Ann Arbor Rec and Ed
Youth Soccer League
Fall 2026 Rules

Updated 09/2026

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FIFA rules govern league play except where modified to fit the needs of Ann Arbor Rec and Ed players.

Visit www.FIFA.com for more information about the laws of the game *The goal of the Community Education & Recreation Youth Soccer Program is to provide an enjoyable, healthy leisure experience for program participants. Players should be taught new skills and how to improve throughout the season with the support of the coaches, parents and league. We will not keep standings in the Youth Soccer League. The main objective of the program is to provide each participant with an equal opportunity to learn and develop a passion for the game of Soccer. Thank you for your support!*

1. All players

All players must be registered with Rec & Ed. Unregistered players will not be permitted to play. Coaches are not permitted to add and/or switch players to the roster. Rec & Ed assigns all players to teams. Any coach playing an unregistered player and/or found switching players will face suspension and/or probation in accordance with the Team Sports Policy on Probation, Suspension, and Hearing Procedures.

2. Refund policy

a. Refund requests must be made in writing 24 hours before player's first regularly scheduled game.

b. Refund requests must be emailed to cancel@aaps.k12.mi.us.

c. All refunds are subject to a $10.00 processing fee.

d. No player fee will be refunded after the first scheduled game.

e. Refunds will be paid by check or credited to charge card depending on method of payment, and normally take four to six weeks to process.

3. Blood and bodily fluids

This rule provides guidelines for coaches and referees as to their responsibilities during a game should an injury or illness result in a player losing blood or other body fluids.

a. As soon as the official can see or has her or his attention called to a player who is bleeding, s/he must stop the game **immediately**

b. The injured player must leave the game at that point and be substituted for.

c. The injured player must have the wound cleaned, the bleeding stopped and the wound covered before being allowed to re-enter the game. Any blood-stained clothing must be removed as well.

4. Cancellations

Games are occasionally canceled due to inclement weather or field conditions. If Rec & Ed cancels all games throughout the city on Saturday, announcements will be made on Team Sports Cancellations webpage: https://reced.a2schools.org/sports/home/team-sports-cancellations. If Rec & Ed cancels all games throughout the city on Sundays, announcements will be made between 10:00 am – 12:00 pm. Officials also have the authority to cancel games if weather or field conditions are not suitable for play. Department personnel and the referee are the only officials authorized to cancel games.

Note: When a weather warning is issued for Washtenaw County, during game times, games are cancelled for the day. If a weather warning is issued for Washtenaw County between 4:00pm and 6:00pm during the weekdays, all practices will be cancelled.

When thunder is heard or lightning is seen, games must be immediately suspended. Officials, players, and spectators should seek appropriate shelter during the delay. Officials must not resume play until thunder has not been heard and lightning has not been seen in the local sky for 30 minutes. The occurrence of thunder and lightning is not subject to interpretation or discussion. Thunder is thunder, and lightning is lightning.

5. Make up games

Due to the length of the season, make-up games are not guaranteed.

6. Volunteer AR (Assistant Referee/Official) – 5th to 8th grade only

Each team must provide one adult to serve as a linesperson for each game. The linesperson must meet with the official in a pre-game conference for instructions. Coaches should have this volunteer assigned prior to the game in order to avoid delays.

The assistant referee's only responsibility is to give the direction on throw-in/kick in situations. The head official may overrule the assistant referee's decisions.

Throw-ins should be awarded when the ball completely crosses the line

7. Warm up time

Teams are to warm up prior to their game in an area away from the game field. This is to avoid confusion and/or conflict between the game that is being played and players warming up.

8. Uniforms

All players must wear their team shirt during league games. If a player is not wearing his or her team shirt, s/he is not allowed to play. In cold weather, sweatshirts or jackets MUST be worn under the team shirt. This is so players and the officials are aware of who is on what team.

Exception: If a player is injured, blood stained clothing must be removed. If the injured player is able to continue playing, he/she may play in a shirt other than the team shirt.

9. Equipment

Players may wear soccer shoes, but sneakers are sufficient. Metal cleats/spikes are prohibited. Proper fitting shin guards are mandatory. All players must wear proper fitting shin guards that are worn underneath socks. Shin guards worn over socks are NOT permitted. Baseball cleats, or shoes with an outward facing toe cleat, are NOT permitted. Mouth guards are permitted. Officials will conduct an equipment check before each game.

