

Quick Reference Guide to Coaching U9/U10

The purpose of soccer at the U9/U10 age group is to further the development of players as individuals while also expanding their ability to play as a team. Skills such as dribbling, passing, and shooting should be taught as individual technical skills as well as more advanced topics such as passing, positions, and full soccer rules (offsides, goalies, etc). *Parents should cheer for **BOTH** teams and **ALL** players in a supportive environment versus a competitive one.*

For all games, **the scheduled game time is the time the game should start.** Please arrive at the fields early in order to warm up.

General Rules

- Practices once or twice per week for 60-75 minutes
- 7v7 format (target roster of 10, max roster of 12)
- Field is 30yd x 47yd
- Size 4 soccer ball
- Score kept by referees - one center referee, two sideline referees
 - There is a zero tolerance against disrespectful or abusive language towards officials.
 - Referees at this level are still learning and may be shy or slow with calls. Be respectful.
- Two 25-minute halves with 10 minute halftime
- Each player must play a minimum of 50% of each half (for which they are present)
- Players on one side of the field, parents on the other; please no closer than 3 feet from the sideline
- Full soccer rules, just on a smaller field (see below)
- Goal kicks, corner kicks, throw-ins; proper throw-in techniques will be enforced by referee
- Teams play with goalkeepers; goalkeepers must wear pinnie or jersey that is a different color than either team's jerseys

Field

- The small box around the goal is called the "Goal Box". It's primary purpose is to define the area from which goal kicks are taken.
- The larger box is the "Penalty Box". Goalkeepers may only use their hands when inside of this box -- watch that goalies do not step outside of this when punting the ball.
- During penalty kicks, all players besides the kicker and goalie must be outside the penalty box AND penalty circle at the top of the box. After the ball is touched, the ball is live and players may play the ball within this area.
- Build Out Lines will be used on the fields to promote playing the ball out of the back in an unpressured setting.

Corner Kicks

- A corner kick is awarded when the ball crosses the end line (goal line) and was last touched by the defending team
- The ball may be placed anywhere within or on the arc defining the corner area
- Defending team must be at least 7 yards (~20 feet) from the ball when it is kicked

- Corner kicks are direct (i.e. can be scored directly from the kick)

Goal Kicks

- A goal kick is awarded when the ball crosses the end line (goal line) and was last touched by the offensive team
- Goal kicks may be taken anywhere within the goal box, typically at the corners or center of the box.
- Players on the defensive (non-kicking) team must all be outside of the penalty box at the time the ball is kicked; players on the kicking team may be inside the penalty box.
- No player (from either team) may touch the ball after the kick until it crosses the penalty box. Kicks that do not go that far are retaken.

Offsides

- **Technical Definition:** “An offside occurs when an offensive player ends up closer to the goal than both the second-to-last opponent, including the goalkeeper, and the ball. The referee will not call the play, however, unless the player in the offside position offensive player or one of his teammates plays the ball while the player remains in offside position or influences the play. The player’s influence on the play remains a judgment call for the referee to make.” Click here [Offside](#) for more details.
- In short, an offensive player may not be closer to the goal than two opponents (including goalie) *when the ball is passed to them*. If a player is offside and not influencing the play, no offside is called.
- On infractions, the referees will award a direct free or indirect free kick from the spot of the infraction to the defending team, unless the infraction occurred within the penalty area of the defending team, which will result in a penalty kick
- You cannot be offside on your own side of the field (e.g. when the last defenders move way up the field).
- There is NO OFFSIDES on the initial touch of a goal or corner kick
 - Corner Kick: the ball is on the goal line, thus no player can be offside at the time of the kick
 - Goal Kick: no non-kicking player may be offside since the opposing team has possession of the ball. However, players may be deemed offside on the subsequent pass.

Goalies

- Goalies MUST wear a pinnie/jersey that is a different color than either team to distinguish them.
- Goalies may only handle the ball with their hands within the penalty box; outside the box, goalies act like any other player.
- Goalies may not use their hands if a defensive player **intentionally** passes the ball to the goalie with their feet. However, players may head the ball to the goalie and any deflections off defending players may be picked up.
- Goalies may not place the ball on the ground and pick it back up. If the goalie performs a bad punt, they must play it like any other player and only use their feet (i.e. don’t pick it back up, just kick it off the ground). Goalies may also opt to roll/throw the ball (in any manner) instead of kicking it.

Direct versus Indirect Kicks

- Corner kicks and some penalty kicks are direct kicks, meaning that the ball may score directly off of the kick without touching another player.
- Indirect kicks **must** be touched by one other player from either team before scoring (i.e. a kick deflected by a defender or goalie into the goal qualifies). The center ref will signal an indirect kick by raising one arm directly upwards while pointing the other in the direction of the kick.
- Throw ins are indirect (i.e. a 2nd player must touch the ball before scoring).

Generally, U9/U10 play by full soccer rules (with the exception of 7v7) and there are a lot of resources available on the internet to define, clarify, dissect, all the rules of soccer.

As a reminder, U4-U10 at T&C are recreational leagues. If your team is much stronger than the other team, please find creative ways to make the match more fair and ensure that both teams are having fun. Some suggestions include:

- Players must pass 3 times before shooting
- Players must dribble using their non-dominant foot
- Players must shoot with non-dominant foot
- Play all your weaker players at one time (use above tactics for stronger players)
- Let the other team control the ball all the way to midfield before you contest the ball
- If the other team is short players or has no subs and the other coach would like some help, see if you have a player or two who are willing to play against their teammates to balance the game.