



South Houston Academy League

4v4 Rules of Play (Recreational) – U7/8 ages

General Philosophy

- To provide the most advanced training for both the players and volunteer coaches while maintaining a fun and positive environment for all.
- To provide players, coaches and spectators an opportunity to learn the game of soccer while instilling sportsmanship in all.

4v4 Game Set-up and Game Length

- Home team wears colored jersey and visiting team wears white.
- 4v4 game (4 for each team on the field). A coach from each team can be on the field but stays out of the play (closer to the out of bounds lines is recommended while play is happening).
- Game is divided into four quarters. Each quarter is a maximum of 12 minutes in length.
 - Quarters can be shortened to 8-10 minutes, prior to the start of the game with agreement from both coaches for reasons such as heat (especially in September) or lack of substitutes.
- Try to start and end on time.
- 2-minute breaks between quarters 1/2, 3/4
- 5-minute half time break.
- After half time, the teams should switch sides of the field so that they are attacking the opposite goal.
- No Scores Kept.

Referee

- The coaches ref the games. It's recommended that each coach call any fouls or out of bounds against their own team
- The rules are posted on the SHALsoccer.org website and coaches should review and understand the rules. The staff are at practices and game site locations each week

Players' Equipment

- Size 3 ball for every player. They should bring a ball and water to every practice and game.
- Footwear should be soft-cleated or soft-soled athletic shoes.
- **SHIN GUARDS ARE MANDATORY.**
- NO JEWELRY ... this includes hard hair clips, earrings, necklaces, rings, bracelets, etc.
- Each team will have the same color uniform
- Non-uniform clothing is allowed based on weather conditions, but uniform must still distinguish teams.

Player Positioning and Game Tactics

- 4 players on the field at a time per team. If a team has only 3 players present, the opposing team must play with only 3 on the field, also ... no 4v3.
 - **Exception ... if one team is dominating another, then coaches should try to even out the game by adding an extra player to the weaker team (4v5).**
 - Player pass is allowed. This is the borrowing of players of like ability from another team within the league, any region. We want the kids to play their games. If there is a team which will be missing players for a game, the team can use other players from any team in the league as long as the borrowed player does not miss playing their game for their assigned team
- Coaches are encouraged to limit the number of goals one child scores to a reasonable number (1 or 2 per quarter). If he/she is dominating play and the rest of the kids aren't involved, encourage that child to pass, dribble or control the ball while waiting for support. See if they can dribble around the field without losing the ball. Have them dribble to a corner and kick to the middle. Be creative.
- If one team has extra players and one team is short players, coaches are encouraged to make arrangements to maximize playing time for all players. Share players if needed.
- Each player shall play a minimum of 50% of the total playing time.
- Best effort should be made to equalize playing time.

- No goalies in 4v4 play.
- Coaches should explain and encourage good defense, but not camp players in the goal.
- Some kids will naturally gravitate to the goal box on defense to protect the goal. However, let's encourage the kids to stay out of the goal as much as possible and play the ball.
- It is OK to play with a defender that moves up towards the play (mid-fieldish or so).
- When the ball is in/near the goal box, don't worry about keeping the kids out of there ... let them go after the ball.
- Finally, if you do decide to play a Forward/Back set up, rotate the players so that all kids have a chance to play all positions. Some players are more inclined to defense and others to offense ... we shouldn't stifle either. Let the kids run and have fun.

Coaches

- Each team is limited to a maximum of two adults on the coaching sideline.
- Coaches are limited to their half of the sideline, from the centerline to the top of the goal box, unless arrangements have been made with the opposing coaches to enter the opposing sideline area.
- Coaches are encouraged to discuss the games during breaks and half-time.

