

Under 8 Soccer Game Play & Conduct Rules & Guidelines For Coaches and Referees Hudson-Maynard-Stow

- The U8 game is broken down into FOUR 12-minute quarters. Teams will only change ends at halftime.
- There are 5 players plus a goalie on each side.
- Prior to the game the **referee will** call the team over to **check** their shin guards and cleats. The referee will then call for captains who will call a coin toss to determine possession preferences or side preferences.
- **Uniforms**-shirts should be tucked into their shorts, *socks OVER shin guards* and cleats tied tightly in double knots (to prevent unties).
- *NO jewelry* (earrings, necklaces, bracelets...), metal or plastic hair clips are allowed on the playing field. Band-aids or tape to cover earrings is not allowed.
- The **game starts with** a kickoff in the center of the field. Team with possession *must kick the ball forward* over the centerline. Opposing *team must stay out of the center circle until the ball is kicked.*
- **Out of bounds-**
 - **SIDE:** The team that did not kick the ball out re-enters the ball with a throw-in which must be 2-handed, go straight back over the player's head while their feet remain on the ground until the ball is released.
 - **END:** When the defensive team kicks the ball out of their own end, the offensive team re-enters the ball with a corner kick kicked from one of the corners (where the flag is – if present). If the offensive team kicks it out the opposition's end, the defensive team re-enters the ball with a goal kick that is placed halfway between the goal line and the penalty area line. Either a defender or a goalie may take the kick.
- **When a goal is scored**, the game is re-started with a kick off by the non-scoring team from the center of the field in the same process as the starting kick-off.
- **At half time** ball possession changes teams and teams change sides of the field.
- **After the goalie has made a save**, she/he may re-enter the ball by taking a maximum of 3 steps and either punting, drop kicking or throwing the ball.
- **Substitutions** may be made on either teams throw-in, goal kick or any re-start kick off (half time or after a goal). Referee must be told if a goalie is being changed.
- **Throw ins** – U8 players are always allowed a second throw in if they violate on the first one. The referee along with the coach should explain the proper method for a throw in.
- There are **NO direct free kicks** in U8 soccer. This includes penalty kicks. All penalties (hand ball, push, trip, etc.) result in a free **indirect** kick (must touch another player before entering the goal to be counted as a goal). If the infraction occurred within the penalty area, the ball should be brought back to the line and an indirect free kick awarded. There are **no** direct penalty kicks. Remember, many of the kids and perhaps even the coaches will not know the difference in kicks. Opposing players must stay back 8 yards when an indirect kick is awarded.
- **Slide Tackling** is NOT allowed in U8 soccer. Keep players on their feet.
- **In the case of an injury** the child sits, the referee pauses the game and then the coach may enter the field. Each team may sub one player on an injury. The ball is restarted with a drop-ball where the referee drops the ball between two opposing players who then *may kick the ball only after it has landed* on the ground.

- **Safety** is the number one concern when dealing with this age group. Referees should not be afraid to stop play at anytime if they see a dangerous situation developing.
- Remember, this is the first game experience for these kids. If inappropriate, aggressive behavior is exhibited; the referee should speak with the individual involved. If this does not solve the problem, the referee should speak with the coach. The use of cards in U8 soccer should be avoided if at all possible.
- Referees should **BLOW THEIR WHISTLES LOUD**. These kids have a great deal of energy and the only way to get them to stop is with a loud, long whistle.

COACH CONDUCT RULES & GUIDELINES

- The game is to be played for the enjoyment and safety of the PLAYERS. **Under 8 soccer is recreational and instructional ONLY.**
- It is expected that coaches, parents and players respect every individual at the field.
- It is expected that there be **NO** yelling at players, referees or coaches. Positive comments only.
- If a team is winning the game by 5 or more goals, it is the responsibility of the winning coach to offer to the opposing team coach to place an extra player on the field or for the winning coach to remove a player from the field. Strategies should be used to avoid a slaughter. Strategies may include those listed above, i.e. remove player from field, add player to field and/or place stronger players in defensive position or in goal, instruct players to pass the ball three times before shooting on the goal.
- Coaches and parents must stay off the field during the game unless a child is injured, then the COACH may enter the field.
- Teaching the kids sportsmanship at this age will build the foundation for their future soccer experience. Players and coaches should always shake hands at the end of the game. Players and coaches should always thank the referee after the game. Teams should celebrate wins, but be cognizant of the other team. Remember, these are 7 and 8 year old kids.
- Please report to your town coordinator if you witness an unruly person at a game.
- Before each home game, it is the home coach's responsibility to call the visiting coach the night before the game to confirm time and place.
- In the case of inclement weather it is the home coach's decision (**SAFETY FIRST**). The home coach must call the visiting coach, ref coordinator and players to notify them of the cancellation.

