supervised by an official referee or a person designated to act on the referee's behalf.

The absence of an official referee is not a reason for canceling a game.

The referee's authority begins when they arrive at the facility and ends when they depart.

Their power of penalizing extends to offenses committed when play has been suspended, when the ball is out of play, and immediately before and after the game.

Their decision on points of fact connected with the play is final regarding the game’s result.

Referees are expected to explain the infraction to the player and coach if asked to do so.

**Law 6: The Assistant Referee**

Two assistant referees will be used if available. If no assistant referees are available due to referee shortage, each team MAY provide a parent AR, or the game will continue with just a center referee. The lack of assistant referees is not a reason for game cancellation or delay. If parents/others are used as ARs, they are to be limited to only calling the ball in/out of play. The center referee will determine offsides, corner, goal kick, etc.

**Law 7: Length of Game:**

U12 - Two (2) 25-minute halves

The halftime interval must be at most five (5) minutes. The referee controls the official time.

**Law 8: Start and Restart of Game:**

Restarts should be per FIFA rules.

An uncontested drop ball shall restart the game when the referee stops the match to assist an injured player or due to any unusual situation (e.g., a baby on the field or the ball deflecting off the referee). A goal scored directly from a drop ball will be disallowed.

For the sake of good sportsmanship, it is highly recommended that the team in possession of the ball kick it out of bounds to force a stop in play when an injury occurs on the field. On the restart, the team throwing the ball inbounds will then throw it to the opposing team.

After the halftime break, players will switch sides on the field to play in the opposite direction.

**Law 9: Ball in and Out of Play**

Conforms to FIFA.

**Law 10: Method of Scoring**

3 Points Win

1 Point Draw

0 Points Loss

**Any forfeited game will be scored as a 2-0 win for the opposing team.**

In the event of a tie in the standings, the following tiebreakers will be used:

1. Head-to-head

2. Most Shut Outs

3. Goals against

4. Goals for (up to a maximum of 4 goals)

5. Coin Toss

**Law 11: Offside:**

The offside rule will be in effect for this age group. The referee’s call is final, and criticism directed at the referee is dissent and will not be tolerated. Please recognize that this is the most controversial and disagreed-upon rule in soccer at all levels of play. Remember to demonstrate sportsmanship at all times.

**Law 12: Fouls and Misconduct**

Conform to FIFA with the following exceptions.

The opposing team will be at least seven (7) yards away from the ball for starts and re-starts.

When a foul is committed, and the referee does not blow the whistle immediately, they are waiting (a couple of seconds) to see if an advantage can be awarded to the fouled team. The referee will typically extend one or both arms parallel to the ground in the direction of advancement. This arm signal means an advantage is awarded to the fouled team. If possession or advantage is lost during the waiting period or shortly after the advantage is signaled, the referee can award the appropriate free kick.

Every situation is unique, and although the examples may help give a general idea of how advantage may be applied, ALL advantage decisions are at the referee's discretion. No player or team has a fundamental right to receive an advantage after a foul has been committed. In some instances, a referee may completely eliminate advantages for the sake of game management. It is advised that advantage not be awarded in the defending third of the pitch, tentatively in the mid-third and more often in the attacking third (although this is best left off any rule books to allow more flexibility for referees in youth games - often a free kick is less of an advantage than possession depending on the skill level of the player and skill differentiation of opponent. In the case of a foul in the penalty area, only an instant goal-scoring opportunity should ever be considered for an advantage call.

**Examples:**

The referee extends their arms, signaling advantage, and the attacking team immediately loses possession. A free kick is awarded for the foul.

The referee signals for advantage, and the ball is played to a teammate who loses possession. The foul is not awarded, and the play continues.

The foul is committed; a teammate attempts to possess the ball and loses control, or the ball rolls out of bounds. The referee waits to determine if an advantage can be applied, and then a free kick is awarded.

The foul is committed, and the ball slowly rolls toward the boundary lines. A teammate controls the ball, dribbling forward, and then loses control. The referee waits, signals for advantage, a foul is not awarded, and play continues.

