

## HFC: Rules of Play for U-6 (Summary):

*U6 games are intended to be an opportunity for young players to experience the fun and excitement of playing soccer. Minimal rules are needed and should be applied with a generous amount of flexibility. Let the players have the freedom to play with little interruption. All infringements should be briefly explained to the players. (US Youth Soccer Laws of the Game - Six & Under)*

### Game Format:

- **Two 15-minute halves** (5-minute half-time - water breaks & switch players if needed to balance play)
- Match is played **3 v 3** (the fewer players on the field, the more touches each player gets).
- Two simultaneous games will be played on the game field (each game using half of the U8 Field) against the teams as noted on the U-6 schedule. If attendance is low (6 or fewer players present on each team), you may choose to have ONE game played instead of two simultaneous games. **(You must still use only half of the field and still play 3 v 3).**

### Field Positions:

- **No Goalies!** No players standing/stationed in front of their defending net. Encourage all players to join in the play by going to the BALL and not to the NET!
- **No Field Positions (offense/defense).** Players should be free to play on the field, following the ball.

### When the Ball Goes out of Bounds:

- **Pass-In** (instead of throw-ins): When the ball goes out of bounds on the SIDELINE, the result is a **pass-in/kick-in** for the team that DID NOT KICK the BALL OUT (or who did NOT TOUCH THE BALL LAST). Goals **cannot** be scored from the pass-in. The ball must be passed **to another player**. *US Youth Soccer strongly recommends a pass-in (instead of a throw-in) for U6 play. HFC will observe this recommendation.*
- **Corner Kick:** Corner kicks are taken when the ball crosses the end-line, and is last touched by a member of the **defending** team. The opposing team should take the corner kick (at the corner mark on the side the ball went out on) and the defending team should retreat to allow the opposing team to set up.
- **Goal Kick:** Goal kicks are taken when the ball crosses the end-line, and it is last touched by a member of the **team that is trying to score on that net**. The Defending team takes the goal kick at a spot on the endline (near the side of the goal (on the side it went out on)). The opposing team should retreat toward the center of the field.

### At the Start of Each Game/2<sup>nd</sup> Half and After a Goal is Scored:

- **Center Starts/Re-Starts:** At the beginning of each half and after a goal is scored. Opposing team must back up to allow the team space to start off the tap.

### Maintaining the Flow of the Game:

- **Substitutions:** Coaches make every few minutes to get players on the field and keep them engaged.
- Coaches on the field should keep the game moving by passing the ball into open space throughout the game when the players are unable to get the ball moving (ex. If players are all swarming at the ball).
- Coaches should provide reminders to players about not using their hands, pushing, tripping, etc. Coaches can stop the game to remind ALL players about the soccer rules if players are experiencing difficulty.
- If one team is dominating the game, both coaches should find a way to even out the play (i.e. placing both team's stronger players on the field at the same time, and then play all the weaker players on at the same time (still maintaining appropriate # of players on the field). Coaches may rearrange game squads to balance play if needed.
- If one player has trouble getting involved in the game find ways to engage him/her by allowing him/her to do pass-ins/tap (center starts), etc.
- Coaches should ensure that they provide players with opportunities to participate in tap, kick-ins, etc. Coaches can rotate to allow all players opportunities within each game.
- Coaches are responsible for making sure all players have fair/equal playing time. Parents can join their player on the field in U6 if they are not comfortable on the field without their parent.

### Sportsmanship:

- **SCORES/STANDINGS ARE NOT KEPT:** There is no winning or losing team since no score is kept. Please remind players (and parents) that we are here to learn and have fun!
- Coaches should promote and set an example of good sportsmanship. Congratulate ALL players (on both teams) for a job well done, a great soccer play, a goal scored, etc.
- ALL Coaches are here to support and encourage ALL players (not just the players on their team).
- Each game should conclude with all players meeting at the center of the field and cheering or shanking hands to say 'good game.' Coaches should set expectations for ALL players to participate in this end of game ritual.
- **Team Wrap-up:** After the handshakes, coaches should gather their team on the field, give positive feedback, and motivate players for the next session before dismissing players.