



## 2025 NWISL Official Under 12 Rules

The enclosed rules and requirements are based upon modifications to the **SAY SOCCER PLAYING LAWS 2022 4th Edition Revised 11/14/24** and NWISL requirements. These rules are subject to change by NWISL.

### Law 1 – The Field of Play

- **Dimensions:** The field of play must be rectangular. The length of the touchline must be greater than the length of the goal line.
  - Length: 75 min. to 80 max. yds. Width: 55 min. to 60 max. yds.
- **Field Markings:** Distinctive lines not more than 4 inches wide. The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line. The center mark is indicated at the midpoint of the halfway line. A circle with a radius of 8 yards is marked around it. Home and Away (Team and Spectators) should be on opposite sides of the field. Revised 11/14/24
- **The Goal Area:** The goal area is defined at each end of the field as follows: Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line 4 yards from the inside of each goal post. These lines extend into the field of play for a distance of 4 yards and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is the goal area.
- **The Penalty Area:** The penalty area is defined at each end of the field as follows: Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line 14 yards from the inside of each goal post. These lines extend into the field of play for a distance of 14 yards and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is the penalty area. Within each penalty area a penalty mark is made 10 yards from the midpoint between the goalposts and equidistant to them. An arc of a circle with a radius of 8 yards from each penalty mark is drawn outside the penalty area.
- **Flag Posts:** Conform to SAY with minimum standard being at each corner of the field.
- **The Corner Arc:** 3-foot arc on each corner.
- **Goals:** Goals must be placed on the center of each goal line, consisting of two upright posts equidistant from the corner flag posts and joined at the top a horizontal crossbar. The distance between the posts is between minimum 18 feet and maximum 21 feet and the distance from the lower edge of the crossbar to the ground is between minimum 6 ½ feet and maximum 7 feet. Revised 02/09/20
- **Safety:** Goals must be securely anchored to the ground. Portable Goals may only be used if they satisfy this requirement.

### Law 2 – The Ball

The ball used at this age group is size **(4)** four.

### Law 3 – Players

- **The Number of Players:** Two teams play a match, each fielding not more than nine **(9)** players, one of whom is the goalkeeper. The minimum roster size shall be nine **(9)** and the maximum roster size shall be sixteen **(16)**. The teams are not required to play even sided. Revised 2/12/15
  - Teams and matches may be coed. Any team that roster **all girls** must be declared a **“GIRLS”** team. Any team that roster **all boys or coed** must be declared a **“BOYS”** team. The minimum number of players per team required to start a match is five **(5)**.
- **Substitutions:** Unlimited with referee permission, at any stoppage of play, **except corner kicks and free kicks**.
  - All players eligible for substitution must be marked with a pinnie. The pinnie shall be handed to the player they are coming in for. The exiting player must take the pinnie with them when leaving the field. Revised 11/14/24
- **Playing Time:** Each player shall play a minimum of fifty percent **(50%)** of the total playing time.

### Law 4 – Players’ Equipment

Conform to SAY. Non-uniform clothing is allowed under uniforms based on weather conditions, but uniforms must still distinguish teams. Referees are required to determine the safety of non-uniform clothing and can require removal of such items.

### Law 5 – Referee

A USSF or SAY Licensed Referee shall be assigned to each game. In the event the assigned Referee does not show, a parent, coach, or assistant may be utilized. Revised 02/02/17

### Law 6 – Assistant Referees

Two USSF or SAY Licensed Referees shall be assigned as a linesman for each game. In the event one or both of the assigned linesmen do not show, the center Referee may use club linesmen. Revised 02/02/17

### Law 7 – The Duration of the Match

The match shall be divided into two **(2)** equal halves of thirty **(30) minutes** each. There shall be a half time interval of five **(5) minutes**.

### Law 8 – The Start and Restart of Play

Conform to SAY with the exception of the opponents of the team taking the kick shall be at least eight **(8)** yards from the ball.

## Law 9 The Ball in and out of Play Revised 11/14/24

The ball is **OUT** of **PLAY** when the following happen:

1. The entire ball passes over the Goal Line or Touch Line (on the ground or in the air)
2. The game has been stopped by the Referee (including when the Referee accidentally blows the whistle)
3. The ball touches the Referee or the AR **AND**:
  - a. The ball changes direction.
  - b. The ball goes directly into the goal
  - c. The team in possession of the ball changes
  - d. A team starts a promising attack
    - i. In any of these cases; play is restarted with a dropped ball from the referee to one player of the team that was in possession before the ball hit the Referee or the AR. All other players must remain at least four **(4)** yards from the ball until play is restarted. Revised 11/14/24
    - ii. A dropped ball is considered in play as soon as it touches the ground. Revised 11/14/24

The ball **REMAINS IN PLAY** when the following happens:

1. It rebounds onto the field from the goal post, crossbar or corner flag post.
2. It touches the Referee or the AR and does not change direction.
3. There may be an apparent violation, **BUT** no signal has been given by the referee.

