

Northumberland Soccer Club Rule U13 and Up Revised June 2025

U13 and up divisions follow the FIFA Laws of the Game. Coaches you are encouraged to put the emphasis of the game on developing the players and the game and away from the score. 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.

Law 1: The Field of Play

For safety reasons, the condition of the Field of Play should be checked by the referee. The nets should be fastened to the ground, goal posts & cross bar. Any gaping holes should be tied up. Lines should be clearly marked. A visual check of the entire field must be completed to look for holes, etc. A ball is considered to be out of play when the whole of the ball crosses the whole of the line.

Law 2: The Ball

The ball needs to be properly inflated. When dropping the ball from your head, it should bounce up to your waist. You can check the roundness of a ball by tossing the ball in the air and spinning it. No wobble should be visible. Some balls may become very hard or heavy in cold and wet weather.

Law 3: The Number of Players

For U13 and older each team should field 11 players, one of whom is the goalkeeper. Substitutes may only enter the field of play at the coach's request and the referee's approval. Entering or exiting the field of play without the referee's approval will result in a caution being issued. If you notice that there are too few players on the field of play, get the player to the half line, get the attention of the referee and explain that there are not enough players on the field. The Referee should allow the player to enter. If you notice too many players on the field of play, bring the extra player to the touch line, get the attention of the Referee, and explain that there are too many players on the field. The Referee will issue a caution for too many players on the field and the player will leave the field of play. If the player is pulled off without the referee's permission, 2 cautions may be issued, 1 for too many players on the field, and 1 for leaving the field of play without permission. Substitutions may only be made with the approval of the referee on Goal Kicks, restarts after a goal is scored, or on throw-ins. The referee must be informed when the goal keeper is changed, no matter when this happens.

Law 4: Player Equipment

Players may not wear anything that is harmful to themselves or another player (specifically jewellery). Players **MUST** wear: shirt, shorts, soccer socks, shin guards and soccer cleats. Goalkeepers **MUST** wear colours that are different from all players and officials.

Law 5: The Referee

The Referee has full authority (regardless of age) to enforce all 17 Laws of the Game. The decisions the Referee makes regarding the Laws of the Game are final and not subject to appeal. This authority extends to the coaches and spectators. The Referee has the right to call or not call any foul that is deemed necessary. This extends to the Advantage Rule, which permits the attacking team to keep possession of the ball should there be a defensive foul.

Law 7: The Duration of the Match

The game consists of 2 equal halves. U13 is 35 minute halves, U15 40 minutes and U18 45 minutes.

The clock does not stop, but the referee may add time to a match due to game delays for various reasons. Each half is separated by a half time. The referee is the sole timekeeper and is the only official who can end a game. If the ball is in flight when a referee ends the game, the ball becomes dead at that point (a dead ball can't be scored). If a penalty kick is awarded, and time runs out immediately after, the kick must take place before the match is over. Goal or not, the game is over immediately after the kick. Games can be shortened only if both coaches and referee agree. The halves must be shortened equally.

Law 8: Start and Restart of Play

A coin toss is used to determine which side a team wishes to attack. The team winning the toss must decide which end to defend/attack. The opposing team automatically gets the kickoff. For the second half teams switch ends and kickoff. A kickoff is a method of start and restart that is simply a Direct Free Kick (DFK) taken from the center spot. A kickoff must go forward and both teams must be in their respective halves and must be signalled by the referee.

Law 9: Ball in and out of Play

The ball is in play following legal start or restart of play. The ball is out of play when it has wholly crossed the goal line or touch line or when the game has stopped by the referee. A player may be outside of the field of play and still play the ball. The goalkeeper can be fully inside the goal while holding the ball outside to prevent a goal from being scored. Only the referee may call a ball out of play. If the referee requests, players and coaches may signal that the ball is out of play but must wait for the referee to call it.

Law 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 his own team.

Law 12: Fouls and Misconduct

Direct Free Kick (DFK) Fouls:

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

- kicks or attempts to kick an opponent
- trips or attempts to trip an opponent
- jumps at an opponent
- charges an opponent
- strikes or attempts to strike an opponent
- pushes an opponent
- tackles an opponent

A direct free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following three offences:

- holds an opponent
- spits at an opponent
- handles the ball deliberately (except for the goalkeeper within his own penalty area)

A direct free kick is taken from the place where the offence occurred.

Indirect Free Kick (IFK) Fouls:

An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a goalkeeper, inside his own penalty area, commits any of the following four offences:

- controls the ball with his hands for more than six seconds before releasing it from his possession
- touches the ball again with his hands after he has released it from his possession and before it has touched another player
- touches the ball with his hands after it has been deliberately kicked to him by a team-mate
- touches the ball with his hands after he has received it directly from a throw-in taken by a teammate

An indirect free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if, in the opinion of the referee, a player:

- plays in a dangerous manner
- impedes the progress of an opponent
- prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his hands
- commits any other offence, not previously mentioned in Law 12, for which play is stopped to caution or send off a player.

