

Northumberland Soccer Club Small Sided Rules U11-U12 Revised June 2025

U11/U12 divisions follow the FIFA Laws of the Game but they play a 9v9 format including the goalkeeper. Coaches you are encouraged to put the emphasis of the game on developing the players and the game and away from the score. There are no league standings in the U11 and U12 Divisions. The NSC wants to teach our teams to play the game from the back forward. This means that if a mid-fielder can't go forward with the ball, instead of just kicking it away they should be encouraged to pass the ball to the defense that may have a better option of putting the ball forward or across the field. If this results in an error and a goal is scored, that shouldn't matter because the players are learning how to play the game of soccer and will have a better understanding of positions. We as a club wish to encourage our players to learn the game and not worrying about the win. The score at the end of the game should not be what determines how we play the game.

Northumberland Soccer Club policy is that all players in house league soccer receives equal playing time. Soccer is important as a social outlet as well as for fitness. It is very important, therefore, that the youngsters be encouraged and respected in every aspect of the sport. Please show respect and support to all coaches and never yell at or ridicule the players or allow other parents to do so. Encourage the adults to conduct themselves in a manner which sets a good example for the players.

All spectators MUST sit on the opposite side of the field from the teams.

- 1. Starting Time:** All teams will have a practice time from 6:00-6:30 pm. Games will begin at 6:30pm. Games will consist of two 35-minute halves with a half time interval of 5 minutes. 9v9 including a goalkeeper.
- 2. Number of Players:** The minimum number of players to start a game is 7 with a maximum of 9 players on the field including the goalkeeper. If one team has fewer players than the other team, both teams should play with the same number of players. It is recommended that if one team is shorthanded the other team should loan them players for the game. If for some reason i.e. bad weather teams are all shorthanded, teams may join together to play a game.

Coaches may be on the field during play until the end of week 6. HOWEVER, coaches must not be directly in line with the play (stay to the flanks/sides)

- 3. Equipment:** Ball: A size 4 ball will be used.

Shin pads: All players must wear shin pads.

Footwear: Soccer cleats are required.

NO JEWELRY (NO TAPING)

- 4. Referee:** An Entry Level Referee will be assigned to each game. If a referee does not show up it should be noted on the game sheet and each coach asked to referee half of the game. The referee may terminate any game in which they are being subjected to abuse from any coach, player or spectator. The coach is responsible for any spectators accompanying their players. Spectators should remain 1 meter from side lines at all times.

5. **Playing Area:** Field Markings: 1 yd quarter circle in each corner for corner kicks. A 5yd box (goal area) extending from the goal line. A 5 yard goal area extending from the goal line – a 18 yard penalty area with a 9.8 yard penalty mark. - The field will be divided in half by a centre line and a 8 yard centre circle.
6. **Goalkeeper:** Only the goalkeeper may play the ball with their hands within the goal area (5yrd box). The goalkeeper may take an unlimited number of steps within the goal area. The goalkeeper may punt or throw the ball back into play. When a ball goes into the goal area and enters the goal, it is a goal and play will restart with a kick off.
7. **Start of Play:** A coin will be tossed to determine which team is given first choice of attacking sides. After the initial kick off, teams will alternate kicking off at the beginning of each period. The ball can be played forward or backwards at the kickoff. All players must be in their own half prior to kickoff and opponents must be 3 yards from the center mark before the ball is struck. Goals cannot be scored from kick off.
8. **Throw-ins:** Yes – 2 feet planted firmly on the ground
9. **Goal Kicks:** When the ball is put out of play over the goal line by the attacking team, a goal kick is awarded to the defending team. The goal kick can be taken from anywhere along the goal line. The kicker may not touch the ball again until it has been touched by another player.

The retreat line will come into play when the ball has gone out for a goal kick or when the goalkeeper has the ball in their arms.

The retreat line shall be marked at the 1/3rd of the field by a painted line. The use of field markers outside the field of play to indicate the retreat line is recommended. The ball is in play once it leaves the penalty area.

