

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 minutes
- 7v7 format
- Field is 30yd x 47yd
- Size 4 soccer ball
- Game is managed by 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 5 minute halftime
- Each player must play a minimum of 50%
- 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 and a few tweaks
- 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
- Goalkeepers are not allowed to punt
- Players are not allowed to intentionally head the ball

Field

- The small box around the goal is called the “Goal Box”. Its 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
- 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
- We use a build-out line. On goal kicks and when a keeper has possession the opponents must move behind the build-out line. Players cannot be offside until they cross the build-out line.

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 be behind the build-out line at the time the ball is kicked, and cannot cross the build-out line until 2 players on the kicking team have touched the ball (including the kicker).
- Players on the kicking team may be inside the penalty box when they touch the ball.

Offsides

- **Technical Definition:** A player is offside when they are closer to the opponent's goal than the second-to-last opponent (including the goalkeeper and the ball). The referee will only call offside if a player is in an offside position when the ball is passed and they touch the ball or influence the play. Influencing the play is the referee's judgment. 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.
- In U9/U10, you cannot be offside until you pass the build out line
- 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 are not allowed to punt the ball in U9/U10. They must throw/roll it out, or kick it from the ground
- Goalies may not place the ball on the ground and pick it back up.

Direct versus Indirect Kicks

- Corner kicks and some freekicks 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
- Let the other team add players to balance the game
- 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.