Spectators

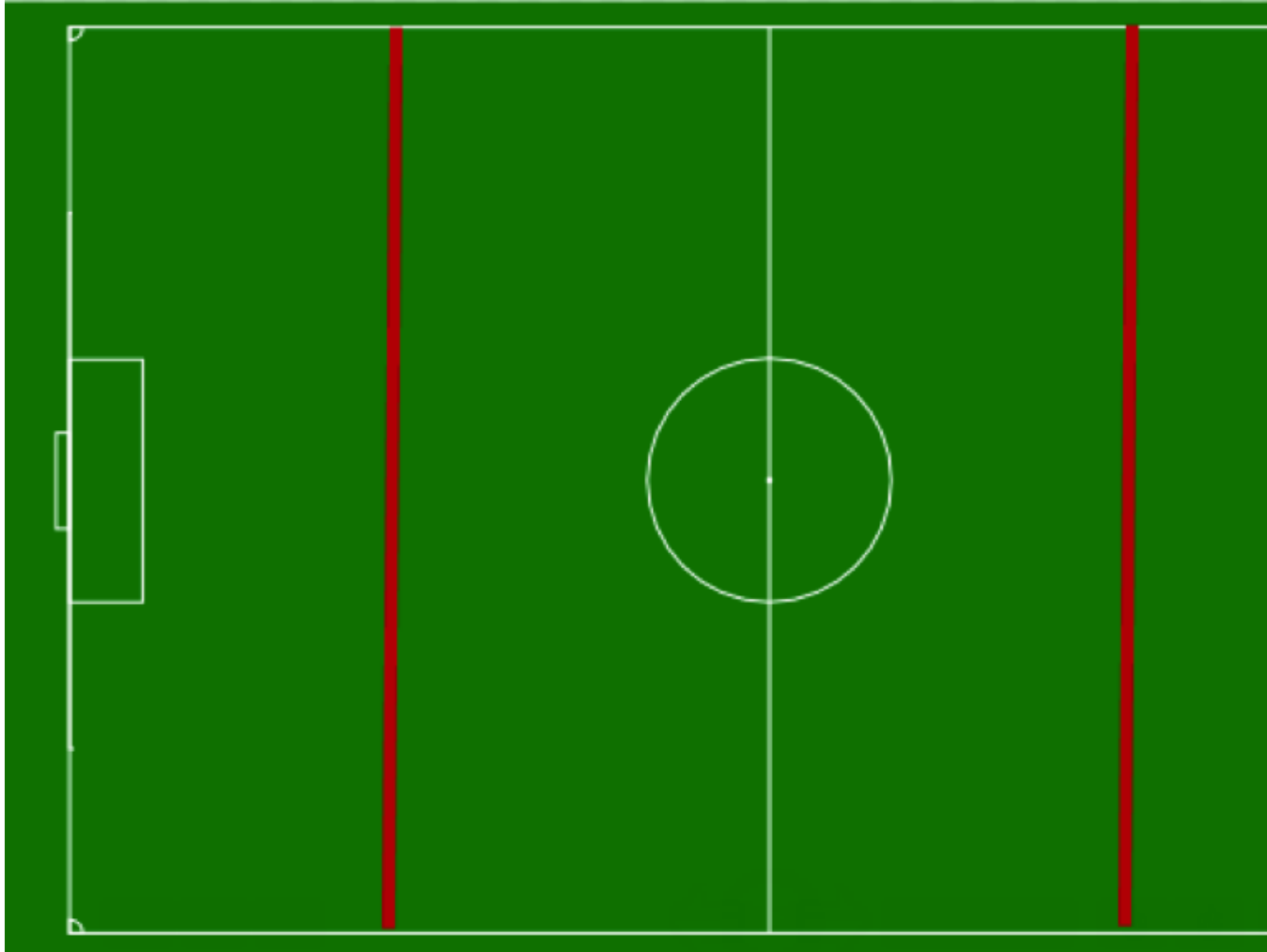
- Spectators are limited to the side of the field opposite the coaches. If possible, they should remain 5 yards from the end line and at least 3 to 5 yards off the side lines
- Coaches are responsible for their parents and should report spectator problems to the staff and/or division director.

Kick-off

- A goal CANNOT be scored directly from a kickoff.
- The ball must travel any direction for the first touch and be touched by a second player before the first player can touch the ball again.
- Teams must remain on their half of the field for kick offs.
- Teams must remain on their half of the field for kick offs and cannot enter into the circle until the ball has been touched

Shooting Line

- Shots may only be taken between the designated shooting line and the goal. Because U8 games are played without goalkeepers, the shooting line has been established to encourage players to dribble and pass before shooting on goal.
- The shooting line is located between the end line and midfield (see graphic below).
- Coaches should encourage their players to abide by the shooting line. If a shot is taken and scored from outside the shooting line, a goal kick is awarded for the other team.



Goal Kicks

- When a goal kick is taken, players from the attacking team must stand at midfield and must not cross the line until the ball has been kicked.
- A goal cannot be scored directly from a goal kick.

Corner Kicks

- Opposing players must be at least 5 yards away on a corner kick.
- A goal cannot be scored directly from a corner kick.

Kick-ins

- There are NO throw ins
- Kick ins Awarded when the ball completely crosses the sideline. The ball must remain lower than knee level on the kick in
- Opposing players must stand at least 3 yards away on a kick-in.

Double Touch Rule

- On Indirect Free Kicks, Goal Kicks, Corner Kicks, Kick-Offs and kick-ins, the ball must touch a second player prior to the kicker touching the ball a second time.

Substitutions

- Allowed any time ball is out of play.
- Suggest 3-5-minute rotation or as needed.

Penalties for fouls

- **ALL FREE KICKS WILL BE INDIRECT.** All fouls shall be penalized with indirect free kicks. From the point of an indirect free kick, opponents shall be no closer than 5 yards.
- **Indirect free kicks should be awarded on hand balls and flagrant tripping or pushing.** Allow the players to play on if you are able and do not discourage aggressive play.
- **THERE ARE NO PENALTY KICKS IN SMALL-SIDED GAMES.**
- No offside calls in U8 play.
- Coaches are strongly discouraged from having players stand in an offside position simply waiting for balls to pass through for shots on goal on the opposing side of the field. Encourage all players to be part of the game.
- **Slide tackling Not allowed.** There is no reason for 6 and 7-year old to slide tackle. It is dangerous to both parties; the tackler and the tacklee. It also is not consistent with the spirit of recreational play.
 - Kids will fall and trip around each other ... that is OK. Let's encourage the kids to stay on their feet and play safe