

Hampton Youth Soccer Rules

K-2 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 K-2 level the players should be learning the basic soccer rules, rudimentary skills required (dribbling, passing, shooting, goalkeeping) while fair and safe play is reinforced.

Given the age of the players and their skill levels some leniency will be afforded to be encouraging of beginning players. Coaches, when acting as refs, should use common sense in their interpretation of these rules to be supportive of beginning 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.

- 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 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

- 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
- A goal *may not* be scored directly from a throw in.
- If a player makes an error on a throw in that player may retry the throw in. If they make an error again, the same player may retry the throw in a second time. On a subsequent error, the ball is turned over to the other team and they now take the throw in.

- **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 on the inside corner of the field 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 five feet from the player taking the kick 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.
- 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 at least ten feet from the Goal 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 and Quarter time**

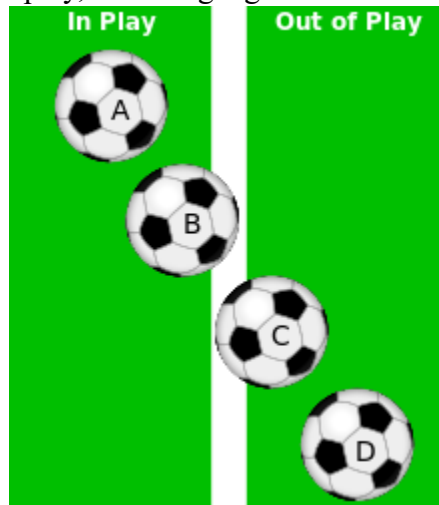
- After half or quarter time the game restarts with a kick off taken by the team who *did not* kick off to start the previous quarter.

- **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

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* their team shirt.
 - 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 may wear gloves
- All jewelry must be removed (earrings, necklaces, bracelets, rings, etc)

Players

During a game there will be 6 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
 - Reschedule the game when a full compliment of players is available.
- If the coach with the full team does not choose to loan players, then the teams must play with fewer, equal numbers of players, or the game must be rescheduled.

- 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 the coaches must decide on one of the following options:
 - The team with greater numbers must take some of their own players off the field so that the game can continue with both teams having the same numbers of players on the field.
- OR -
- (default) The game may be abandoned and the coaches should reschedule the game when a full complement of players can be fielded

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 one-and-a-half quarters per game (15 minutes total combined playing time)**. Our league aims to play all players equally to teach the skills and aims of the game.

Positioning

Team positions are made up of

- A goalie
- Players who may both attack and defend
- The goalie should remain inside, or within ten feet of their own Goal Area. Being outside this area is not an offense, but the goalie may need to be reminded to return to their goal zone.
- All other players may position themselves and play the ball anywhere on the field, including in the opposing team's Goal Area.

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 Goal Area. When the goalie is in possession of the ball opposing players *must* cease their attack.
- 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 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 – in this young age group extra latitude should be given to the players when committing minor infractions.

- On a throw-in if the player lifts a foot or does not throw the ball over their head, they may retake the throw. If after three attempts they cannot successfully complete a throw-in, the throw-in is to be retaken by the opposing team from the same location on the Touch Line.
- If any player commits a hand ball offense a 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 a Free Kick is awarded to the opposing team at the location of the infringement.
- On a kick off, corner kick, goal kick or free kick if the player who took the kick touches the ball before any other player has touched it a Free Kick is awarded to the opposing team at the location of the infringement.
- On a throw in, kick off, corner kick, goal kick, or 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
- An opposing player kicks or intentionally hits a goalie who has taken possession of a ball inside the goalie's own Goal Area a 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 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.
- Penalty kicks (a type of Direct Free Kick) **do not apply** to the K-2 grade age group.
- A player may be cautioned for unsafe play or unsporting behavior (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.

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.
- We appreciate that the above statement may appear strict for this age group however we are wanting to maintain a consistent standard across the Hampton Youth Soccer league and expectations are the same regardless of age group.

Free Kicks

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 5 feet away from the ball, with the only exception to this rule being that the players may be within 5 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
- If, on a Free Kick, the kick is kicked directly into the opponent's goal, the goal is awarded.
- If, on a 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.

Scores

Scores will not be kept for K-2 grade matches.

Referees

- Coaches will serve as the referees for K-2 grade games. Two coaches from each team may be on the field at the same time to assist in instructing the players should they so choose, but only one of these coaches should be acting as that team's referee.
- Both referees will officiate the match and help with guiding the players through a safe and enjoyable game.