

Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to introduce the basic rules and terms of soccer to those who are relatively new to the game. It is designed especially for new youth soccer coaches who don't have a soccer background.

This guide is not a regulation. Enid Soccer Club games are governed by the actual FIFA Laws of the Game and the ESC Playing Rules for the various age groups. This guide highlights certain areas of the Laws of the Game, but omits others. Much of the language in the Laws of the Game is paraphrased for ease of reading.

This guide does not cover any of the ESC Playing Rules. It is recommended that you review the ESC Playing Rules for your age group side by side with this guide.

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I. Who makes the rules?

The international rules of soccer are known as the Laws of the Game. There are 17 Laws. They are published by the Fédération Internationale De Football Association (FIFA) based in Switzerland and authorized by the International Football Association Board (IFAB). The official Laws of the Game can be found on FIFA's website: www.fifa.com.

The FIFA Laws of the Game are modified by the Enid Soccer Club Playing Rules. There are four sets of ESC Playing Rules, each for a specific age group: U5-U6, U7-U8, U9-U10, and U11-U12. At U13 and above, the standard FIFA rules are used.

The ESC Playing Rules are also organized into 17 Laws and only cover exceptions to the FIFA Laws of the Game. To understand the rules for your age group, you must review both regulations.

Law 1	The Field of Play	Law 10	The Method of Scoring
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II. FIFA Laws of the game (abbreviated and paraphrased).

1 The Field of Play

The dimensions of a full-size soccer field are 50-100 yards in width and 100-130 yards in length. The names of the different areas on the field are shown in the diagram at right.

2 The Ball

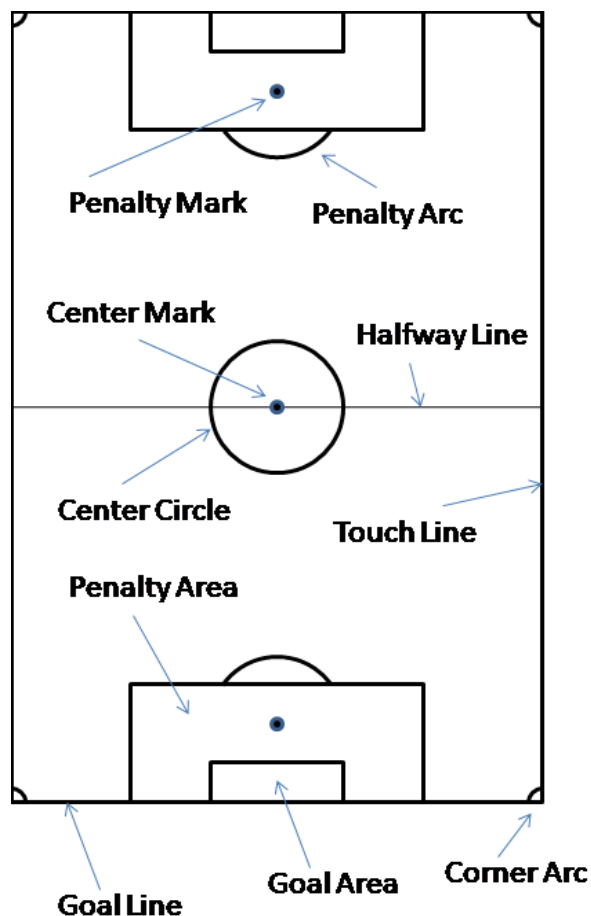
The ball is spherical with a circumference of 27-28 inches and a weight of 14-16 ounces. This is a size 5 ball. *Young players use a smaller size 3 or size 4 ball.*

3 The Number of Players

Each team has a minimum of 7 and maximum of 11 players, one of whom is the goalkeeper. *Note: There are many rules that apply only to the goalkeeper.*

4 The Players' Equipment

- A player must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous to himself or another player, including any kind of jewelry. **Forbidden items include earrings, necklaces, rings, and bracelets.**
- Required equipment includes a jersey or shirt and shorts, shin guards, and shoes. **Shin guards must be covered entirely by socks.** Shoes may have cleats, but **no toe cleats.**
- Each goalkeeper wears colors that distinguish him from the other players, the referee, and the assistant referees.



5 The Referee (not all duties are listed)

- Ensures that the ball and players' equipment meet requirements.
- Acts as a timekeeper.
- Enforces the Laws of the Game and stops, suspends, or terminates the match, at his discretion, for any infringements of the Laws.
- Stops the match if, in his opinion, a player is **seriously injured** and ensures that he is **removed from the field of play**. The referee allows play to continue until the ball is out of play if a player is only **slightly injured**, in his opinion. The referee ensures that any player bleeding from a wound leaves the field of play.
- Allows play to continue when the team against which an offense has been committed will benefit from such an advantage and penalizes the original offense if the anticipated advantage does not ensue at that time. *This is known as the "Advantage Rule."*
- Takes disciplinary action against players guilty of cautionable (yellow card) and sending-off (red card) offenses.
- Takes action against team officials (*e.g. coaches*) who fail to conduct themselves in a responsible manner and may, at his discretion, expel them from the field of play and its immediate surroundings.
- Ensures that no unauthorized persons enter the field of play.