HUDSON – MAYNARD – STOW U-8 YOUTH SOCCER LEAGUE ZERO TOLERANCE LAW

All coaches, all assistant coaches, all players, and all spectators shall support the referee before, during, and after the game. Failure to do so undermines the referee's authority and could create a hostile environment for players, the referee, coaches, assistant coaches, and all spectators, including participants in other matches. Consequently, Hudson-Maynard-Stow U8 Youth Soccer has adopted the following rule:

NO ONE IS TO ADDRESS THE REFEREE DURING THE GAME!!!!

Coaches/Assistant Coaches – Allowable Exceptions:

During the game:

- *Responding to a referee initiating a communication
- *Making substitutions
- *Pointing out emergencies or safety issues

Penalties:

- *1st Minor Infraction – Referee should issue a verbal warning
- *2nd Minor Infraction – Referee should issue a caution
- *3rd Minor Infraction – Referee should issue an ejection

- *1st Serious Infraction – Referee should issue a caution or ejection depending on the seriousness of infraction per FIFA.
- *2nd Serious Infraction – Referee should issue a caution or ejection depending on the seriousness of infraction per FIFA.

Accumulation of two cautions in one match is equivalent to an ejection.

If a coach has an issue with the referee, it should be discussed with your town Referee Coordinator and NOT the referee.

If during the game, you feel your team could be injured due to the refereeing, you should pull your team off the field and abandon the game. Notify your U8 Coordinator and Referee Coordinator as soon as possible.

Spectators should not address the referee at any time!

Penalties:

- *1st Infraction – Referee should stop the game, give a verbal warning to the coach, and ask the coach to warn the spectator that the next infraction will be an ejection or the referee will abandon the game.
- *2nd Infraction – The referee shall instruct the coach to direct the spectator to leave the field. The referee should abandon the game if the spectator does not leave the field.

Communications among players and referees are governed by the FIFA Laws of the Game.

REFEREE SUPPORT (Continued from Zero Tolerance Law)

Everyone, especially coaches and assistant coaches, shall provide support to the referees at all times.

- (1) Coaches are responsible for assistant coaches', players', fans', and their own behavior.
- (2) Any coach who does not comply with a referee's request to deal with a fan shall be issued a misconduct as deemed appropriate by the referee.
- (3) Anyone responsible for the verbal or physical assault of a referee prior to, during, or following a game will be subject to review by the Board of Directors.
- (4) Any team/town that refuses to provide the name and address of the responsible person(s) for the verbal or physical assault on a referee will be subject to review by the Board of Directors.

MYSA COACH'S CODE OF CONDUCT

The Board of Directors of Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association, Incorporated (MYSA) and the leaders of the affiliated Leagues are concerned about the conduct of all coaches and referees during games at all levels, from recreational to premier to ODP.

We want to ensure that games are fair, positive and enjoyable experiences for all of the children and adults involved. A soccer game should be friendly and unifying - a spirited social and athletic occasion for players, coaches, referees and spectators.

To clarify expectations of coach conduct, we jointly expect all coaches to conform to this code of conduct.

- *Before, during and after the game, be an example of dignity, patience and positive spirit.
- *Before a game, introduce yourself to the opposing coach and to the referee.
- *During the game, you are responsible for the sportsmanship of your players. If one of your players is disrespectful, irresponsible or overly aggressive, take the player out of the game at least long enough for him/her to calm down.
- *During the game, you are also responsible for the conduct of the parents of your players. It is imperative to explain acceptable player and parent behavior in a preseason meeting.
- *Encourage them to applaud and cheer for good plays by either team. Discourage them and you may need to be forceful and direct from yelling at players and the referee.
- *During the game, you are also responsible for the conduct of spectators rooting for your team.
- *During the game, do not address the referee at all. If you have a small issue, discuss it with the referee calmly and patiently after the game.
- *If you have a major complaint, or if you think the referee was unfair, biased, unfit or incompetent, report your opinion to your League. Your reactions will be taken seriously if they are presented objectively and formally.

*After the game, thank the referee and ask your players to do the same.

We stress two points: (Continued from MYSA Coach's Code of Conduct)

*Referees - especially young and inexperienced ones - are like your players and yourself, in that they need time to develop. You can play an important role in helping them to improve by letting them concentrate on the game. You can help by encouraging them, by accepting their inevitable, occasional mistakes and by offering constructive post-game comments. On the other hand, you could discourage and demoralize the referees by criticizing their decisions, by verbally abusing them and inciting - or even accepting - your own players' overly aggressive behavior.

*Your example is powerful, for better or worse. If you insist on fair play, if you concentrate on your players' enjoyment of the game and their overall, long term development, and if you support the referee, your players and their parents will notice. If you encourage (or allow) your players to play outside the rules, if you're overly concerned about results, and if you criticize the referee harshly, your players and their parents will also notice.

Think about what you're doing during a game! Uphold the Spirit of the Game! If you follow the expectations described above, the spirit of the game will be alive and well in Massachusetts and will grow, along with the enjoyment of all.

Coaches who don't follow the expectations described above will be disciplined or removed.