The foul is committed, and the ball is played safely backward to a teammate who begins the attack. An advantage or a free kick can be awarded based on the referee’s discretion.

**Slide Tackling:**

No slide tackling is allowed. The opposing team will receive an indirect free kick if it is done.

**Heading of the Ball:**

Heading of the ball is allowed.

Play may be stopped after a ball to the head for an injury check at the referee's discretion.

**Law 13: Free Kicks**

**Direct Free Kick:**

Free kicks will follow FIFA laws, except that the opposing team must be 7 yards away from the ball when.

**Indirect Free Kick:**

An indirect free kick is awarded for non-foul offenses such as offside, obstruction without contact, offensive language on the field, high foot, and other technical crimes.

The ball must be stationary when the kick is taken, and the referee will blow their whistle to signal the start of play.

The opposing team must be at least 10 yards away from the ball until it is kicked.

The kicker must touch the ball before another player can touch it, and the ball must visibly move before being considered in play. Should the kicker play the ball a second time before it is touched by a teammate or opponent, an indirect free kick will be awarded to the opponents. A goal may not be scored directly from an indirect free kick without a player other than the kicker touching the ball - this can include a touch from an opponent, e.g., if it hits the goalkeeper before entering the goal, a goal will be awarded. A goal kick is awarded if the ball enters the goal directly from an indirect free kick.

**Law 14: Penalty Kick:**

Conform to FIFA.

**Law 15: Throw In:**

Conform to FIFA. No redos!

**Law 16: Goal Kick:**

Conform to FIFA.

**Law 17: Corner Kick:**

A corner kick is awarded when the ball crosses the goal line and is last touched by a defensive player. The kick is taken from the corner on the side nearest to where the ball went out (as indicated by the direction of the referee’s arm). The kicker may not touch the ball again unless it first touches another player. The ball is deemed in play once it has been kicked and moved.

Corner kicks will follow FIFA laws, except the opposing team must be 7 yards away from the ball when kicked (as opposed to the standard distance of 10 yards). This is due to playing on a much smaller field.

**Sidelines:**

The home team's players, coaches, and spectators will sit on the north side of the field, and the away team’s players, coaches, and spectators will sit on the south side of the field.

All spectators shall remain 6 feet from the sidelines and halfway line during the game.

No spectators or coaches will be permitted along the goal lines or behind the goal.

**Playing Time:**

Each player must play at least 50% of the game. If a player refuses to go on the field, a parent must be notified to avoid parent/coach conflict about playing time. The only exception to this rule is if there are disciplinary issues with a player or the player is not attending practice regularly (without coach notification) and shows up for games expecting to play. Playing time must be discussed with the parents if there is a disciplinary or no-show issue.

***The 50% playing time rule DOES NOT apply during end-of-season tournament games.***

**Sportsmanship:**

If a goal differential exceeds five (5), the team with fewer goals MUST add another player. The opposing team MUST remove a player if there is no player for the team with fewer goals to add. If the goal differential exceeds seven (7), the winning team WILL NOT score from inside the penalty area. As the goal difference decreases, the extra player will be removed, or the removed player will be added back in, and the team with the higher score may again score from inside the penalty area. The referee is not responsible for notifying the relevant coach when this goal differential is met. The coaches are responsible for ensuring that players are added and removed per this rule. Any goals scored after the seventh will not be used in tie-break calculations.

***Coaches are responsible for the conduct of their assistant coaches, players, parents, and spectators. No coach, parent, player, or spectator shall yell, belittle, degrade, or threaten the referee, opposing coach, players, or fans. The referee has the authority to issue a yellow or red card to any coach, parent, spectator, or player for continued misconduct after a warning. If a coach is red-carded and no assistant coach is available, the game will be called in favor of the opponent. If a coach, parent, or spectator refuses to leave the field after being issued a red card, the referee will call the relevant authorities. Should physical contact be directed at the referee, the club will determine whether the person will be allowed at any future games, and a police report will be filed. No coaches or fans shall run up and down the sidelines during the game. After the game is over, players and coaches will line up and shake hands with the opposing team and referees along the centerline.***