6 The Assistant Referees

Two assistant referees assist the referee with various duties.

7 The Duration of the Match

- Duration of the match is two 45 minute halves unless mutually agreed otherwise. The half-time interval is no longer than 15 minutes.
- At the discretion of the referee, allowance is made in either period for all time lost through substitution, assessment of injury to players, removal of injured players from the field for treatment, wasting time, or any other cause.
- If a penalty kick has to be taken or retaken, the duration of either half is extended until the penalty kick is completed.

8 The Start and Restart of Play

- **Preliminaries:** A coin is tossed.
 - The team that wins the toss **decides which goal it will attack** in the first half.
 - The team that loses the toss takes the kick-off to start the first half.
 - The team that wins the toss takes the kick-off to start the second half.
 - In the second half, the teams change sides of the field.
- **Kick-off:** Method of starting or restarting play at the start of the match, after a goal has been scored, at the start of the second half of the match, or at the start of each period of extra time.
 - All players are in their own half of the field.
 - The opponents are at least 10 yards from the ball until it is in play.
 - The ball is stationary on the center mark.
 - The referee signals for the kick to be taken.
 - The ball is in play when it is **kicked and moves forward**.
 - The kicker **may not touch the ball a second time until it has touched another player**. If the kicker does touch the ball a second time, an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team.
 - A **goal may be scored** directly from the kick-off.
- **Dropped ball:** A way of restarting the match after a stoppage that becomes necessary while the ball is in play, for any reason not mentioned elsewhere in the Laws of the Game.
 - The referee drops the ball at the place where it was located when play was stopped. If play stopped inside the goal area, the dropped ball is taken on the goal area line.
 - Play restarts when the ball touches the ground.

9 The Ball In and Out of Play

- The ball is out of play when the **entire ball** has completely crossed the goal line or touch line whether on the ground or in the air, or when play has been stopped by the referee.
- The ball remains in play when it rebounds from a goalpost, crossbar, or corner flagpost. The ball also remains in play when it rebounds from the referee or assistant referee when they are on the field.

10 The Method of Scoring

- A goal is scored when the **entire ball** passes over the goal line between the goalposts and under the crossbar, provided that no infringement of the Laws of the Game has been committed *previously* by the team scoring the goal.
- If both teams score an equal number of goals or no goals are scored, the match is a draw (tie).
- When competition rules require that there be a winning team, the following procedures are permitted:
 - Away goals rule: Goals scored during away games count double.
 - Extra time (overtime): Two periods of no more than 15 minutes each.

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- Kicks from the penalty mark: These are performed exactly like a penalty kick. Each team gets five kicks. If the score is still tied, each team continues to get an additional kick until there is a winner. Only players on the field at the end of the match may take kicks. Each kick is taken by a different player. All players except the player taking the kick and the two goalkeepers must remain within the center circle.

11 Offside

- A player is in an *offside position* if he is nearer to his opponents' goal line than both the ball and the second last opponent.
- A player is not in an offside position if:
 - He is in his own half of the field or
 - He is level (even) with the second last opponent or
 - He is level (even) with the last two opponents.
- **Being in an offside position is not an offense.**
- A player in an offside position is only penalized if, at the moment the ball touches or is played by one of his team, he is, in the opinion of the referee, involved in active play by:
 - Interfering with play or
 - Interfering with an opponent or
 - Gaining an advantage by being in that position.
- There is no offside offense if a player receives the ball directly from a goal kick, throw-in, or corner kick.
- For any offside offense, the referee awards an **indirect free kick** to the opposing team to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred.

12 Fouls and Misconduct

- A **Direct Free Kick** is awarded to the opposing team if a player:
 - Commits any of the following six offenses in a manner considered by the referee to be careless, reckless, or using excessive force: kicks or attempts to kick, trips or attempts to trip, strikes or attempts to strike, jumps at, charges, or pushes an opponent.
 - Commits any of the following four offenses:
 - Tackles an opponent to gain possession of the ball, **making contact with the opponent before touching the ball.**
 - Holds an opponent.
 - Spits at an opponent.
 - Handles the ball deliberately (except for the goalkeeper within his own penalty area).
- A **Penalty Kick** is awarded if any of the above ten offenses is committed by a player inside his own penalty area {while defending his own goal, in other words}, irrespective of the position of the ball, provided it is in play.
- An **Indirect Free Kick** is awarded to the opposing team if
 - A goalkeeper inside his own penalty area commits any of the following four offenses:
 - Takes more than **6 seconds while controlling the ball with his hands** before releasing it from his possession.
 - **Touches the ball again with his hands** after it has been released from his possession and has not touched any other player.
 - **Touches the ball with his hands** after it has been **deliberately** kicked to him by a teammate.
 - **Touches the ball with his hands** after he has received it directly from a throw-in taken by a teammate.
 - A player, in the opinion of the referee, plays in a dangerous manner, impedes the progress of an opponent, prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his hands, or commits any other offense, not previously mentioned in Law 12, for which play is stopped to caution or dismiss a player.