10. Jewelry, casts, and other accessories

Most exposed jewelry is illegal. Rings, watches, bracelets (friendship included), earrings, chains, or necklaces are illegal with the following exceptions and as long as the official deems it safe.

a) Starter earrings or studs may be worn on newly pierced ears if they are covered with tape or a bandage to the satisfaction of the official.

b) A religious medal may be worn if it is taped to the body and worn under the uniform.

c) Medical alert bracelets or necklaces may be worn if they are taped to the body so the medical alert information still remains visible and accessible if needed.

d) Body piercings not visible to the official are not of concern. If the piercing becomes visible, the official must order the player to remove it.

HAIR ACCESSORIES

Any hair accessory made of metal or hard plastic such as barrettes, hair clips or bobby pins are illegal and may not be worn. However, a player may wear hair beads as long as the hair is tied in a tight bun or adequately covered by a hair net to the satisfaction of the official.

HEADWEAR

a) Players may wear a headband. The headband must be worn on the forehead/crown and cannot exceed a maximum of 2".

b) Under no circumstances are players in any Rec & Ed youth sports program allowed to wear bandanas.

CASTS, SPLINTS, BRACES AND PROSTHESES

a) In Rec & Ed soccer leagues casts, splints, and braces may be worn on the upper extremities as long as they are padded with at least ½" of closed cell, slow-recovery rubber or other material of the same minimum thickness and having similar physical properties. No casts, splints or braces may be worn on the lower extremities.

b)No protective equipment used in any Rec & Ed youth soccer program shall have exposed metal or hard material.

c) Prosthesis may be worn as long as the official's judgment of the prosthesis is no more dangerous to players than the corresponding human body part.

d) It is the responsibility of each coach to inform players and their parents whenever a player is guilty of an infraction of the Youth Sports Equipment and Apparel Rule. Any player who is in violation of the rule may not participate in any Rec & Ed contest until the player is in compliance with the rule. If a player cannot comply with the Youth Sports Equipment & Apparel Rule without significant delay, another player must substitute in for the player or the offending player's team must play short. Note that a player who leaves the game to remove jewelry or illegal apparel may be re-entered as a legal substitute once he/she complies with the equipment and apparel rule.

11. Spectators and teams

The coaches of each team should meet no later than 10 minutes before the game to negotiate spectator and team positioning. If it is convenient, coaches may arrange spectator and team positioning by phone or email prior to the day of the game. The choices appear below.

1) Teams will agree which sideline each of them will have. If the coaches of the two teams cannot agree on the sideline configuration then it will be decided by a coin flip, conducted by the official.

2) Parents will sit on one side of the half. Players and coaches will sit on the other side of the half.

3) Coaches can walk up and down their entire sideline. No coach or person is allowed to stand by the end lines or by the goal.

Notes

All coaches and players are to remain three yards off the touchline for their safety. Parents should remain 3 yards off the touchline for their safety as well as the players. Spectators may be removed from the playing area if their conduct or language is deemed unsportsmanlike by the referee.

12. Sportsmanship and conduct (Parents, Coaches, and Players)

Coaches must emphasize good sportsmanship and behavior before, during and after the game. **There will be no handshakes at the end of play.**
EXCEPTION: Unless both teams agree to do so.

Parents, coaches, and officials should contact Rec & Ed if players and/or coaches are not properly demonstrating sportsmanship. Coaches not emphasizing sportsmanship and players not demonstrating sportsmanship may be suspended and/or placed on probation in accordance with the Team Sports Policy on Probation, Suspension and Hearing Procedures.

For K-4th grade, a yellow or red card may not be shown. However, the official can remove a player for one possession instead of showing a yellow card so the player can speak to the coach (The official should let the player know what foul(s) he/she committed to avoid when they return to play). If a player repeatedly commits fouls and/or endangers other players, knowingly or unknowingly, the official can remove the player for the remainder of the game.

For 5th-8th grade, it's at the official's discretion to show a yellow or red card or adhere to the rules for K-4th grade. If a player receives a yellow, they must go off for at least one possession before returning to play.

Coaches, who in the opinion of the official persistently infringe the laws of the game, show dissent towards an official, or display unsportsmanlike conduct, will be cautioned by the official with a yellow card.

