

# ABYS Rule Book

This ABYS Rule Book is based on the 2002 Laws of the Game published by the United States Soccer Federation (USSF) as authorized by the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA). The Boston Area Youth Soccer (BAYS) and Acton Boxboro Youth Soccer (ABYS) organizations play by the FIFA Laws as modified by the United States Youth Soccer Association (USYSA), the Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association (MYSA), BAYS and ABYS. These modifications do not alter the Laws except to allow for more liberal substitution of players, small-sided play, and play by the very young.

This ABYS Rule Book is the official record of modifications to the Laws of the Game made by ABYS for 6v6 and 4v4 in-house play (i.e., for non-travel teams).

Bob Cadogan  
ABYS Referee Assignor

Peter Doig  
ABYS Referee Education

Joe Will  
BAYS Relations

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### **Let Referees Referee!**

In order to meet the demand for referees in the In-House program and to deter an unacceptably high number of incidences of coaches contradicting, criticizing, arguing with, and calling games for youth referees, ABYS has adopted

the following "Let Referees Referee!" policy for ABYS in-house (non travel) games:

Under NO circumstance shall an ABYS coach, by word or action, contradict, argue with, or overtly criticize a referee.

Coaches shall refrain from making calls for the referee. This is the referee's role.

Coaches shall also strongly discourage ANY comments directed at referees by spectators associated with the coach's team.

The ABYS Board of Directors will take appropriate action, up to and including suspending coaching privileges to coach, for failing to uphold this policy.

As always, player safety, i.e., situations where players are clearly at risk of injury, shall be an overriding concern.

Coaches are encouraged to report youth referee performance to the ABYS Referee Director via the card provided to them by the referee. Referees who do not meet to the standards that have been set for them in their training will receive additional training or, if necessary, they will be removed from service. The referee performance card, or direct communication with the Referee Director is the only acceptable method for coaches to express their dissatisfaction.

The primary reason for a high attrition rate among young referees is coaches and parents interfering with them in the performance of their assignments. Please understand that referees are providing a service: The facilitation of fair and safe play for players. We appreciate the coach's role in training players, and we, in turn, ask that coaches demonstrate respect and unequivocal support for the conscientious efforts of our youth referees.

For more information please contact our Referee Director, Turner Wilson, by e-mail at [turner@pair.com](mailto:turner@pair.com).

Laws As Amended by ABYS for 6v6 and 4v4

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## **LAW 1 THE FIELD OF PLAY**

- Field: 6v6 – 35-40 yards by 50-60 yards
- Goal: 6v6 – 12 feet wide by 6 feet high
- Penalty Area: 12 yards by the width of the field
- Radii for center circle and penalty kick mark arc: 6 yards (6v6)
- Corner Area: 1 yard arc
- Lines:
  - Goal line, touchline, halfway line, corner area, penalty kick arc
  - Lines belong to area they mark
- Goals must be securely anchored to the ground
- Goals must have a net, which is properly secured to the goal posts and the ground

## **LAW 2 THE BALL**

- No loose material or protruding valve
- Properly inflated
- Sizes
  - Size 4 - U-10
  - Size 3 – U8 and U7

## **LAW 3 NUMBER OF PLAYERS**

U8, U10 – 6 players a side  
U7 – 4 players a side

In ABYS there is no minimum number of players to play a game. If a team is short players, the referee shall allow the coaches to determine if players shall be lent to the opposing team, or one or both teams shall play shorthanded. The goal shall be to play soccer

- Substitutions

- Substitutions, in all cases, may be made only with the prior consent of the referee.
  - Teams may substitute after a goal, at the start of the second half, before a goal kick, for an injured or cautioned player, or before their team's throw-in. With regard to throw-ins, if the attacking team chooses to substitute, the defending team may then also choose to substitute.
  
  - Any player who is bleeding must leave the field.
  - If a team substitutes for a bleeding or injured player, at that point, either team can substitute an unlimited number of players.
  
