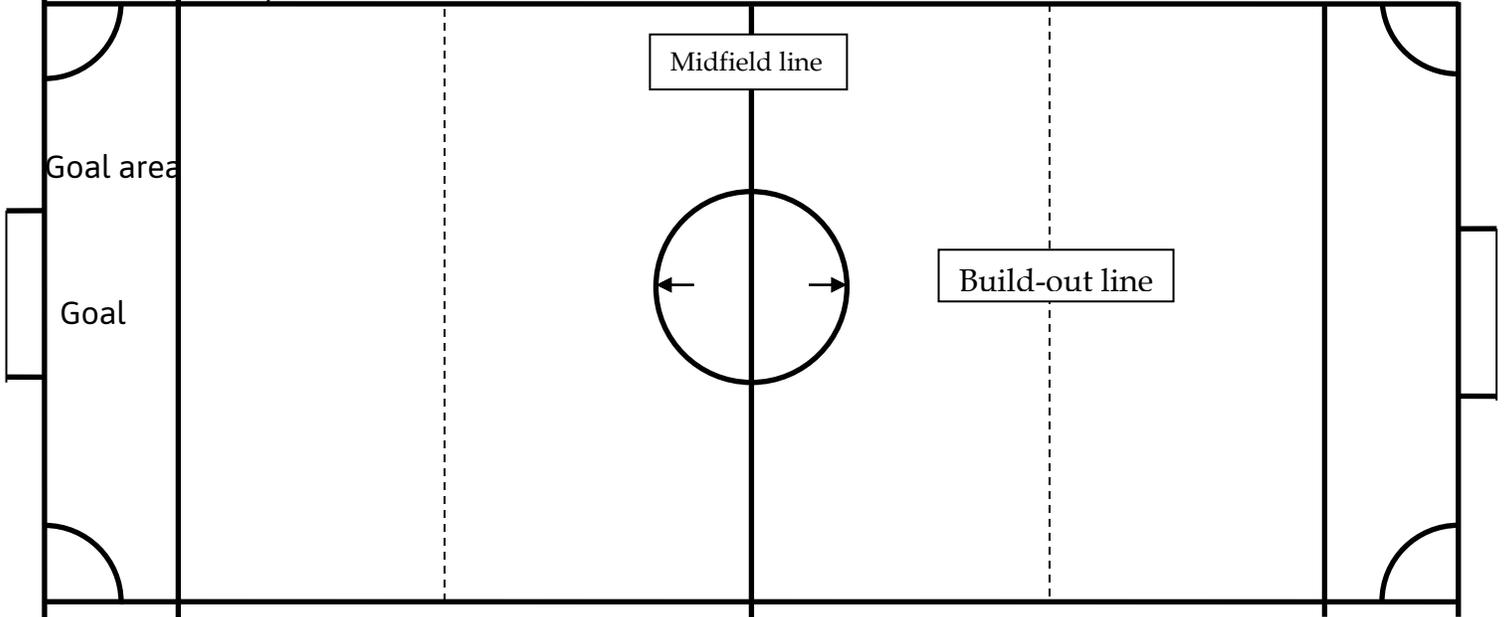


Youth Outdoor Soccer League Rules
AGES 3.5-9
Vancouver Parks and Recreation
Updated 8/20/2025

FIELD MEASUREMENTS: Refer to field sizes below.

Corner kick = 1 yard radius



1. PLAYING FIELD

a) Field size:

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| Ages 3.5-4 | Twenty (25) yards long by fifteen (15) yards wide, goals are 2 yards wide. |
| Ages 4.5 -5 | Thirty (30) yards long by twenty (20) yards wide, goals are 2 yards wide. |
| Ages 6-7 | Thirty (35) yards long by twenty (25) yards wide, goals are 3 yards wide. |
| Ages 8-9 | Forty (45) yards long by thirty (35) yards wide, goals are 4 yards wide. |

b) The goalie area will run from the end line into the field five (5) yards and cover the entire width of the field.

c) Ages 8-9 will have a build-out line halfway between the midfield line and the goalie area

d) Goals are marked with goals, centered on each end line. Corners are marked with cones.

e) Center circle will be 5 yds in diameter for ages 3.5-4, and 10 yards in diameter for ages 4.5-9.

