

**US YOUTH SOCCER**  
**RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GAME FOR U8**  
**(Additional modifications for Gates Youth Soccer)**

**Law 1 The Field of Play:**

The dimensions are smaller to accommodate the 5v5 game and are appropriate for the movement capabilities of seven- and eight-year-old children. These adjusted dimensions provide more practical space allowing players to be successful.

*Field Markings:*

The center circle gives the players a concrete marking on where to be for the kick-off. The corner arc gives the young player a concrete place to put the ball to kick it back onto the field of play. While kids this young will not execute corner kick plays taking a kick from the corner is a reasonable way for them to put the ball into play and provides continuity with all other age groups. Cones will be used in lieu of corner flag posts.

*Goals:* 6' x 12' will be used.

**Law 2 The Ball:** must be a size three.

**Law 3 The Number of Players:**

The maximum # of players is 7, including a goalkeeper. Introducing positions, offense & defense, will begin, but do not expect the players to fully grasp the concept. "Bee Hiving" is still very prevalent at this age. This will provide the opportunity for the children to further develop their running, jumping and kicking coordination. These are valuable traits for all soccer players to develop. The smaller number of players takes into account the egocentrism of this age group and therefore allows each child more opportunities for kicking and dribbling the ball. With fewer players on the field each child has an increased number of contacts with the ball and has more actual playing time. Additionally the players will be required to make more decisions and experience repeating game situations frequently. The work rate and involvement of players will be more consistent.

- *Substitutions:* At any stoppage and unlimited.
- *Playing time:* Each player SHALL play a minimum of 50% of the total playing time. Teams and games will be coed.
- *Positions:* Each player SHALL get a chance to play at all positions throughout the course of the season.

**Law 4 – The Players Equipment:**

Jersey/Shorts/Socks as issued by the league. Players MUST wear shin guards. Players must wear appropriate footwear - sneakers or Soccer cleats. No sandals, crocs, bare feet, no jewelry etc.

**Law 5 The Referee:**

Young referees begin their training at the U8 level. All rule infringements shall be briefly explained to the offending player. 'Do-over's should be a regular occurrence allowed by the adult(s) supervising the U8 game.

**Law 6 The Assistant Referees:** Not necessary, but the ref may request a parent to act as a sideline judge. The parent's only responsibility is to raise the flag when the ball is *completely* out of the field of play. Any part of the ball touching the line is considered IN play.

**Law 7 The Duration of the Match:**

The match shall be divided into four (4) equal, (10) minute quarters. There shall be two (2) minute break between quarters. There shall be a half-time interval of five (5) minutes.

**Law 8 – The Start and Restart of Play:** Conform to FIFA, with the exception of the opponents of the team taking the kick-off are at least four (4) yards from the ball until it is in play.

**Law 9 – The Ball In and Out of Play:** Throw Ins are introduced

Some U8 players do not yet have the eye-hand coordination to execute a throw-in to the letter of the law. However, some U8 players have sufficient eye-hand coordination to attempt the throw-in. One 'do-over' per thrower should be the normal response if the throw-in is incorrect. The adult officiating/coaching the match should explain to the child how to execute the throw-in correctly.

**Law 10 The Goal Kick:** The defending players must stand at least four yards away from the ball until it is in play. The ball is in play once it has left the goal area.

**Law 11 – The Method of Scoring:** Game scores are kept. No seasonal standings are kept.

**Law 12 Offside:** there shall be no offside called during these games.

**Law 13 Fouls and Misconduct:** The referee/coach MUST explain all infringements to the offending player. No caution or send off shall be issued to players. If a child is being too rambunctious then the coach should make a substitution of that player to give the child a chance to calm down before returning to play.

**Law 14 Free Kicks:** all free kicks shall be direct. This should keep the game flowing and keep the attention of the kids.

**Law 15 The Penalty Kick:** for this age group there will not be any penalty kicks called.

**Law 16 – The Goal Kick:** The goal kick should be taken within 2-3 yards of the goal line anywhere across the width of the field of play at the nearest point from where the ball was retrieved. Opposing players must be four (4) yards away from the ball until it is in play.

**Law 17 The Corner Kick:** per FIFA. The defending players must stand at least four yards away from the ball until it is in play.

**Additional US Youth Soccer Regulations:**

- Opposing coaches, players and parents shake hands after each match.
- Parent/coaches, non-participating players and spectators should be there to enjoy and encourage the activity of the youngsters.
- A team and its spectators shall occupy the same side of the field with the opposing team on the opposite side of the field (where space permits).
- No alcoholic beverages or tobacco products will be consumed or allowed near the playing area. Soccer is a healthy activity and all adults present shall model healthy behavior.
- Zero Tolerance for any adult, coach, player verbally or physically assaulting ref, coach, player or spectator. Refer to the Gates Youth Soccer League Code of Conduct.