  - Players with improper or unsafe equipment must leave the field and the team plays shorthanded. The player may reenter next stoppage of play with the referee's permission and after his/her equipment is inspected by the referee.
- 4v4 games only - One coach from each team is allowed on field
  
  - The coach shall not be allowed to interfere with play.
  - The coach shall stay out of the penalty area (or away from the goals if there is no penalty area)

#### **LAW 4 PLAYER EQUIPMENT**

- The referee shall show flexibility with uniforms, particularly in cold weather, but not with issues involving safety (e.g., players must wear shin guards, cannot wear hard casts). Game shirts (or shirts of roughly the same color) shall be worn over all other clothing
- If a player is playing with improper or unsafe equipment, the referee shall correct the situation or ask the coach to substitute a player, whichever is quicker
- All players must have shin guards, socks that cover the shin guards, and shoes
- Shoes: Flat cleats or bars; nothing loose or sharp (flats are also an option)
- Cannot wear anything that is dangerous to self or another player
  - Watches
  - Chains
  - Rings, necklaces, earrings (including starter studs), or other jewelry
  - Sharp objects in hair
  - Belts
  - Head coverings with any visors or protrusions (goal keeper may wear a soft-billed hat)
  
- NO hard casts or splints, even if padded, and even with parents', coach's, or doctor's permission. No orthopedic braces with exposed or uncapped metal are allowed
- Goalkeeper must wear different color shirt than both teams and referee

#### **LAW 5 REFEREES**

Referees shall:

- Stop game for injuries
  - [Err on the side of caution. When in doubt, assume player is injured]
  - [Wave coach on to tend to player]
  
- Decide if game should be postponed because of poor weather or field conditions (before teams arrive, only league calls games; after teams arrive, only referee can call game - may consult with coaches)
- Not allow play when lightning is visible anywhere
- Start games on time
- Enforce the laws
- Keep record of game - time, score, cautions, ejections
- Have discretionary power to stop the game for infringement of the laws, and suspend or terminate the game whenever he/she deems it necessary, such as for weather, unruly behavior of spectators, refusal of players or coaches to leave when ejected. (Note: If the referee stops the game, he/she doe

not decide the winner or whether the game will be continued at a later date or replayed, the league does; the referee just reports the facts to the Referee Director)

- Allow nobody to enter field without permission
- Signal (with whistle) for all stoppages by referee (e.g., foul, injury)
- Call only deliberate, avoidable fouls (not trifling fouls)
- Not deal directly with the spectators; the coach is responsible for his/her fans, so the referee deals with the spectators through the coach
- Keep game moving - encourage coaches to substitute without undue delay
- File a game report

## **LAW 6 CLUB LINEPERSONS**

Referees may use volunteer linespersons. Their duties will be limited to:

- Judging balls out over touch line.
- Indicates direction of throw-in
- Indicates general area of throw-in

### [Referee Hints:

- USE the lines people; they can see the line better than the referee
- Before the game, review with linespersons, what you want them to do
- If they are not doing job, speak to them quietly and politely during stoppage]

## **LAW 7 DURATION OF THE GAME**

- U-12: 30 minute halves
- U-8, U-10: 30 minute halves
- U-7: 25 minute halves
- Must have a minimum of a 5 minute half time
- Referees shall shorten the game if necessary so that it ends five minutes before scheduled start of next game if there is one on the same field; coaches may request a shorter game

## **LAW 8 START OF PLAY**

- Coin toss at beginning of game, visiting team calls. Winner chooses which goal to attack; loser gets ball. Teams switch goals at half and the other team kicks off.
- Kickoff at beginning of game, second half, and by scored-upon team after goals
- Goal may be scored directly (i.e., without being touched) from a kickoff
- Referee signals permission to kick off with whistle
- Both teams in own half of field for kickoff
- Receiving team at least 6 yards from ball (6v6) or at least 2 yards from the ball in 4v4 until ball kicked
- Ball must be kicked forward before in play; if not kicked forward, ball was never in play and kick is retaken
- Ball may not be retouched by kicker until any other player touches it. Penalty is Indirect Free Kick by opposing team.
- After stoppage not covered in laws (e.g. injury), start with drop ball where ball was when play stopped. Ball must touch ground before in play (therefore may not be kicked until it touches the ground)

## **LAW 9 BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY**

- Ball is out of play when:
  - It has totally crossed the goal or touchlines in the air or on the ground

[Reminder from Law 1: The lines belong to the area they are marking; for example, the touch and goal lines belong to the field of play.]

  - When the referee has stopped the game
- Ball is in play at all other times including:
  - Rebounding from the goal or corner flag

- Rebounding from the referee or lines person when they are in the field of play
- In the event of an infraction or injury until the referee has stopped play

## LAW 10 METHOD OF SCORING

- A goal is scored when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, between the goal posts, and under the crossbar, provided that no infringement of the Laws has been committed previously by the team scoring the goal.

