

Hampton Youth Soccer Rules

3-5 League

Last Updated: 08/16/2025



Foreword

The goal of the Hampton Youth Soccer program is to provide children with the opportunity to learn, practice and play soccer in a supportive and enjoyable space with coaches, referees and spectators who are encouraging and respectful of the players and the game.

The participants are *children*. At the 3-5 level the players should be honing the fundamental skills required (dribbling, passing, shooting, goalkeeping) while fair and safe play is reinforced. The players are reaching, or at a physical size where unsafe play can cause injury to other players and while soccer is a contact sport, safe play must be paramount on the field.

Given the age of the players and their skill levels some leniency will be afforded to be encouraging of

players. Coaches, when acting as refs, should use common sense in their interpretation of these rules to be supportive of all players, while ensuring the game continues to flow freely.

Governance and Escalation of Issues

- These rules are an abridged, and slightly modified version of the FIFA 'Laws of the Game' to be more appropriate for this age group. Should any rule not be specifically codified here, the FIFA rules will apply.
- These rules are constructed and owned by the Hampton Youth Soccer board of directors with the intention of the enjoyment and skills development of all players, and compliance with local laws, regulations, customs, and environment in which the games are being played.
- Disagreements with these rules, the interpretation thereof, or the application of them shall not interrupt game play and should be discussed in a calm and rational manner with the coach or referee(s) at breaks or after game play has concluded.
- During game play, a referee's call is final.
- The escalation path for disagreement in rules, interpretation or application thereof, should first go to the player's coach, then the League Representative, then the HYS Board.
- The Board's decision on any issue is final.

Duration

Games will be 40 minutes in length, broken into quarters of 10 minutes in duration, with a one minute break between quarters, and a five minute break at the half. Any game that reaches half-time or anytime in the second half with a 10-goal differential shall be immediately terminated. The first half is to be played to completion.

The referee will keep track of time, being aware of when the Quarter, Half and Full Time has elapsed. *Play will continue* until the ball goes 'dead' (it has gone past the touch or goal lines, or a goal has been scored), at which point the referee will signal the Quarter, Half or Full Time with a whistle.

There is a maximum played time limit of 13 minutes per quarter, allowing for 3 minutes of additional play should the ball not go dead, excluding time between quarters/halves and stopped clock events (such as subbing, injury, etc). After 13 minutes of play the end of Quarter/Half/Full-Time will be signaled with a whistle and play will immediately stop.

Injury

- Should a player become injured during the game *and* inside the field of play the referees must stop the game immediately and all players should stop where they are and take a knee.
- Players should not attempt to assist, crowd around the injured party, try to leave the field or in other way potentially obstruct the referee, Coach or player's parents/guardians from providing assistance.
- Immediately taking a knee from their location on the field ensures players are out of the way for any medical assistance to the injured player and are not injured themselves by being in the way.

- Should players already be close to the injured party and need to move they should retreat to a safer spot on the field and take a knee again *under direction from their Coach*.
- *Coaches should instruct their players what this means and how to do it before the first game of the season.*

Starting/Restarting play

Before the game begins a player from each team is selected by their coaches (generally the captain) and the players will flip a coin. The winner of the coin toss will choose which side of the field they will start in, the *other* team kicks off. At half time the two teams switch sides of the field.

- **Kick Off**
 - Performed to start a match, after half time, or when a goal is scored.
 - The ball is placed on the Center Mark, the player who kicks off must kick the ball either ahead or behind the center line to start play
 - Player who kicked off must not touch the ball again until another player (of either team) has touched it – no double touches.
 - The opposing team must remain outside of the Center Circle and in their own half during kick off.
 - When a goal is scored the game is restarted by a kick off – the team who *did not* score the goal kicks off.
 - A goal *may* be scored directly from a kick off.
- **Throw-in**
 - if the ball goes completely past the Touch Lines a throw in occurs.
 - The throw in is awarded to the opponents of the player who last touched the ball before it crossed the Touch Line.
 - The throw in is taken from the point at which the ball left the field.
 - Any player on the team may perform the throw in.
 - Players on the opposing team must remain at least five feet from the thrower until after the ball has left their hands.
 - The player who performed the throw in must not touch the ball again until another player (of either team) has touched it.
 - The thrower may take the throw immediately, or wait until their players are in position – they should not take longer than 60 seconds to complete the throw in from when the player received the ball to make the throw in.
 - The player taking the throw in:
 - Must face the field of play
 - Must keep both feet behind the Touch Line
 - Must hold the ball with both hands and throw from behind their head
 - Has part of both feet on the ground – they may not jump
 - May take a run up provided both feet are in contact with the ground when the ball leaves the player's hands
 - Offside rules do not apply during a throw in
 - A goal *may not* be scored directly from a throw in.
 - In a scrimmage, or game, if a player makes an error on a throw in they may retry the throw in; if they make an error again, the ball is turned over to the other team and they

now take the throw in. During a tournament, on *any* error, the ball is turned over and the opposing team takes the throw.

