



East Lincoln Optimist Club

Soccer Under 8 Playing Rules

This league is designed to instruct players on the basics of soccer.

There is a zero-tolerance policy for poor sportsmanship from coaches, participants, and parents. Coaches and parents are to remember that these games are for the kids – not the adults. Referee's decisions are final. Coaches are encouraged to have players try multiple positions so that they learn as much of the game as possible.

Playing Age

- U8: 6 and 7-year-olds

Heading

- Heading is banned at U10 and below.
- Indirect free kick awarded to the opposing team if a player deliberately heads the ball.
- If inside the attacking goal area, the kick is taken from the goal area line closest to the infraction.

Law 1: The Field of Play

- Length: 30–45 yards
- Width: 20–30 yards
- Center circle radius: 5 yards
- Goal area: 5x5 yards
- Penalty area: 8x8 yards with penalty mark 7 yards from goal line
- Flag posts: Encouraged, not required
- Corner Arc: Conform to FIFA (1 yard)
- Goals: 14 ft wide x 6 ft high, securely anchored

Law 2: The Ball

- Size 3 ball required

Law 3: Number of Players, Substitutions, Playing Time

- 7 players per team including a goalkeeper
- Minimum to start: 6 players

- Each coach should make every effort to ensure that all players receive a minimum of at least 50% of total game time. This equates to playing two full quarters (10 minutes each), or a total of 20 minutes per player in each game.

- Substitutions allowed on:
 - Throw-ins (if initiating team subs, opponent may also)
 - Corner kicks
 - Goal kicks
 - Foul kicks

Law 4: Players' Equipment

- Conform to FIFA.
- Non-uniform clothing allowed due to weather but jerseys must remain visible.
- Shin guards are required at all times.
- Players may not wear anything deemed unsafe by the referee.
- Goalkeeper must wear a distinguishing jersey or covering.

Law 5: The Referee

- A referee is recommended, but if unavailable, coaches may share responsibility.
- All rule infractions should be briefly explained to the offending player.

Law 6: On-field Coaching

- One coach per team may be on the field to instruct players.
- Only documented coaches allowed on the field or bench.
- No spectators or coaches are allowed on the goal lines.

Law 7: Match Duration

Regular Season:

- Two halves of 20 minutes each. Water breaks at 10 minutes.
- 5-minute halftime.
- Games ending in a tie remain a draw.

Tournament Games:

- Quarterfinal/Semifinal: Decided by penalty kick shootout.
- Championship: Two 4-minute overtimes followed by shootout if tied.

Law 8: Start and Restart of Play

- Conform to FIFA with opponents at least 5 yards from the ball during kick-off.

- Goals may be scored from kick-off.
- The player taking the kick-off may not touch the ball again until another player does.

Law 9: Ball In and Out of Play

- Conform to FIFA.

Law 10: Method of Scoring

- Conform to FIFA.

Law 11: Offside

- No offside rule enforced.
- Coaches are instructed to prevent “cherry picking” behavior.

Law 12: Fouls and Misconduct

- Conform to FIFA except for heading infractions.

• All fouls result in an indirect free kick.

- No slide tackling allowed.
- Hard physical play encouraged; pushing or grabbing is not tolerated.

Law 13: Free Kicks

- Conform to FIFA.
- Opponents must be at least 5 yards from the ball.

Law 14: Penalty Kicks

- Conform to FIFA.

Law 15: Throw-Ins

- Conform to FIFA with teaching accommodation.
- First illegal throw gets a demonstration and retry.
- Second illegal throw results in a turnover.

Law 16: Goal Kicks

- Conform to FIFA.
- Opponents must remain 5 yards away until ball is in play.

Law 17: Corner Kicks

- Conform to FIFA.
- Opponents must remain 5 yards away until ball is in play.

Law 18: Penalty Kick Shootout Procedure

- Used only during tournament games when a winner must be determined.
- All players eligible; new goalie may be designated.

- Coaches select 5 players and provide jersey numbers.
- Teams alternate kicks.
- Only shooter and goalkeeper allowed near the goal.
- Shooter must use one fluid motion—no dribbling or stutter steps.
- Goalkeeper must remain on the line until the ball is struck.
- Re-kick allowed if the keeper moves off the line and the shot misses.
- If tied after 5 rounds, additional rounds are single elimination until a winner is determined.

Law 19: Exception to Handling

- If a ball is played back to the goalkeeper by their own team or themselves and handled to prevent a goal, it is NOT considered a handball.