## Law 10 The Method of Scoring

Conform to SAY

- A goal is scored when the **WHOLE BALL** passes completely over the Goal Line, between the Goal Posts and under the Crossbar.
  - A Goalkeeper may not **THROW** the ball into another team's goal
  - A goal shall not be allowed if the **WHOLE BALL** has not crossed the **ENTIRE** goal line Revised 11/14/24

## Law 11 – Offside

Conform to SAY

- A player is in the “Offsides Position” the moment the ball is played or touched by a teammate. If any of the part of the head, body or feet is:
  - Nearer to the opponents goal than the ball **AND**:
  - In the opponent's Half of the Field **AND**:
  - Closer to the opponents' goal line than the second to last defender. Revised 11/14/24

## Law – 12 Fouls and Misconduct

Conform to SAY with youth modifications.

1. A deliberate heading of the ball shall not be allowed in this age group (penalty for infraction is **indirect free kick**). Revised 07/09/16

Conform to SAY: DFK, IFK and PK can only be awarded for fouls and misconduct that happen while the ball is in play.

- DFK is awarded for the following:
  - A player kicks (or attempts to kick)
    - An opponent
    - The ball while in the GK's possession
  - Strikes (or attempts to strike) an opponent
    - The GK throws the ball vigorously at an opponent
    - A GK pushing an opponent with the ball while still holding it
  - Trips (or attempts to trip) an opponent
  - Jumps at an opponent
  - Charges an opponent
  - Pushes an opponent
  - When tackling, or challenging an opponent to gain possession of the ball; makes contact with the opponent:
    - Before making contact with the ball
    - On any tackle or challenge made from outside the peripheral vision of the opponent, even if contact is made with the ball first.
  - Holds an opponent
  - Bites or spits at anyone
  - Obstructs an opponent with contact
  - Throws or kicks an object at the ball, an opponent, or the match officials
  - Contacts the ball with any held object (including the GK)
  - Handles the ball (This does not apply to a GK within their own penalty area)
    - Not every touch with a player's hand / arm is an offense. It must be purposeful.
- PK is awarded for the following:
  - If a player of the defending team commits one of the above acts within their own Penalty Area, a PK shall be awarded to the opposing team.
  - If the ball is in play a PK shall be awarded whenever a DFK offense is committed within the Penalty Area
- IFK is awarded for the following:
  - Dangerous Play
    - High Kicks
    - Double Kicks (Scissors or Bicycle) in distance of another player
    - Low headers (below the waist of another player)
    - Playing the ball from the ground
  - Heading the Ball deliberately.
  - Slide tackling from behind with no contact
  - Charging unfairly
    - Each player must have at least one foot on the ground when shoulder to shoulder contact is made.
    - The ball must be within playing distance of the involved players when shoulder to shoulder contact is made.
  - Obstruction
  - Fouls against the GK
    - Note: A GK has possession of the ball when they have any part of **ONE (1)** hand or arm is on it, whether it be trapped on the ground, another body part, or the goal post. This also includes holding the ball in an outstretched open palm.
  - Improper clearing of the ball by the GK Revised 11/15/24

### Law 13 – Free Kick

Conform to SAY with the exception that all opponents are at least eight (8) yards from the ball. **On all kicks, the ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves.** Revised 02/09/20

- On a Free Kick for U12, U14, U19 games, all attackers must be **(1)** yard from the defensive wall prior to the ball being put into play (kicked). If encroachment occurs, an IDF is awarded to the defending team. Revised 02/09/20

### Law 14 – Penalty Kick

Conform to SAY with the exception that all opponents are at least eight **(8)** yards from the ball and outside the penalty area.

### Law 15 – Throw-In

Conform to SAY

1. The throw-in is taken in any direction at the point where the ball left the field by a member of the opposing team.
2. The thrower **MUST**:
  - a. Face the field of play with part of each foot either
    - i. On the touchline
    - ii. On the ground outside the touchline and
      1. Part of each foot **MUST** remain on the ground at the time of release.
  - b. Throw the ball with both hands
  - c. Throw the ball from behind and over their head.
  - d. Not touch the ball again until it has been touched by another player
- All opposing players must remain at least two **(2)** yards away from the thrower of the ball until the ball is in play. Revised 11/14/24

### Law 16 – Goal Kick:

Conform to SAY

1. Opponents are required to be outside the Penalty Area prior to the taking of a goal kick. Opponents cannot be in the defenders (goalkeeper's) portion of the field (inside the Penalty Area) at the taking of the goal kick. Revised 01/29/17
2. If a properly taken goal kick is taken while opponents are in the goalkeeper's half of the field or encroach before the ball clears the penalty area, the goal kick is retaken. Revised 01/29/17
3. A goal on the opposing team **CAN** be scored directly from a goal kick. Revised 11/14/24

### Law 17 – Corner Kick:

Conform to SAY with the exception that all opponents remain at least eight **(8)** yards from the ball until it is in play.