- **Corner Kick**

- If the ball goes completely past the Goal Line and the last person who touched it was on the *defending* team (and a goal is not scored)
- The corner kick is awarded to the attacking team
- The ball is placed anywhere inside the Corner Arc nearest the point where the ball crossed the Goal Line, including on any of the lines, by the kicker.
- Any player on the team may perform the corner kick
- Players on the opposing team must remain at least fifteen feet from the Corner Arc until after the kick has been taken.
- Player who performed the corner kick must not touch the ball again until another player (of either team) has touched it.
- Offside rules do not apply during a corner kick
- A goal *may* be scored directly from a corner kick but *only against the defending team*
- If the ball is kicked into the player's own goal a corner kick is awarded to the opposing team.

- **Goal Kick**

- If the ball goes completely past the Goal Line and the last person who touched it was on the *attacking* team (and a goal is not scored)
- The goal kick is awarded to the defending team
- Any player on the team may perform the goal kick
- The ball is placed on the ground anywhere inside the Goal Area and then the kick is taken – normal throw in/goal kick rules apply should the ball go outside the playing area as a result of the goal kick.
- Players on the opposing team must remain outside the Penalty Area until after the kick has been taken.
- Player who performed the goal kick must not touch the ball again until another player (of either team) has touched it.
- A goal *may* be scored directly from a goal kick but *only against the opposing team*
- If the ball is kicked into the player's own goal a corner kick is awarded to the opposing team.

- **Half Time**

- After half time the game restarts with a kick off taken by the team who *did not* kick to begin the game.

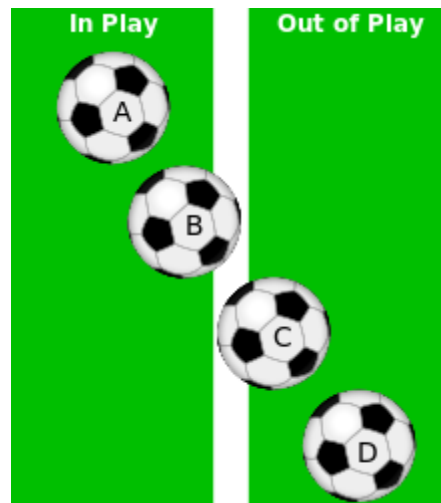
- **Quarter Time**

- Restarts after the first and third quarters (ie, not after the Half) are taken by:
 - If a goal was immediately scored prior to the quarter, a standard kick off is taken
 - If a throw in, corner kick, goal kick, indirect free kick or direct free kick was about to be taken immediately prior to the quarter, the throw in or corner/goal/free kick is continued by the team who was in possession of the ball prior to the quarter
 - At any other stage of play, the team with possession of the ball at the time play stopped will perform a throw in at the nearest point on the Touch Line from where the ball was when play stopped
 - Should the location of the ball be lost prior to restarting play, or if no decision can be reached as to who was last in control of the ball, the game is restarted with a kick off by whichever team did *not* kick off most recently.

- **Goal**
 - A goal is scored if the ball goes completely past the Goal Line inside of the Goal Box and below the Goal Box's crossbar, regardless of whether the goalie is holding the ball at the time or of which team's player last touched it, excepting in the circumstances noted above (Throw in, Corner kick, Goal kick) and below (Free kicks).
 - The goal is awarded to the attacking team of the Goal Line that the ball crossed
- **Goal Differential**
 - Any game that reaches half-time or anytime in the second half with a 10-goal differential shall be immediately terminated. The first half is to be played to completion.

In Bounds/In Play

The ball is in play until the whole of the ball has passed the Touch Lines or Goal Lines. A player may go out of bounds to keep the ball in play, including a goalie inside their own Goal Box.



- The ball is In Play in positions A, B and C
- The ball is Out of Play (causing a Goal Kick, Corner Kick or Throw In) only in position D
- Similarly, a goal is only scored when the ball has completely crossed the Goal Line, as in position D above

Player Equipment

Before entering the field each player must have:

- Shin guards
- Their team shirt on and in plain view at all times as the outer layer of clothing, even if other clothes are layered underneath. Coats must be worn *under* the team shirt, excepting:
 - The Goalie will wear a pinny to identify them from the other players on their team that does not match their own or the opposing team's colors.
- Soccer cleats are optional, tennis shoes can be worn. Metal cleats are not permitted. Baseball cleats may be used ***if the toe cleat is removed.***
- Goalies must wear provided goalie gloves
- All jewelry must be removed (earrings, necklaces, bracelets, rings, etc)

Players

- During a game there will be 7 players per team on the field, including the goalie.