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- **Yellow card (cautionable) offenses:**
 - A player is cautioned and shown the yellow card if he is guilty of unsporting behavior, shows dissent by word or action, persistently infringes the Laws of the Game, delays the restart of play, fails to respect the required distance when play is restarted with a corner kick, free kick, or throw-in, enters or re-enters the field of play without the referee's permission, or deliberately leaves the field of play without the referee's permission.
 - A substitute or substituted player is cautioned and shown the yellow card if he is guilty of unsporting behavior, shows dissent by word or action, or delays the restart of play.
- **Red card (sending-off) offenses:**
 - A player, substitute, or substituted player is sent off and shown the red card if he commits any of the following 7 offenses:
 - Guilty of serious foul play.
 - Guilty of violent conduct.
 - Spits at an opponent or any other person.
 - Denies the opposing team a goal or an obvious goalscoring opportunity by deliberately handling the ball (this does not apply to a goalkeeper within his own penalty area).
 - Denies an obvious goalscoring opportunity to an opponent moving towards the player's goal by an offense punishable by a free kick or a penalty kick.
 - Uses offensive or insulting or abusive language and/or gestures.
 - Receives a second caution in the same match.
 - A player, substitute, or substituted player who has been sent off and shown the red card must leave the vicinity of the field of play.

13 Free Kicks

- Free kicks are either **Direct** or **Indirect**.
- Similarities: For both Direct or Indirect free kicks:
 - The kick is taken from where the offense occurred.
 - The ball must be stationary when the kick is taken.
 - All opponents remain 10 yards from the ball until it is in play.
 - The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves.
 - The kicker **does not touch the ball a second time until it has touched another player**.
 - When a free kick is awarded to the defending team inside its own penalty area:
 - All opponents remain outside the penalty area until the ball is in play.
 - The ball is in play when it is kicked beyond the penalty area.
 - A free kick awarded to the defending team inside its own goal area is taken from any point inside the goal area.
- Differences:
 - Direct free kick
 - **A goal can be scored** from a direct free kick.
 - Indirect free kick
 - The ball **has to touch another player before a goal can be scored**. If the ball is kicked directly into the goal, a goal kick is awarded to the defending team.
 - The referee signals an indirect free kick by **raising his arm above his head**. He lowers his arm after the kick has been taken and the ball touches another player or goes out of play.
 - When an indirect free kick is awarded to the attacking team inside its opponents' penalty area, all opponents are at least 10 yards from the ball unless they are **on their own goal line between the goal posts**.
 - An indirect free kick awarded to the attacking team in its opponents' goal area is taken from the goal area line.

14 The Penalty Kick

A penalty kick is awarded against a team that commits one of the ten offenses 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. {Note: The penalty kick is awarded to the attacking team for an offense committed by the defending team.}

- The ball is placed on the penalty mark.
- The player taking the penalty kick is identified.
- The defending goalkeeper remains on his goal line, facing the kicker, between the goalposts until the ball has been kicked.
- The players other than the kicker are located inside the field of play, outside the penalty area and the penalty arc, behind and at least 10 yards from the penalty mark.
- The referee signals for the kick to be taken.
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves forward.
- The kicker does not touch the ball a second time until it has touched another player.

15 The Throw-In

A throw-in is a method of restarting play when the entire ball passes over the touch line, either on the ground or in the air.

- The throw-in is taken from the point where it crossed the touch line.
- The throw-in is taken by the opponents of the player who last touched the ball.
- Opponents of the thrower are at least 2 meters (2.2 yards) from the point where the throw-in is taken.
- The thrower faces the field of play and has part of each foot either on the touch line or on the ground outside the touch line. **Both feet must be touching the ground** when the ball leaves the thrower's hands.
- The thrower uses both hands and delivers the ball from behind and over his head.
- The ball is in play as soon as it enters the field of play.
- A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw-in.

16 The Goal Kick

A goal kick is a method of restarting play when the entire ball passes over the goal line, a goal was not scored, and the ball last touched a player of the **attacking** team.

- The ball may be kicked from anywhere inside the goal area by any player of the defending team.
- The kicker may not touch the ball a second time until it has touched another player.
- Opponents remain outside the penalty area until the ball is in play.
- The ball is in play when it moves outside the penalty area. If the ball is not kicked outside the penalty area, the kick is retaken.
- A goal may be scored directly from a goal kick.