1. EQUIPMENT

Player's Equipment:

a) ALL PLAYERS ARE REQUIRED TO WEAR SHINGUARDS. Socks must be worn up and over the shin guards. *Due to safety, players will not be allowed to play in the game if they do not have appropriate socks and shin guards on.*

(b) All players shall be in uniform to play. A minimum "official" uniform is the standard league shirt that is provided by the league. Goalkeepers shall wear shirt colors that distinguish them from other players.

(c) Standard approved soccer shoes or gym shoes shall be worn by all players. Cleats are not required; baseball cleats may not be worn. A player may not play in their bare feet.

(d) A player should not wear anything that may be dangerous to other players or themselves.

(e) All or any member(s) of a team may wear extra protective clothing against the cold, including gloves without dangerous, protruding, or hard objects, provided that:

- (1) The proper team uniform is worn outermost; and

- (2) Any hat should be without peak, bill or dangling or protruding object of any kind; however, the goalkeeper may wear a soft-billed hat; and
- (3) Referee discretion may be used to determine if an item of protective clothing is considered to go beyond the purpose of providing a means of retaining body heat.
- (f) No player wearing a cast or splint shall be permitted to play in any regularly scheduled game or practice.
- (g) No player shall be allowed to play in any regularly scheduled game with an injury or a known medical condition, which can be aggravated by playing.
- (h) Protective orthopedic devices, prosthetic devices and any equipment, gear, appliance, or apparatus that is protective for a known medical condition may be worn during a regularly scheduled game provided that:
 - (1) The equipment, gear, device appliance or apparatus has been approved by a licensed physician, prosthetics, therapist or other practitioner trained or licensed to prescribe, design, select and/or fit such devices.
 - (2) A letter is on file at the youth sports office from a licensed physician, therapist or other practitioner trained or licensed to prescribe, design, select and/or fit such devices, stating (i) that he or she is licensed to prescribe, design, select and/or fit such devices; (ii) that the device is properly fitted; and (iii) that the device is suitable for use in youth soccer competition.
 - (3) The player, or coach or team manager who is present, has with him/her written confirmation from the youth sports office that the required letter has been received; and the referee determines that the device conforms to the Laws of the Game.

Ball Size: Ages 3-5 -7 size 3 ball, Ages 8-9 size 4 soccer ball.

Mouth Guards: any player with braces must wear a mouthguard.

No Jewelry: Jewelry will not be allowed to be worn during games due to risk of injury. Taping of earrings is **not** allowed.

Coaches Equipment: Vancouver Parks and Recreation will check out equipment (soccer balls and cones) to you for team practices. Equipment must be returned to the referees at the end of the last game of the season or a fee will be assessed for lost equipment.

3. RULES OF PLAY

a) Referee: Coaches/parents/players/spectators are not allowed to argue, question, or challenge the referee at any time. If you have a concern, call Cindy 487-7071. There will be a staff person on site from the Youth Sports Department. This person will be the communication person to Ashley if you have questions. The referee will have first aid supplies, game schedules, and team rosters. Please respect the referee, make your players listen to them, work with them, and be patient. Remember that this is a tough job. Not only are the referees there to call the game, but they are also there to educate the children and make their experience positive.

b) Team make up:

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Ages 3.5-4 roster. | 3 vs 3, 3 forwards, no goalie | Maximum 8 players on |
| Ages 4.5-5 roster. | 4 vs 4, 3-4 forwards, 1-0 defender, no goalie | Maximum 8 players on |
| Ages 6-7 | 5 vs 5, 2-3 forwards/midfielders, 2-1 defender, 1 goalie | Maximum 9 players on roster. |
| Ages 8-9 | 6 vs 6, 3-4 forwards/midfielders, 2-1 defenders, 1 goalie | Maximum 11 players on roster. |

If a team doesn't have enough players, the opposing team should allow a few players to play on the other team or play with less players on the field so a game can be played (this is up to the coaches). Forfeited games will not be made-up.