## LAW 11 OFFSIDE

- There is no offside law in ABYS In-House soccer

## LAW 12 FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

- The opposing team shall be awarded a **DIRECT** free kick from the spot of the foul if a player commits any of the following six offenses in a careless or reckless way (awarded a penalty kick if committed in own penalty area):
  - Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent
  - Trips or attempts to trip an opponent
  - Jumps at an opponent
  - Charges an opponent
  - Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent
  - Pushes an opponent or commits any of the following four offenses
    - Slide tackles
    - Holds an opponent
    - Spits at an opponent
    - Intentionally handles the ball

Use of hands or arms while protecting the body (for girls, this includes protecting the upper body) can be penalized if the referee judges these moves are to trap or direct the ball

- The opposing team shall be awarded an **INDIRECT** free kick if a player commits any of the following offenses:
  - Plays in a dangerous manner (for example, plays the ball while on the ground among other players, or kicks high near a player's face)
  - Blocks the progress of an opponent when not playing the ball
  - Prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his/her hands
  - Commits any other offense not mentioned where a referee stops play to caution or dismiss a player
  - And if the goalkeeper:
    - Keeps possession of the ball more than six seconds
    - Touches the ball with his/her hands after deliberately releasing it into play without the ball's being touched by another player
    - Touches the ball with his/her hands after receiving it directly from a teammate's throw-in.

On goal kicks, goalie punts, or goalie throws, the ball does not touch a player or the ground in own half of field before crossing the half way line.

It shall be legal for a goalkeeper to handle the ball after a teammate deliberately kicks the ball to him/her

## GENERAL GUIDANCE

- For a foul to be called:
  - Must be against an opponent
  - Ball must be in play
- Other unacceptable actions and behavior can be punished only by showing a yellow or red card (or some words if that will suffice)
- Definition of legal charge
  - At least one foot of both players on the ground
  - Shoulder to shoulder

- Player charged within playing distance of the ball
- Elbows down
- Not violent (i.e., not done with excessive force)

- Cards shall not be shown to players except in extreme cases of repeated deliberate misconduct (see below). Instead the referee shall escort misbehaving players to his/her coach, explain the problem to the coach, and request the coach to replace the misbehaving player while the coach teaches the misbehaving player proper conduct. The misbehaving player may reenter the game at a normal substitution time (as always, with the permission of the referee).
- Cards may be shown to coaches who persistently dissent after being requested not to, or fail to prevent inappropriate conduct from the parents and fans of his/her team
- The referee (and anybody else) shall report all serious misconduct by players, coaches, or fans, whether a card was shown or not, to the Referee Director or some other ABYS Board member

- CAUTION (Yellow)

- D - Dissent (words or behavior)
- U - Unsporting behavior
- P - Persistent fouling
- E - Entry or exit to/from the field without referee's permission
- S - Staying back the required distance on corner or free kick, or delaying restart of play

- EJECTION (Red)

- P - Persistent misconduct after getting caution
- A - Abusive language
- V - Violent conduct (including spitting at anybody)
- S - Serious foul play
- F - Fouling or deliberately handling the ball on an obvious goal-scoring opportunity

### **LAW 13 FREE KICK**

- Taken from spot of foul (not where ball is)
- Ball must be stationary (re-kick if not)
- Ball is in play when it has been kicked and moves (and is outside penalty area if kick awarded in kicking team's own penalty area; if touched other than by kicker without having left penalty area, kick retaken because it was never in play)
- U8, U10 - Opponents must be 6 yards from ball (and outside penalty area if kick awarded in kicking team's own penalty area); kick retaken if opponents closer than 6 yards
- U7 - Opponents must be 2 yards from ball (and outside penalty area if kick awarded in kicking team's own penalty area); kick retaken if opponents closer than 2 yards
- Kicker may not retouch ball until it has touched another player from either side
  - Penalty: indirect free kick for other team where ball was retouched
- Any kick awarded in own goal area shall be taken anywhere in the goal area

DIRECT: May score without being touched by another player

INDIRECT: Must be touched by player from either team other than the kicker before a goal is allowed

- If indirect kick awarded to offense in opponents goal area, kick taken from 6 yard line nearest foul. Defenders may stand on goal line between the goal posts.
- The referee shall hold his/her arm straight up to indicate an indirect free kick. The referee's arm shall remain up after the ball is kicked until the ball is touched by a player on either team (in other words, a goal shall not count if scored while the referee's arm is up).
- If ball goes into opponents goal without being touched, goal kick awarded to opponent. If ball goes into own goal without being touched, corner kick awarded to opponents
- The referee at his/her option may allow a second chance (after explaining the rule) if a free kick (or kickoff) is touched a second time before being touched by another player

### **LAW 14 PENALTY KICK**

- There are no penalty kicks in ABYS in-house

- Instead award a direct free kick from the spot of the foul, but no closer than 6 yards to the goal

