



Rules for U7/U8

GWYSL Regional Modifications to the AYSO Rules & Regulations, Abridged
Updated 1/14/2024



U7/U8 Game Rules

Coaching methodology: Fundamental motor skills (balance, walking, running, jumping, etc.) should be highlighted, and combined with ball control. Players must maximize their contact with the ball, and most activities should be individual (ball per player). Players need to develop ball familiarity, and PLAY! Players at this age are egocentric, and for the first time have to build relationships with other players. Coaches should give different responsibilities to players to develop a sense of team (cone helpers, break captains, etc.).

Matches in the **U7 and U8** Divisions are conducted per the *IFAB Laws of the Game* and the *US Soccer Player Development Initiatives* with the following **exceptions**:

- Each half is 20 minutes long. Field size is 25-35 yds long and 15-25 yds wide. Ball size is 3.
- The team has between 5-6 team members, and games are played 4 v 4.
- Teams that are short players can “play a man down” or borrow players. Late arriving players can substitute for the loaned players at the quarter or half. Do not allow both sides to play a man down, as it unfairly robs the on-time players of ball time.
- There is one substitution break / water break at a natural stoppage in play halfway through each half. Except for injury or emotional distress, all substitutions shall be made during these breaks and at halftime.
- An injured player who comes off may be replaced for that quarter, or the coach can play short and allow the injured player to return in that quarter, with the permission of the referee.
- There are no goalkeepers, and coaches should discourage defenders from lingering near their own goal.
- There are no offside offenses, but coaches should discourage attackers from lingering near their opponent’s goal.
- Attackers need to retreat behind the “buildout line” prior to goal kicks being taken. If an attacker crosses the buildout line before the ball is kicked and clearly moves, the goal kick is retaken. (Note: goal kickers may still take “quick kicks” if they deem it to their advantage.)
- There are no penalty kicks, and therefore there is no penalty area. For all fouls called against the defensive team within its own goal area, the free kick is taken at the point on the goal area line parallel to the goal line that is closest to where the foul occurred.
- All free kicks are indirect free kicks.
- No slide tackling is allowed. The restart is a free kick.
- Deliberate heading of the ball is not allowed. The restart is a free kick.
- Significantly-egregious throw-ins shall be retaken once by the same player.
- Cautions and sending offs, while rare, shall be made without the use of yellow and red cards.



The Build-Out Line

The purpose of the buildout line modification is to help defensive players develop skills to drive the ball forward immediately following a goal kick.

In the IFAB Laws of the Game, when one team is making a goal kick, the opposing team must remain outside the Penalty Area until the ball is in play (when it is kicked and clearly moves). In U7, U8, U10 and U12, it is the buildout line, not the penalty area, that the opposing players must remain behind. The buildout line should be marked by paint or cones halfway between the penalty area and the half-way line.

- There are no restrictions on how far the ball may travel on a goal kick.
- Most of the time, the goal kicker will wait until their opponents have retreated to the buildout line prior to making the kick. In that case, if an opponent crosses the buildout line toward the goal before the ball is in play, that player is warned, and the restart is that the goal kick is retaken (unless the referee chooses to signal advantage, warning the encroaching player at the next stoppage).
- However, per the IFAB Laws, the goal kicker may choose a “quick kick” and not wait for all their opponents to retreat to the buildout line. Those opponents who interfere with or prevent the taking of the quick goal kick shall be warned. Any other opponents who genuinely did not have time to leave the penalty area before the quick goal kick may intercept the ball from their position once it is in play.
- An opponent who deliberately slow-walks their retreat to the buildout line can also be warned for delaying the restart of play.
- Please note that GWYSL only observes build-out line procedures for goal kicks, and not when the keeper has merely taken possession of the ball and is releasing it.
- In U14 & U19 divisions, there is no buildout line for goal kicks, and regular AYSO-IFAB Laws require opponents to be outside the penalty box until the ball is kicked and it moves.