c) Game time:

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Ages 3.5-4 | 30 min. practice, 4 x 6 min. quarters, 1 min. breaks between quarters, 2-min. half time. |
| Ages 4.5 and 6-7 | 4 x 10 min. quarters, 2 min. breaks between quarters, 5-min. half time. |
| Ages 8 -9 | 4 x 12 ½ min. quarters, 2 min. breaks between quarters, 5-min. half time. |

d) Start of play:

- (1) Home Team Kicks Off. Kick off will rotate each quarter with home and visitor teams. Ball may go in any direction as long as it moves and is then kicked by another player. The ball will be placed at the center of the field by the referee and the game will start with one player taking a kick in any direction as long as it moves and is then kicked by another player, after a given signal by the referee. At the time of the kickoff, every player will be in his/her half of the field. Every player of the opposing team, to that of the kicker, shall be:

4.5-9: Ten yards from the center mark

3.5-4: Five yards from the center mark

- (2) The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves forward or backwards. The kicker shall not kick the ball a second time until it has been touched or played by another player.

For any infraction of these laws the kickoff shall be retaken.

- (3) A goal **shall not** be scored directly from a kickoff without the ball being touched by at least one other player on either team.

e) Restart of Play

- (1) After a goal has been scored, the game shall be restarted in like manner by a player of the team that gave up the goal.
- (2) Restarting play after temporary delay: In the case of a temporary suspension due to an injury or any unusual situation, if one team is clearly in possession of the ball, the game shall be restarted by an indirect free kick by the team in possession of the ball at the point where the ball was when play was suspended. Should there not be a clear possession at the time play is suspended due to an injury or any unusual situation, there will be a drop ball at the spot where the ball was declared dead. The ball shall be deemed "in play" when the ball has touched the ground. This is for ages 6 and up.

f) Ball in and Out of Play

- (1) The ball is out of play when it has completely crossed the goal line or whole touchline, whether it is on the ground or in the air,
- (2) The ball is out of play when the referee has stopped the game.

g) Method of Scoring

- (1) A goal is scored when the whole of the ball has crossed the whole of the goal line on the ground or in the air between the goal posts and under the cross bar.
- (2) In the event that cones are used for markers, the height of the crossbar will be determined by the height of the goalkeeper's arms.
- (3) In the case the goal marker (cone) is knocked over or moved as a result of a direct hit by the ball as it crosses the goal line, the goal will not be allowed. In this case, the ball shall be put into play by either a goal kick or a corner kick, depending on who touched the ball last. The ball striking the inside of the goal marker and deflecting

into the goal shall constitute a good goal. As in all judgment calls, the referee's decision will be final.

h) Offside Rule

- (1) The **offside rule will not apply to 3.5-7 ages; however, the intent of the rule will be followed.** Positioning a player in front of the opponent's goal irrespective of the location of the ball on the field is contrary to the aims of the program. The referee shall take appropriate action to prevent this kind of play (an indirect kick to the offended team and instructional statements to the violating players and coach.)
- (2) **The offside rule will be lightly enforced for Ages 8-9. The build-out line shall be used as the line to determine offside. 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.**

i) Goalkeeper: Ages 6-7 and 8-9 will have a goalkeeper.

Coaches/parents are not allowed to stand or coach from behind the goal or at the corners of the field.

j) Goalkeeper possession: Once the goalie has possession of the ball it is a dead ball. Opposing players may not kick the ball. The goalie has 5 seconds to put the ball back into play by throwing it in or dribbling it back into play, drop kicks are **not** allowed for ages 3.5-7, ages **8-9 may drop kick**. If the goalie dribbles the ball back into play the ball is live as soon as it touches the ground.