## **LAW 15 THROW-IN**

- Awarded to the opponents of the player that last touched the ball before it totally crosses the touchline
- Taken where the ball crossed the touch line
- Thrower must face field of play when ball thrown
- Both feet must be on or outside touchline
- Ball must be thrown with both hands evenly
- Ball must be delivered from behind and over his/her head
- If bad throw-in, the other team takes throw-in
- Ball in play when it has entered field of play
- Thrower cannot play ball again until touched by another player (If done, indirect free kick at spot of infraction)
- Goal cannot be scored directly from a throw-in
- Referees may allow (at his/her discretion) a second throw-in attempt after explaining the infraction; the referee shall be consistent
- U7 - There are no throw-ins; the ball shall be kicked in. Opponents must be 2 yards from the kick-in. If the ball is touched by the kicker a second time before touched by any other player, an indirect free kick will be awarded to the opposing team where the ball was touched. (The referee at his/her option may allow a second chance after explaining the rule)

## **LAW 16 GOAL KICK**

- Goal kick results when team sends ball totally over opposing goal line, other than between posts
- Goal kicks shall be taken from within 6 yards of the goal
- Ball not in play until it has left penalty area (therefore, goalie cannot receive ball directly) – kick retaken
- Cannot be retouched by kicker until touched by another player (indirect free kick from spot; if touched inside penalty area, no infraction because ball not in play - kick retaken)

## **LAW 17 CORNER KICK**

- Corner kick results when team sends ball wholly over own goal line, other than between goal posts and under the cross bar.
- Is a direct free kick
- Taken from inside 1 yard quarter circle in corner (the ball may sit on the line)
- Opponents must be at least 6 yards from ball
- In play after ball moves forward
- Kicker cannot retouch ball until it touches another player.  
Penalty: Indirect free kick from spot of infraction

## **Additional Guidelines for ABYS Referees**

### **Three Most Important Things A Referee Must Do!**

- 1. Be there** (write all games, including changes on your calendar; check it each week).  
GET YOUR OWN SUBSTITUTES EARLY IN THE WEEK!!!
- 2. Act like a referee**
  - MOVE! Keep in position
  - Look like a referee
  - Take it seriously, but don't act too self-important
  - Be polite, always, to everybody
  - Look confident (Always look like you know what you're doing, especially when you don't!)
  - Don't be hesitant (change your call quickly if you clearly made a mistake, but look confident in changing it)
  - Blow the whistle loudly (but not long or unnecessarily)
- 3. Know the rules**, Apply the rules consistently, and do not call every trifling foul

### **Eight Things To Bring To Each Game**

1. Uniform
2. Whistle

3. Referee Wallet (red and yellow cards)
4. Watch
5. Coin
6. Pencil
7. Paper
8. One game report card and two referee rating cards

#### **Checklist of Things to Do Before Each Game**

1. Inspect field (holes in nets, corner flags, dangerous areas)
2. Introduce yourself to coaches
3. Inspect players' uniforms and equipment
4. Request linespersons (optional; if used, ask coaches to recruit)
5. Review selected rules with teams (optional)
6. Talk with linespersons (if they are used)
7. Ensure all spectators, including coaches and players are at least one yard behind the touch lines during the game.

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### **BAYS Rules for 11v11 will apply (see [www.BAYS.org](http://www.BAYS.org))**

Note these rules specify two 30 minute halves and a size 4 ball for U11&12.

#### **In addition to (or in modification of) the regular playing rules of soccer, the following special rules for BAYS 8v8 shall apply:**

(Taken from printed version of BAYS 2004 Rulebook, not available on-line yet).

- 1 Instead of 11 players on the field, there shall be eight players, including the goalkeeper.  
A minimum of six players must be present to start a game and a minimum of five players to continue a game.
- 2 Goal Kicks shall be taken from within six yards of the goal line.
- 3 Indirect kicks awarded to the attacking team within the penalty area will be placed at the spot of the infraction, but no closer than six yards from the goal / goal line.

#### **Key differences compared with BAYS 6v6 competition:**

- 1 The offside rule will apply.
- 2 Goal Kicks or any kick / throw by the goalkeeper may cross the halfway line.
- 3 On penalty kicks, the players not taking the kick do not have to stand beyond the halfway line.

#### **Field Dimensions for 8v8:**

(Taken from printed version of BAYS 2004 Rulebook, not available on-line yet):

- 1 Ideal field size is 70v50 yds, with a 16x40 yd penalty area, but this is not a rigid requirement. The penalty mark will be the usual 12 yds.
- 2 Goals of 6 x 18 ft are recommended, but this is not a rigid requirement. They must be anchored securely to the ground.