Safety

Referees and Coaches are asked to work as a team in order to ensure that player safety is the #1 priority on the field. All incidents, injuries and property damage shall be reported to the regional commissioner or safety director.

The league provides jerseys, shorts, socks, goalie gloves and goalie jerseys. All players should purchase their own shoes, shin guards and ball, sized for their division. BQ Sports offers GWYSL players a 10% discount on equipment.

Equipment & Attire:

- Goalkeeper's shirt must contrast with both team jerseys.
- Shin guards are required and must be completely covered by socks.
- Cleats are not allowed, turf shoes are strongly encouraged.
- Prescription glasses, hearing aids and mouth guards are allowed. Casts or splints are prohibited.
- Hard or metal jewelry is not allowed. For new piercings, silicone "sports studs" are allowable. Taping over non-compliant jewelry is never allowable.
- Long fingernails or extensions should generally be allowed if the referee deems them safe.
- In cold weather, soft hats without brims are allowed.
- Hair control devices, and other adornments, such as beads, worn in the hair must be securely fastened to the head, and must not present an increased risk to the player, teammates, or opponents. Flat clips less than two inches in length may be used to hold the hair in place close to the head so long as their placement on the head does not present an increased risk to the player, teammates, or opponents.



Weather Policy:

Games can be canceled for weather in one of two ways.

- The commissioner may cancel games via email with an hour's notice if the weather forecast indicates to do so. Such a measure will be used sparingly.
- For unforecasted conditions, referees may suspend individual matches.

We do play in moderate rain if the temperature is above 50 degrees and it's not too windy. But we do not play in the presence of thunder or lightning. If thunder is heard during a game, it is within striking distance. Games shall be immediately suspended and everyone should seek shelter immediately. Matches shall be restarted after no thunder or lightning has been detected for 30 minutes.

Good shelter is a genuine building like McCarren Pool or the BIP Fieldhouse. Examples of insufficient shelter include under a tree, or a tent, or storage shed, or near light posts, fences or flag poles.



Code of Conduct

Coaches, Referees, and Parents must collaborate to create a safe haven for players to experience the game of soccer and a place where they can play with freedom, confidence, and enjoyment in order to develop as players and to truly reach their potential. It's the duty of all Coaches, Referees, Players and Parents to:

- Conduct themselves in a manner becoming a member of AYSO and consistent with the AYSO Six Philosophies and the highest standards of conduct.
- Work together as a team in support of the children playing the match.
- Encourage clean competition and good sportsmanship.
- Prohibit and abstain from making negative comments and complaints about officiating.

Coach Conduct:

- Coaches must ensure respect and support for Referees by Players, Parents, and all other Spectators.
- It is the duty of coaches to limit their sideline participation during matches to comments that are positive and/or encouraging, with limited supportive instruction.
- Coaches should remain along the touch line and are prohibited from the area immediately behind the goal line.
- Players should play an equal number of quarters throughout the season if not within each match. Any player arriving on time or within the first quarter shall play a minimum of 2 quarters.

Referee Conduct:

- The application of the Spirit of the Game in youth soccer is far more important than a strict application of the Letter of the Law (see IFAB Laws of the Game). Soccer is a fast-paced sport that should flow with minimal interruptions. Referees have considerable flexibility when determining whether or not to stop play. Violation of the letter of the Law may be overlooked if the Referee deems it to be a trifling or doubtful offense. The Referee may also decide not to stop play when it could be more advantageous for the team that was fouled to continue play.
- Constant whistling for trifling and doubtful breaches produces bad feelings and loss of temper on the part of the players and spoils the pleasure of spectators.
- Referees are responsible for keeping the game safe, fair, and fun. Referees should support, and work with Coaches to manage the behavior of Players and Spectators.

Parent Conduct:

- Parents are expected to respect Coaches, and Referees, and to model positive sporting behavior.
- Fans in AYSO (including parents) are asked to be cheerleaders, not critics or sideline coaches. Soccer is a player's game. Players learn the game by trying new things, making mistakes, and trying again.
- Parents are prohibited from the area immediately behind the goal line.