k) Charging the Goalkeeper: No player shall make physical contact with the goalkeeper or attempt to play the ball once the goalkeeper has control of the ball in any manner and to any degree whatsoever. "Having control of the ball" is if the goalkeeper holds the ball on the ground with one or both hands. *If there is contact an indirect kick shall be awarded.*

l) Fouls and Misconduct

- (1) **FREE KICKS: For ages 3.5-9.** Free kicks shall be classified under one (1) heading:
"Indirect", from which a goal cannot be scored unless the ball has been played or touched by a player other than the kicker (including the goalie) before passing through the goal. If a player directly kicks the ball in, there will be one retry allowed. (Why? This is a learning league.) If on the second kick, it enters the goal directly, not touching another player, there will be a change of possession, and a goal kick will be awarded to the other team. This is for all infractions that warrant a free kick. A Corner Kick is not due to an infraction; therefore, it can be a direct kick into the goal.
- (2) **NO DIRECT KICKS SHALL BE AWARDED. ONLY INDIRECT KICKS WILL BE USED.** This is for the safety of the players. The field size is not set-up to allow direct kicks.
- (3) **Penalty Kicks will NOT be granted**
- (4) An **INDIRECT KICK** shall be awarded for the following offenses: (some could result in a player sitting out or leaving the game depending on severity)
 - Kicking an opponent
 - Tripping an opponent
 - Jumping at an opponent
 - Charging an opponent in a violent or dangerous manner
 - Charging an opponent from behind
 - Striking an opponent

- Holding an opponent
- Pushing an opponent
- Handling the ball, with the exception of the goalie, in the designated area.
- Dangerous play (high kicking)
- Charging fairly (shoulder to shoulder) when the ball is not within the playing distance of the players involved
- Obstructing the goalkeeper (there will be NO INTENTIONAL physical contact with the goalkeeper in the "penalty area")
- Lying on the ball and not allowing others to play it
- Unsporting behavior
- Offsides for ages 8-9 between the build-out line and goal line.

Handball rule: A handball will be called if a player blatantly grabs or touches the ball with their hand. If a player is blocking him/herself to avoid being hit/self protection and the ball is not deliberately propelled, a handball will not be called, and the game will continue. If a ball that is hit even by an unintentional handball scores a goal, the goal will not count, and a goal kick will occur.

- (5) Generally, in any free kick, an opposing player cannot stand closer than 10 yards (9.15 meters) from the free kick spot. The only exception to this is when an indirect free kick is awarded inside the penalty area. Here, the opposing players form a wall on the goal line. When a player is taking a free kick inside his penalty area, the opposing players should stay outside the penalty area, at least 10 yards from the ball, till the ball is played or kicked.

(6) SLIDE TACKLING WILL NOT BE ALLOWED.

Consistent with the educational intent of the Small Sided Program, the referee should inform the offending player of the infraction that was committed.

m) Throw-Ins

- (1) When the whole of the ball passes over the whole touch line, either on the ground or in the air, it shall be put back into play by a throw-in. The throw shall be taken from the point where it crossed the line, by a player of the opposing team.
- (2) The thrower must face the field of play and must keep both feet on the ground while releasing the ball. He/she shall use both hands on both sides of the ball to deliver the ball from behind and over his/her head.
- (3) For age 3.5-7, re-throws will be allowed if an incorrect throw occurs. *This is to be done in a timely matter. Before the "offending" player takes the re-throw, the referee will instruct the thrower on the proper technique and then proceed with the re-throw. For 8-9 there will only be one re-throw allowed.
- (4) The thrower may not play the ball until another player has touched it. If the thrower plays the ball a second time before another player has touched it, the above re-throw rules will apply. The referee will explain the proper procedure. If the player throws incorrectly again, an indirect kick shall be awarded to the opposing team from the spot where the infringement occurred.
- (5) A goal shall not be scored directly from the throw-in.

n) Goal Kicks

- (1) When the whole of the ball passes over the whole of the goal line, excluding the portion between the goal posts and under the crossbar (either in the air or on the ground), having last been played by one of the players on the attacking team, it shall be kicked directly into play by a goal kick.
- (2) A goal kick may be taken from any point inside the goal area

- (3) **Any defending player, including the goalkeeper, may take the goal kick.**
- (4) The kicker shall not play the ball a second time until it has been touched or played by another player.
- (5) A goal shall not be scored directly from a goal kick.
- (6) The ball is in play when it crosses outside the goal area.
- (7) DEFENSIVE PLAYERS: Move all of your players back to the midfield line (3.5-7 ages) or back to the **build-out line** (8-9) on ALL goal kicks, not just when the game is lopsided.