Low Player Numbers

- If, before the game, one of the teams does not have the requisite number of players the coaches must both agree to one of the following:
 - Play with fewer, but an equal, number of players on each team
 - Equalize the teams by having players from the larger team play for the short team
 - Equalize the teams by having players from another Hampton Dumont Youth Soccer team in the same age group join *if they are immediately available to play*.
 - Should the short team receive players from either the opposing team, or spare local players, those additional players must *only play as defenders (backs)*.
 - If the coach with the full team does not choose to loan players, or allow outside players to join, then the teams must play with fewer, equal numbers of players.
- If, during the game, one of the teams does not have the requisite number of players due to injury or other unavoidable circumstances, and cannot substitute on an able player from their own team, the game must be stopped and coaches will need to decide how to equalize the teams using the above rules to continue the game.
 - If one team has fewer players because of a player being removed from the game by the referee due to an infraction then that team must continue to play with fewer players (and without the removed player) for the remainder of the quarter, as per the below rule in *Substitutions* and further in *Offenses and Fouls*.

Substitutions

- There are an unlimited number of substitutions per game.
- Players who have already played on the field and been substituted off may return to the game during a later substitution, unless the player has been ejected from the game by the referee with a determination that they may not return to the game.
 - Cautioned players who are temporarily removed from the game by the referee due to an infraction may be substituted back into the game *in a later quarter*.
 - Should the player be removed from the game due to a caution in the final quarter that player may not be substituted back into the game.
- Players may be substituted during the following phases of play:
 - Stoppage due to a goal being scored
 - At the end of a quarter
 - Stoppage due to the ball going out of play (throw-in, goal kick, corner kick) or a free kick being taken – *see below*
- Substitutions made when the ball has gone out of play, or a free kick being taken, may only be initiated by the team with control of the ball – the opposing team *may not* request subs first and potentially gain advantage due to forcing a longer stoppage of play. Should the team with control of the ball request substitutes then the other team may also substitute at the same time.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● The referee must stop the clock during substitutions, but only up to a maximum of one minute – at which point play resumes regardless of how prepared the teams are! |
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- All players must play **a minimum of two full quarters per game (20 minutes total combined playing time)**.

Positioning

Team positions are made up of

- A goalie
- Backs, or Defense
- Midfielders, or Wingers
- Forwards, or Attackers

The goalie should remain inside, or within twenty feet of their own Penalty Area. Being outside this area is not an offense, but the goalie may need to be reminded to return to their goal zone.

Backs should remain inside their own half of the field. Being outside this area is not an offense, but the backs may need to be reminded to return to their defense zone.

All midfielders and forwards may position themselves and play the ball anywhere on the field, including in the opposing team's Goal Area (while observing the below Offside rule, however).

Offside

A player is in an Offside Position when the player is ahead of the ball and between the opposing team's last defender and their goalie

The player is *not* offside when

- They are chasing the ball past the last defender
- They are in their own half
- They are level with the last defender
- During a
 - Throw in
 - Goal kick
 - Corner kick

It is not an offense to be in an offside position unless that player receives the ball while in an offside position, or affects game play by interfering with a player of the opposing team (by blocking them, running at them as if they were onside and going to tackle the opposing player, and so on).

Handling the Ball

- A player is considered to handle a ball when they touch the ball with any part of the arm below the shoulder.
- The only player who may handle the ball is the goalie and only when inside their own Penalty Area and only when the ball has not been passed back to them, or thrown in to them by a member of their own team. When the goalie is in possession of the ball opposing players *must* cease their attack.
- The goalie may not handle the ball again after it has been released from their possession and has not touched any other player. The goalie may not hold the ball longer than sixty seconds.
- Except in cases of a goal kick, as soon as a goalie has placed the ball on the ground the ball has returned to play and the opposing team may attack.

A hand ball penalty is awarded when:

- The goalie handles the ball in violation of the above rules
- Any other player *intentionally* handles the ball

A hand ball should *not* be awarded if the player did not handle the ball deliberately and was instead struck inadvertently.