17 The Corner Kick

A corner kick is a method of restarting play when the entire ball passes over the goal line, a goal was not scored, and the ball last touched a player of the **defending** team.

- The ball is placed inside the corner arc at the nearest corner flagpost and is kicked by a player of the attacking team.
- The kicker may not touch the ball a second time until it has touched another player.
- Opponents remain at least 10 yards away from the corner arc until the ball is in play.
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves.
- A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick.

III. Types of Kicks and Restart of Play

	Kick-off	Direct free kick	Indirect free kick	Penalty kick	Goal kick	Corner kick	Throw-in	Dropped ball
When taken	Start of game, start of 2nd half, or after a goal.	After certain fouls	After certain fouls	Certain fouls committed by defensive team within the Penalty Area.	Ball goes across goal line - last touched by attacking player.	Ball goes across goal line - last touched by defending player.	Ball goes across touch line.	After a stoppage for a reason not mentioned in the Laws of the Game.
Position of ball	center mark	location where foul occurred	location where foul occurred	penalty mark	Anywhere within the goal area.	Inside the Corner Arc.	Point where it crossed the Touch Line.	Place where it was located when play was stopped.
Opposing players	At least 10 yards away (center circle) and in own half.	At least 10 yards away ³ .	At least 10 yards away ³ .	See note 6.	Outside the penalty area.	10 yards away	At least 2 meters away.	N/A
Ball is in play when	Kicked and moves forward.	Kicked and moves ⁴ .	Kicked and moves ⁴ .	Kicked and moves forward.	Kicked beyond the penalty area.	Kicked and moves.	It enters the field of play.	It touches the ground.
No 2nd touch¹	Applies	Applies	Applies	Applies	Applies	Applies	Applies	N/A
Goal can be scored directly²	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	N/A
Other comments	All players in their own half.		Referee signals by raising arm above his head.	See note 6.			See note 5.	Referee drops the ball.

¹ The player taking the kick cannot touch the ball a second time until it has touched another player.

² A goal can be scored directly from this type of kick, without touching another player first.

³ Also outside the penalty area if defending team is taking a free kick from inside the Penalty Area.

⁴ Ball is in play when it is kicked outside the penalty area if defending team is taking a free kick from inside the Penalty Area.

⁵ At the moment of releasing the ball, the thrower faces the field, uses both hands, delivers the ball from behind and over head with both feet touching the ground. Feet can be behind or on the Touch Line.

⁶ Goalkeeper on the goal line. All players except the kicker and goalkeeper remain outside the penalty area, behind the penalty mark, and at least 10 yards from the penalty mark until the ball is in play.

IV. Common Misconceptions about the Laws of the Game:

Fullbacks (defenders) have to stay on their own half of the field. – False. The Laws of the Game do not contain rules for or descriptions of any specific positions (such as Forward, Midfielder, Fullback, or Sweeper) other than the Goalkeeper. Any guidelines about where certain players should be located on the field are created by coaches.

The Goalkeeper cannot step out of the Penalty Area. – False. The Goalkeeper cannot *handle the ball* with his hands outside of the Penalty Area. It is perfectly legal for the Goalkeeper to move outside the Penalty Area and kick the ball like any other player.

It is illegal to either pass the ball or make a throw-in to the Goalkeeper. – If a player *deliberately* passes the ball or makes a throw-in to his own Goalkeeper *and the Goalkeeper picks up the ball with his hands*, an Indirect Free Kick is awarded to the other team. As long as the Goalkeeper does not pick up the ball with his hands, no offense has been committed and the Goalkeeper may kick the ball like any other player.

During a throw-in, the player must stand behind the touch line. – Not exactly. At the moment the ball is released, the thrower must have part of each foot either *on the touch line* or on the ground outside the touch line. Standing on the line is legal.

I saw an obvious foul but the referee didn't stop play or award a free kick. Why not? – Fouls are handled much differently in soccer as compared to many other sports. After a foul has been committed and if the offended team recovers and will benefit (i.e. retains possession of the ball, perhaps with an opportunity to score), the referee allows play to continue. If the anticipated advantage does not occur, *then* the referee stops play and penalizes the offense. It is important to understand that the referee's action depends on what happens *after* the foul.

I saw a player in an offside position but the referee didn't call it. Why not? – Just being in an offside position is not an offense. The referee only penalizes the team if, at the moment the ball is played by his teammate, the player is involved in active play by interfering with play, interfering with an opponent, or gaining an advantage by being in that position. For example, if the player in the offside position receives a pass from his teammate, an offside offense has occurred and the referee should stop play and award an indirect kick to the opposing team.

This guide was created January 7, 2008 by Tim Rehmel with reference to the FIFA Laws of the Game 2007/2008, dated July 2007.