o) Corner Kicks

- (1) When the whole of the ball passes over the whole of the goal line excluding that portion between the goal posts and under the crossbar, (either in the air or on the ground), having last been played by one of the defending team, a player of the attacking team shall have a corner kick.

p) Miscellaneous Rules

- (1) Unless otherwise modified by these rules, the standard laws of the game will govern.
- (2) **Dropkicking and punting will NOT BE ALLOWED for age 3.5-7.** Dropkicking and punting will be allowed at 8-9 and above.
- (3) **SLIDE TACKLING IS NOT ALLOWED FOR ANY AGE GROUP.** Infringement of this rule will result in an indirect free kick.
- (4) Good judgment, sportsmanship and fair play should govern the decisions and actions of all the coaches, referees and spectators.
- (5) Coaches, their assistants or spectators are not allowed on the field of play during the game unless permission is given by the referee (in case of emergencies or unusual situations) Exception: Ages 3.5-5, a coach may be on the field to coach players.

There will be no published team standings and game scores will not be recorded.

q) Substitutions

- (a) Unlimited substitutions are permitted, with the consent of the referee, on any dead ball. All substitutes are to enter at the half line, when signaled to do so by the referee.
- (b) *Fairness in playing time:* **Each player will receive equal playing time.** Substitutions will be allowed in order to give an opportunity for all players to get equal playing time and to balance rather than to run up the score. *
- (c) *Positions:* Ages 6-7 and 8-9 – coaches need to teach players positions. Players may not play the same position for more than one half of the game. (Rotate – goalie, defender, forwards, etc).
- (d) Players not on the field of play must remain two (2) yards behind the touchline and not within the distance of the goal area from the corner of the field.
- (e) A cautioned player shall be substituted for immediately and not return until the next legal substitution.

These rules are flexible for the 3.5 -4 and 4.5-5 age groups.

* **Running up the score: 6-7, 8-9-year-old groups only.** If a player has scored 3 goals, that player will not be allowed to score in the remainder of the half. Not allowed is based on being realistic with the situation, if the player has no other choice, then to score then obviously, they will score, we want to give other players a chance to score though. We do not want to discourage players from scoring but try switching positions to allow others to score. Rotate a player to a defender or goalie position or a player may assist other players in scoring by passing rather than scoring. Have the opposing team pull back to the midline during goalie kicks. This allows for the other team to be able to pass the ball and

not have to worry about the other team getting a quick steal and scoring. It also allows for the offense to be able to move the ball up the field a little thus helping to balance the game.

EXPLANATION: This rule is intended to encourage players to play different positions, allow all players the opportunity to score, and learn to assist other players in scoring. Players do not need to know this rule exists, as the coach you can rotate the player without discouraging the player's aggressiveness and incentive to play in the game. As the coach you can also encourage the players to pass the ball more or rotate the player to a non-scoring position such as goalie or defender. Players will not be penalized if they score more than 3 goals.

When your team is outscoring the other team and it is a lopsided game you will need to make all of the following adjustments and teach your players how to play a well-rounded game and use other skills other than shooting on goal. Lopsided game/outscoring the opposing team = any team up by 5 goals needs to implement the following skills/techniques/adjustments.

- Players must pass the ball 3-4 times before taking a shot on the goal
- Drop the ball back to a teammate
- Use the following formations
 - Ages 6-7 - 2 forwards, 2 defenders, 1 goalie
 - Ages 8-9 - 2 forwards, 3 defenders, 1 goalie
- Move your stronger players to defense or goalie positions versus forwards.
- Move ALL players back to the midfield line on ALL goal kicks, not just when the game is lopsided.
- Move all players back further than normal on a throw in.
- Passing with the outside of their foot.
- Shooting on the goal with their non-dominant foot.

r) Sidelines: Coaches are responsible for the spectators/parents. There will be a line 6 feet away from the sidelines that parents need to stay behind, please inform your parents. Teams are encouraged to sit on opposite sides of the field to allow coaches to move up and down the sidelines freely.

s) Changing sides: Only ages 6-7, 8-9 will change sides at the half.