Heading

- Players may *not* head the ball during any game. Should a player head a ball intentionally during a game an Indirect Free Kick is awarded to the opposing team at the location of the infringement.
- Heading has been disallowed from games for Hampton Youth Soccer due to studies made to the effects of heading in youth and the effects on the brain and the subsequent banning of heading by the US Youth Soccer Association. (An example of such a study is 'Evidence for Acute Electrophysiological and Cognitive Changes Following Routine Soccer Heading', by Di Virgilio, Hunter, Wilson, Stewart, Goodall, Howatson, Donaldson, and Ietswaart.)
- Heading may be practiced during regular practice by the coaches, should they wish to. No single player should head the ball more than 25 times per week.

Offenses and Fouls

The following offenses/fouls are to be handled as appropriate when observed:

Offenses

- On a throw in if the player lifts a foot or does not throw the ball over their head,
 - **During a scrimmage or game:** The player may be allowed to retake the throw *once*. On a second error, the throw in is retaken by the opposing team, as below.
 - **During a tournament game:** The throw in is to be retaken by the opposing team from the same location on the Touch Line.
- On a throw in, kick off, corner kick, goal kick, indirect free kick, or direct free kick if the player of opposing team is found to be within the exclusion distance for the throw or each type of kick the throw, or kick, is to be retaken by the same player

Indirect Free Kick Fouls

- If a goalie commits a hand ball offense an Indirect Free Kick is awarded to the opposing team at the location of the infringement
- On a throw-in if the player who took the throw-in touches the ball before any other player has touched it an Indirect Free Kick is awarded to the opposing team at the location of the infringement.
- On a kick off, corner kick, goal kick, indirect free kick, or direct free kick the player who took the kick touches the ball before any other player has touched it an Indirect Free Kick is awarded to the opposing team at the location of the infringement.
- If the goalie handles the ball for longer than 60 seconds or handles the ball in violation of the goalie handling laws above an Indirect Free Kick is awarded to the opposing team at the location of the infringement.
- If a player commits an offside foul an Indirect Free Kick is awarded to the opposing team at the location of the infringement.

Direct Free Kick Fouls

- If any other player other than the goalie commits a handball offense a Direct Free Kick is awarded to the opposing team at the location of the infringement
- An opposing player kicks or intentionally hits a goalie who has taken possession of a ball inside the goalie's own Goal Area a Direct Free Kick is awarded to the goalie's team at the location of the infringement.
- Kicking, tripping, pushing, holding, charging, striking, jumping on an opponent, sliding/slide tackles, or high kicking (kicks above waist level), regardless of whether it contacts another player, is considered unsafe play and the opposing player's team is awarded a Direct Free Kick at the location of the infringement.
 - **Dangerous Rough Play** – Playing in a dangerous manner is any action that, while trying to play the ball, threatens injury to someone (including the player themselves) and includes preventing a nearby opponent from playing the ball for fear of injury. This may include actions that would otherwise be acceptable but are being done to an excess and therefore is considered dangerous.
 - A player may be cautioned for unsafe play or unsporting behavior (swearing at other players, the referees or spectators, grabbing at other players to interfere with their play, etc) by the referee. The referee may decide, at their discretion, to remove a player from the field for unsafe or unsporting behavior and, at an appropriate moment, should inform the coach as to whether the player may return to the field in another quarter or if they

- may not return for the remainder of the match.
- Coaches may choose not to substitute a cautioned player back on, even if they have not played their second quarter yet, should they feel the situation warrants such action.

Penalty Kick Fouls

- If a Direct Free Kick offense is committed by a player inside their own Penalty Area then a Penalty Kick is awarded to the opposing team.

Inappropriate Behavior

- Inappropriate behavior is an immediate sending-off offense and that player may not return to the field of play for the remainder of the game. At an appropriate time (quarter-time or half-time) the player's Coach *may quietly* discuss the event with the other refereeing Coach, should the player's coach not have witnessed the infraction, however this will not affect the player's sending-off (ie, they still may not continue to play for the duration of that game).
- Inappropriate behavior includes grabbing at, or groping another player (regardless of the players' genders), making lewd comments, jokes or gestures, unwanted touching (even if only a player's clothing), or making unwanted comments on another player's appearance. These will not be tolerated under any circumstances.
- Depending on the severity of the act there may be follow-ups required of coaches (managing player conduct is primarily the responsibility of the Coach), and/or may involve the Hampton Youth Soccer board or even Law Enforcement.

Free Kicks

Both Indirect Free Kicks and Direct Free Kicks are taken by placing the ball on the field at the location of the offense for which the free kick was awarded.