All opponents must be behind the retreat line and cannot cross the retreat line until the ball: · Is touched by a player of the team releasing the ball OR, · Leaves the field of play OR, · Goes over the retreat line. (If the goalkeeper chooses to play the ball across the retreat line prior to the opposition crossing the retreat line)

10. **Substitutions:** Substitutions are allowed during any stoppage in play upon approval of the referee.
11. **Offside:** This law provides a distinction between being in an offside position (OP) and the infraction of offside. A player is in an OP if: they are nearer to their opponents' goal line than both the ball and the second last opponent at the time the ball is kicked. It is not illegal to be in an OP. For the player to be called offside and an IFK to be awarded, the player must interfere with play typically by playing or attempting to play the ball. Or interfere with an opponent as to make him less able to play the ball, or by gaining an advantage for their own team.
12. **Penalty Kicks:** There are penalty kicks taken from the 10 yrd spot. All players except the penalty taker and the goal keeper are to remain outside the penalty area. The ball must be kicked forward and the defending keeper must remain on their goal line until the ball is kicked. The goal keeper may move between the goal posts, just not forward. The ball cannot be touched a second time by the penalty taker until the ball has been touched by another player. The penalty taker must wait for the referee's signal before taking the kick.
13. **Drop Ball:** The referee may restart the game with a "drop ball" for any infringement that does not call for a free kick. The ball will be dropped between one player from each opposing team. The ball must touch the

ground before it may be played by a player. Examples of infringements for which free kicks would not be awarded are: spectators or animals on the pitch, doubt about which team last put the ball out of play, an injury etc.

14. Free Kicks: Both direct and indirect free kicks can be awarded based on the foul.

Direct Free Kick

A direct free kick is awarded if a player commits any of the following offences against an opponent in a manner considered by the referee to be careless, reckless or using excessive force:

- charges
- jumps at
- kicks or attempts to kick
- pushes
- strikes or attempts to strike (including head-butt)
- tackles or challenges
- trips or attempts to trip If an offence involves contact it is penalised by a direct free kick or penalty kick.

Careless is when a player shows a lack of attention or consideration when making a challenge or acts without precaution. No disciplinary sanction is needed.

Reckless is when a player acts with disregard to the danger to, or consequences for, an opponent and must be cautioned.

Using excessive force is when a player exceeds the necessary use of force and/or endangers the safety of an opponent and must be sent off.

A direct free kick is awarded if a player commits any of the following offences:

- handles the ball deliberately (except for the goalkeeper within their penalty area)
- holds an opponent
- impedes an opponent with contact
- spits at an opponent

Handling the ball involves a deliberate act of a player making contact with the ball with the hand or arm. The following must be considered:

- the movement of the hand towards the ball (not the ball towards the hand)
- the distance between the opponent and the ball (unexpected ball)

- the position of the hand does not necessarily mean that there is an offence
- touching the ball with an object held in the hand (clothing, shinguard, etc.) is an offence
- hitting the ball with a thrown object (boot, shinguard, etc.) is an offence

The goalkeeper has the same restrictions on handling the ball as any other player outside the penalty area. Inside their penalty area, the goalkeeper cannot be guilty of a handling offence incurring a direct free kick or any related sanction but can be guilty of handling offences that incur an indirect free kick.

Indirect Free Kick

An indirect free kick is awarded if a player:

- plays in a dangerous manner
- impedes the progress of an opponent without any contact being made
- is guilty of dissent, using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures or other verbal offences
- prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from the hands or kicks or attempts to kick the ball when the goalkeeper is in the process of releasing it
- commits any other offence, not mentioned in the Laws, for which play is stopped to caution or send off a player

An indirect free kick is awarded if a goalkeeper, inside their penalty area, commits any of the following offences:

- controls the ball with the hands for more than six seconds before releasing it
- touches the ball with the hands after:
- releasing it and before it has touched another player
- it has been deliberately kicked to the goalkeeper by a team-mate
- receiving it directly from a throw-in taken by a team-mate

A goalkeeper is considered to be in control of the ball when:

- the ball is between the hands or between the hand and any surface (e.g. ground, own body) or by touching it with any part of the hands or arms except if the ball rebounds accidentally from the goalkeeper or the goalkeeper has made a save
- holding the ball in the outstretched open hand
- bouncing it on the ground or throwing it in the air

A goalkeeper cannot be challenged by an opponent when in control of the ball with the hands. Playing in a dangerous manner Playing in a dangerous manner is any action that, while trying to play the ball, threatens

injury to someone (including the player themselves) and includes preventing a nearby opponent from playing the ball for fear of injury. A scissors or bicycle kick is permissible provided that it is not dangerous to an opponent. Impeding the progress of an opponent without contact Impeding the progress of an opponent means moving into the opponent's path to obstruct, block, slow down or force a change of direction when the ball is not within playing distance of either player. All players have a right to their position on the field of play; being in the way of an opponent is not the same as moving into the way of an opponent. A player may shield the ball by taking a position between an opponent and the ball if the ball is within playing distance and the opponent is not held off with the arms or body. If the ball is within playing distance, the player may be fairly charged by an opponent.

16. Score Keeping: No scores or league standings will be kept

17. Team Parity: The objective is to have evenly matched teams in all divisions. Therefore, after all teams have played 3 games players may be reassigned to new teams at this time in order to even up the division.