

Rules & Playing Formats

2026 OUTDOOR HOUSE LEAGUE STRUCTURE:

AGE	PLAYING FORMAT	GAME TIME		BALL SIZE	REFS	OFFSIDE	ALL KICKS INDIRECT	PENALTY KICKS	THROW INS	DIVISION STANDINGS
		SCRIMMAGE	FIELD TIME							
U6/U7	3v3 no goalies	2x15	45 min	3			N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
U8/U9	5v5	2x20	60 min	4			Y	N	PASS IN DRIBBLE IN	N
U10/U11	7v7	2x25	90 min	4	Y	N	Y	Y	PASS IN DRIBBLE IN	N
U12/U13	9v9	2x25	90 min	4	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
U14/15	11v11	2x35	100 min	5	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
U16+	11v11	2x40	100 min	5	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y

AGE DIVISION	PLAYING FORMAT	SIDE LINE	OFFSIDE	REFEREE	GAME LENGTH	RETREAT LINE
U6/U7	3v3 no goalies	PASS IN DRIBBLE IN	NO	COACHES	2x15	1/2 half
U8/U9	5 v 5 including Goalies	PASS IN DRIBBLE IN	NO	COACHES	2x20	1/3rd
U10/U11	7 v 7 including Goalies	PASS IN DRIBBLE IN	NO	YES	2x25	1/3rd
U12/U13	9 v 9 including Goalies	THROW IN	YES	YES	2x25	N/A
U14/U15	11 v 11 including Goalies	THROW IN	YES	YES	2x35	N/A
U16+	11 v 11 including Goalies	THROW IN	YES	YES	2x40	N/A

MATCH FORMAT – EQUAL NUMBER OF PLAYERS

In accordance with Canada Soccer Grassroots principles, games should be played with an equal number of players whenever possible. If one team is unable to field the full number, the opposing team is encouraged to match numbers to ensure a fair and developmentally appropriate environment.

THE RETREAT LINE (U7/U8, U9/U10, U11/U12)

The retreat line is used in small-sided games to promote skill development, confidence, and building play from the back. When the goalkeeper has possession of the ball (from a goal kick or after making a save), the opposing team must retreat behind the designated retreat line. This allows the defending team time and space to restart play. The goalkeeper may pass, throw, or roll the ball to a teammate.

Once the receiving player touches the ball, the opposing team may cross the retreat line and apply pressure. The goalkeeper is not required to wait for all opponents to retreat and may restart play quickly if they choose.

Retreat Line Locations:

U7/U8: Halfway line

U9/U10 & U11/U12: Final third of the field (marked with cones if necessary)

The retreat line should not be used to intentionally delay the game. Referees may intervene if delays occur.

KICK-OFF (Start of Play / Restart After Goal)

- The ball must be kicked and clearly move to start play.
- It may be played in any direction (per current Laws of the Game).
- All players must be in their own half.
- Opponents must be at least 5 meters from the ball.

GOAL KICK

- Taken from anywhere within the penalty area.
- Opponents must retreat behind the retreat line.
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves.
- Opponents may pressure once the ball is in play or once it crosses the retreat line.

GOALKEEPER

- May handle the ball within the penalty area.
- Must restart play by throwing, rolling, or playing the ball from the ground.
- Drop kicks and punt kicks are not permitted (per Grassroots standards).
- Opponents must retreat to the retreat line during restarts.
- The goalkeeper may restart play before opponents fully retreat.

An indirect free kick is awarded if the goalkeeper handles a deliberate pass from a teammate.

BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY

The ball is out of play when it has completely crossed the goal line or sideline, either on the ground or in the air, or when play has been stopped by the referee.

SUBSTITUTIONS**U7/U8**

- Rolling substitutions permitted at any time, including during play
- No referee permission required
- Equal playing time is expected

U9-U13

- Substitutions permitted at stoppages with referee approval
- Unlimited substitutions
- Referee may manage excessive stoppages
- Equal playing time is expected

U14+

- Substitutions permitted at stoppages (throw-ins, goal kicks, kick-offs) with referee approval
- Unlimited substitutions
- Equal playing time is encouraged where applicable

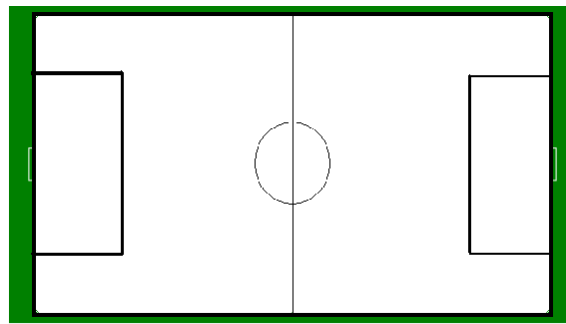
BALL OUT OF PLAY – SIDELINE RESTART

U7-U12 (Grassroots Standard)

- No throw-ins
- Play restarts with a pass-in or dribble-in
- Ball must be stationary on the line
- Opponents must be 5 meters away
- Ball should remain on the ground when passed
- A goal cannot be scored directly from a pass-in or dribble-in
- SAFETY AND EQUIPMENT
- All jewelry must be removed (except medical alert bracelets)
- Hard casts are not permitted; soft protective casts may be allowed at referee discretion
- Eyeglasses must be sport-safe; referee has final decision
- No hard or dangerous hair accessories
- WATER BREAKS
- The referee may allow water breaks in hot conditions or other circumstances
- Recommended: 1-minute break at 15-minute intervals
- During an Environment Canada heat advisory, water breaks are mandatory at the midpoint of each half
- Game clock continues to run

HOUSE LEAGUE FIELD LAYOUT:

oo Coaches oo
XX Players XX



**** Parents ****
(of both teams)

SAFETY AND EQUIPMENT

All items of jewelry (necklaces, rings, bracelets, earrings, leather bands, rubber bands, etc.) are strictly forbidden and must be removed. The exception to this rule is a Medic Alert Bracelet. Hard plastic or metal hair clips are not allowed to be worn.

HARD PLASTER CASTS are considered to pose a danger to both the wearer and other players and are not permitted on the field of play. The exception is a soft, lightweight cast that does not present a danger to the individual or any other player. The practice of padding a hard plaster cast does not reduce the element of danger.

EYEGASSES are permitted provided they are sport spectacles and are safe for the players themselves and for other players. House League Referees have the discretion and authority not to allow spectacles if they feel the basic safety principles of FIFA Law #4 are not met.

WATER BREAKS

On extremely hot days or when one team is short on players, a coach or the referee may request breaks in the game for water. The decision to allow this is at the discretion of the referee. It is recommended to stop on intervals of 15 minutes for one minute.

In the event of a heat advisory (as issued by Environment Canada) it is mandatory for the referee to provide one minute water breaks at the midway point of each half. The game clock is not stopped during water breaks.

Visit the AYSC website for more information