- Any player on the team awarded the kick may take the kick
- Players on the opposing team must be at least 10 feet away from the ball, with the only exception to this rule being that the players may be within 10 feet if they are on their *own* Goal Line, between their goal posts (a "wall")
- The player taking the kick must not touch the ball again until another player has touched it
- **Indirect Free Kick**
 - Player CANNOT score directly
 - If, on an Indirect Free Kick, the kick is kicked directly into the opponent's goal, the goal is disallowed, and a goal kick is taken
 - If, on an Indirect Free Kick, the kick is kicked directly into the team's own goal, the goal is disallowed, and a corner kick is taken by the opposing team.
- **Direct Free Kick**
 - Player CAN score on opposite goal
 - If, on a Direct Free Kick, the kick is kicked directly into the opponent's goal, the goal is awarded.
 - If, on a Direct Free Kick, the kick is kicked directly into the team's own goal, the goal is

disallowed, and a corner kick is taken by the opposing team.

- **Penalty Kicks**

- Scoring directly is allowed by the awarded team
- A Penalty Kick is taken by placing the ball on the infringing team's Penalty Kick Mark (PK Mark).
- Any player on the team awarded the kick may take the kick
- The opposing team's goalie must remain on their Goal Line, between the goal posts, facing the kicker until the ball has been kicked
- All other players, excepting the opposing team's goalie, must be outside the Penalty Area and fifteen feet *away* the kicker (behind or to either side), while still inside the field of play
- The kicker taking the kick must kick the ball forward
- The player taking the kick must not touch the ball again until another player has touched it
- If the kick is kicked directly into the opponent's goal, the goal is awarded.
- As soon as the kick has been taken the ball is in play and other players may attack and defend as normal.

Winner of the Match

- The player with the highest number of goals scored during a match is considered the winner of the match.
- If both teams have the same number of goals during a regular season game then the match is a draw.
- If the game ends in a draw during tournament play a shootout will take place.
- **Shootouts**
 - One goalie and five kickers are selected from each team
 - All other players must remain behind the Center Line away from the goal the kicks are being taken at.
 - During a kick, the goalie not defending the kick must remain on the Goal Line fifteen feet from the Goal Box and must not distract the other goalie.
 - The referee will choose the goal at which the kicks will be taken
 - The referee tosses a coin and the team whose captain wins the toss decides whether to take the first or second kick
 - The kicks are taken alternately by the teams
 - If, before both teams have taken five kicks, one has scored more goals than the other could score, even if it were to complete its five kicks, no more kicks are taken
 - If, after both teams have taken five kicks, both have scored the same number of goals, or have not scored any goals, the coach *may* select five new kickers and a different goalie. Kicks must continue to be taken until one team has scored one goal more than the other team from the same number of kicks.
 - A goalkeeper who is injured during the shootout may be replaced by another member of the same team who is *not* taking kicks
 - Each kick is taken by a different player
 - The goalie *may* take a kick on the opposing team

Coaches and the Technical Area

- The Technical Area is the space surrounding a team bench during a game. The Technical Area extends six feet from either side of the team bench, within a foot of the Touch Line of the soccer field, and six feet *behind* the team bench.
- A team has one Coach, and may have one Assistant Coach, no more.
- During a practice additional people may assist in coaching players.
- During a game one Coach is on the field refereeing (see below) and, if present, the other Coach must stay within the Technical Area (within reason, the Coach may run to the bathroom or do other activities as long as the Coach does not interfere with the game in play).
- Only the Coaches may provide coaching instructions to players on the field - this may be the Coach who is refereeing, and/or the Coach who is in the Technical Area.
- Spectators may provide encouragement or applaud/cheer players, but they should not provide coaching advice and, if doing so, should be asked to stop. Players should receive instructions only from their own Coaches.
- The Coach is always the primary role model for players, whether their own or on another team. At a game, or during practice, the Coach's behavior and demeanor is on display for all to see (players, parents and spectators) and others will follow your lead.
- Under NO circumstances will a non-refereeing coach or spectator enter the field of play during a game with the sole exception of when a coach's player, or parent's child, is injured and requires assistance.
- A coach or spectator who verbally harasses, argues or accosts a referee will be asked to leave the soccer grounds and may be banned from future games, or from East Park indefinitely.

Referees

- One coach from each team will serve as a referee during the match - so there will be two referees on the field at all times. Referees may also coach their own teams at the same time, but their priority should be the refereeing of the match first and foremost.
- Outside refs *may* be provided for some matches when they are available.
- The two designated referees should divide the field into halves lengthwise and take responsibility for action taking place in their lengthwise half of the field. A ref *may* make a call on the other half of the field, however (in case the other ref may have missed something due to attending to other events, or their sight lines being blocked, so on).
- All tournament games will have a referee provided – this may be the coach of another team who is not participating in this match.