Coaches who, in the opinion of the official, display violent conduct or foul/abusive language will be shown a red card and asked to leave the premises.

Note:

Disparaging language or communication (whether verbal or non-verbal) will not be tolerated from players, coaches or spectators. Should the official hear or see such communication sanctions will be enforced per the guidelines of the "laws of the game". Should an official be informed that such communication has and/or is taking place, s\he should call both coaches together and ask them to address sportsmanship with their respective players and spectators. It is the coach's responsibility to address their parents in regards to this. The official can also ask a parent to leave the premises for unsportsmanlike conduct.

13. Playing time

All players should play for a minimum of half of the game, with the exception below:

> If a team has more than the recommended maximum number of players on the roster, coaches should spread playing time out as evenly as possible.

Parents should contact Rec & Ed if coaches are not abiding by this rule. Coaches not abiding by this rule may be suspended and/or placed on probation in accordance with the Team Sports Policy on Probation, Suspension and Hearing Procedures.

14. Number of players on the field and time guidelines

All games are to begin on time. Referees have the option of shortening the game if a team(s) arrive late. Note: There is a two-minute break between each quarter and a five-minute break at halftime.

> Young 5/Kindergarten & 1st Grade - 40-minute games, 5v5 (no keeper), 10-minute quarters
>
> 2nd - 4th grade - 48-minute games, 6v6 (includes keeper), 12-minute quarters
>
> 5th grade - 48-minute games, 7v7 (includes keeper), 12-minute quarters
>
> Middle School - 48-minute games, 11v11 (includes keeper), 12-minute quarters

Notes

1. If one team is short players, the other team is not required to play short as well. However, if the team has 2 or more subs, that team is **REQUIRED** to loan a player to the short-handed team. The coach loaning the player may rotate several players throughout the game to the other team. In the spirit of the game, the first priority is to allow players to play and enjoy the game.
2. NOTE - In the event one team is severely short players, both teams can combine players and still play, in which the ref will still ref the game, even if it's under the # of players that each team is supposed to have on the field.

15. Goal Size and goalposts

Players must not hang from the goal posts. Yellow and/or red cards will be issued for this potentially destructive conduct.

The size of the goals for grades YK-1st are 4 feet high by 6 feet wide. The size of the goals for grades 2nd-5th are 6.5 feet high by 12 feet wide. The size of the goals for grades 6th-8th are 6.5 feet high by 18.5 feet wide.

16. Soccer ball sizes

K-2 Size 3 ball

3-5 Size 4 ball

Middle School Size 5 ball

17. Positions and Positioning during the game

Coaches must give their players the opportunity to play different positions throughout the season. Players should have the opportunity to play goal if they wish in the leagues that have the keeper position.

For Grades K and 1, we recommend not giving positions but rather encouraging all players to attack and defend. This way, players are not cherry picking by the goal or standing in front of their goal but rather trying to be involved in the game to appropriately learn the game.

18. Starting the game and pregame with the official

5 min prior to the game, the official will meet with teams and coaches to review the rules.

The official may call out to have the first player to raise their hand. The team winning the raised hand then chooses a goal to attack. The other team starts the game with a kick-off.

19. Kick off and half time

A kick off may go forward or backwards off the kick off. Coaches should encourage players to pass to their teammate off the kickoff.

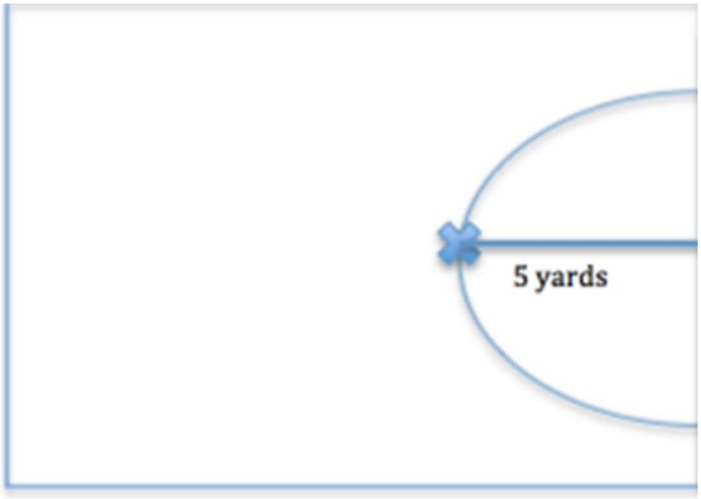
In kindergarten through fourth grades, a team making an incorrect kick-off will have one chance to do it over again correctly. A second violation will result in an indirect kick for the other team from the spot of the infraction.