The indirect free kick is taken from the place where the offence occurred.

Misconduct: Yellow Card:

Two yellow cards are equal to a red card. It's possible that a yellow will not be shown immediately, especially when 'advantage' is being applied. With advantage, the referee will show the yellow at the next stoppage in play. A player may be cautioned (yellow-carded) if:

1. The player enters or re-enters the field of play to join his team or deliberately leaves after the game has begun without having received permission from the referee.
2. The player persistently infringes upon the laws of the game.
3. The player shows, by words or actions, dissent from any decision given by the referee.
4. The player is guilty of un-sportsmanlike conduct.

Red Card:

The individual is sent off the field and not permitted to return. The affected team plays short the remainder of the game. If more than one player, from the same team, is sent off, that team will play that number down. Red cards are given immediately following the foul. A player shall be sent off the field of play (red-carded) if, in the opinion of the referee, he/she:

1. Is guilty of violent conduct or serious foul play.
2. Uses offensive, insulting, or abusive language or spits at another person.
3. Denies an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by deliberately handling the ball.
4. Denies an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by an offense punishable by a free kick or penalty kick.
5. Persists in misconduct after having received a caution.

Law 13: Free Kicks

IFK (indirect free kick) – The ball has to be touched by a second player before a goal will be awarded. The referee will hold one arm straight over head, which will not be lowered until the second touch takes place. DFK (direct free kick) – The kicker can score directly from the kick. Ball placement is at the site of the foul and must

be stationary, opposing players must be 10 yards away and the ball needs to move in any direction to be considered in play.

Free Kick Inside the Penalty Area

Direct or indirect free kick to the defending team:

- all opponents must be at least 10 yds from the ball
- all opponents must remain outside the penalty area until the ball is in play
- the ball is in play when it is kicked directly out of the penalty area
- a free kick awarded in the goal area may be taken from any point inside that area

Indirect free kick to the attacking team:

- all opponents must be at least 10 yds from the ball until it is in play, unless they are on their own goal line between the goalposts
- the ball is in play when it is kicked and moves
- an indirect free kick awarded inside the goal area must be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred

Free Kick Outside the Penalty Area:

- all opponents must be at least 10 yds from the ball until it is in play
- the ball is in play when it is kicked and moves
- the free kick is taken from the place where the infringement occurred or from the position of the ball when the infringement occurred (according to the infringement)

Law 14: The Penalty Kick

A penalty kick is awarded against a team that commits one of the ten offences for which a direct free kick is awarded, inside its own penalty area and while the ball is in play. A goal may be scored directly from a penalty kick. Additional time is allowed for a penalty kick to be taken at the end of each half or at the end of periods of extra time. All players except the penalty taker and the goalkeeper are to remain outside the penalty area and 10 yds away. The ball must be kicked forward and the defending keeper must remain on his goal line until the ball is kicked. The goalkeeper 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.

Law 15: Throw-in

This is a method of restart when the opposing team puts the ball out of play over the touch line (sideline). The thrower must face the field of play, have part of each foot either on the touch line or on the ground outside the touch line, use both hands and deliver the ball from behind and over his/her head. The throwing team's

goalkeeper is not permitted to use his/her hands on a ball that was thrown to him. The thrower may not touch the ball again until it has been touch by any other player. Players may stand in front of the thrower but may not make any motion that would impede the throw.

Law 16: Goal Kick

This is a method of restart used when the opposing team puts the ball out of play over the goal line (end line) except when it is between the goal posts which would result in a goal scored. Any member of the defending team is permitted to take the goal kick. The ball must be placed anywhere within the goal area. The goal kick must result in the ball exiting the penalty area before being touched by another player to be back in play or the goal kick will be retaken. The opponents must remain outside of the penalty area until the ball is back in play. A goal can be scored but only against the attacking team.

Law 17: Corner Kick

This is a method of restart used when the defending team puts the ball out of play over the goal line except when it is between the goal posts which would result in an own goal scored. The attacking team takes the kick. This is a DFK taken from the corner of the field in the attacking end of the field of play. No player can be offside when the kick is taken; however, the kicker may be called offside if the ball is passed back to him/her prior to him/her getting out of an OP. The attacking team may position players near the goalkeeper, but they may not interfere with his/her attempts to get the ball. This means that the players who are near the keeper **MUST** go after the ball, or in some way become involved in the play. The corner flags may not be removed, even if the arc seems too small. It may be easiest to teach players to place the ball so that their kicking shoulder is next to the flag. This way the flag will not interfere with their approach to the ball.