4. COACHING

Soccer presents an excellent opportunity to learn, develop, and establish group behavior, friendly relationships, fair competition, doing things in an organized manner, enjoyment, and many other items. Above and beyond anything else it must be fun!

- (a) The coach or designated adult (18 years or older, unless approved by the Parks and Recreation) should attend every practice and every game. All coaches, team managers, and assistants must fill out the required Background Check form and comply with all Risk Management requirements. There must be an approved adult at all functions.
- (b) The coach should, as soon as possible, have a team and parent meeting. Utilize this time to explain the league rules and regulations as well as other basic rules of the game.
- (c) The coach should appoint an assistant coach and team manager/helper.
- (d) The coach is responsible for his own behavior as well as that of his players and spectators. Discuss what you expect of parents during games. Remember this is just for fun.
- (e) Every player must play in each game at least 50% of the playing time unless they are not able to play due to illness or injury.
- (f) All coaches should attend the coaching meeting prior to the start of the regular season.
- (g) Coaching from the sidelines is permitted but not recommended. Coaching must be done in a civil manner and the tone of voice will be informational and encouraging, not demanding or critical.

- (h) Home team: Make sure that you have a game ball properly inflated before the game starts.
- (i) Make sure that all of your players are properly equipped, fit and emotionally ready to play.
- (j) In case of injuries during the game, assure that the player is properly attended to. Check his/her condition after the game and follow up with a call to the home in the evening.
- (k) In the event an injured player requires medical attention, he/she must have a written release from the doctor before returning to practice or play with the team.
- (l) Proper warm up of all players should take place for approximately 20-30 minutes prior to the start of the game.
- (m) Prior to the start of the game, meet and greet the visiting coach. After the game, exchange with them some friendly, positive comments. Be sure to thank the referees and shake their hands. Have the players line up at the center of the field to shake hands with the opposing players.
- (n) **Coaches on the field:** For ages 3.5-5, One coach from each team is allowed on the playing field during games. Coaches must stay out of the way of play, away from the goalie area, and may not impede the progress of the game. This is a learning league; therefore, some children/teams may need more direction. For ages 6-9, **NO** coaches are allowed on the fields during play. **No** coaches or parents can be behind the goals during game play.

5. DISCIPLINE RULES

- a) SEE LEAGUE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES for expectation/discipline guidelines.

6. GAME CANCELLATIONS

Inclement Weather Policy: Games will be played rain or shine. Cancellations will only occur due to inclement weather such as lightning, snow, etc. An email will go out to all coaches if games are cancelled. YOU WILL **NOT** BE CONTACTED INDIVIDUALLY WHEN CANCELED. If there is no message saying that games have been canceled, then games are on as scheduled. Coaches are responsible for notifying parents and the Youth Sports Program of practice cancellations.

7. OTHER

- a) **Refund Policy:** When the customer drops a minimum of 4 weeks prior to the league's first game, the total fee will be refunded minus a \$5.00 processing fee. If the fee is greater than \$10.00 and the customer prefers, a refund check. Refund requests made after the 4 weeks prior to league games deadline will only be issued in the case of a family or medical emergency. Refunds take about 10 working days to process after applications are submitted. ***Vancouver Parks and Recreation Youth Sports Department has a wait list and we will replace players who drop out prior to the second game of the season.***
- b) **TOBACCO FREE POLICY:** All parks and recreation youth leagues are smoke/tobacco free. For the well being and health of the youth in our programs the use of tobacco is not allowed around the fields by spectators or coaches. Use of tobacco (including and not limited to cigarettes, cigars, pipes and chewing tobacco) is prohibited in the program. Please inform guests who may attend practices or games of this rule.
- c) **Trophies:** The Vancouver Parks and Recreation Department does not provide trophies/certificates for teams at the end of the season.

This is a recreational soccer league. The goal is to have FUN versus playing in a highly competitive game.

THANKS, AND HAVE A GREAT SOCCER SEASON!