At the half, teams will switch sides and attack the opposite goal

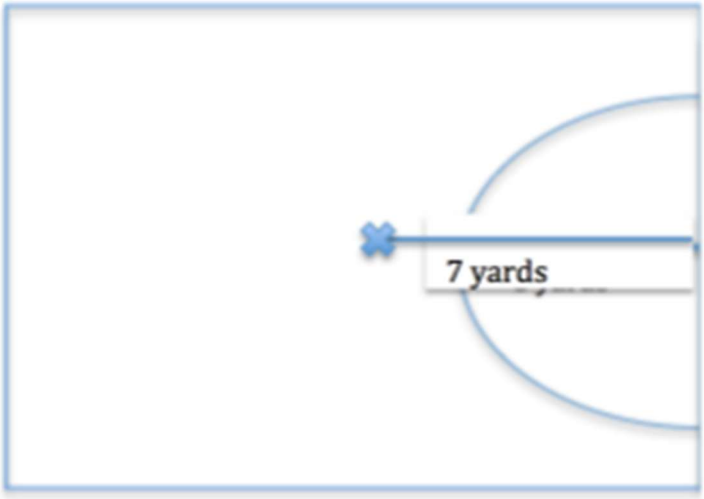
20. Free kicks and penalty kicks

In K-8th grade, FIFA rules apply for free kicks and penalties with the exceptions and clarifications below:

1. PK'S for Kindergarten:
    a. A foul in the arc will result in a direct free kick (Penalty) from the top of the arc (5 yards) with no keeper
        i. All players must be behind the line of the ball

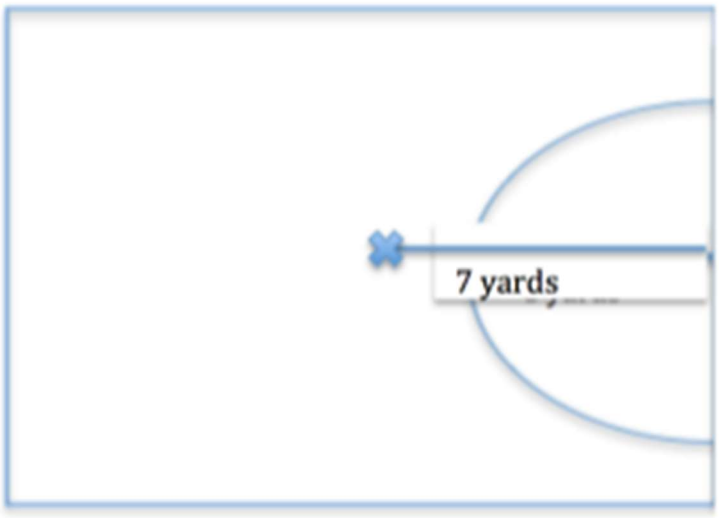


2. PK'S for 1st
    a. A foul in the arc will result in a direct free kick (Penalty) from the penalty marker (7 yards) with no keeper



3. PK'S for 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade

a. A foul in the arc will result in a direct free kick (Penalty) from the penalty marker (7 yards) with the keeper.



A dangerous play or heading (For grades K-5) will result in an indirect free kick

For free kicks in grades K-4th, players on the opposing team must be 5 yards or more from the ball

For free kicks in grades 5th-8th grade, players on the opposing team must be 10 yards or more from the ball

Note: A goal may be scored directly from a kick-off, goal-kick, or corner kick.

21. Goalkeeper and Goal kicks

Goal Keeper - Y5, Kindergarten and 1st

- There will not be a keeper
- ***Players may go into the arc/goal area when the play involves chances/plays that can go to the goal. However, coaches are encouraged to help keep players away from the goal and/or arc and play and position players based on where the ball is)***

Goal kicks

When the ball goes completely over the end line, a field player has two options to restart the play. The player may:

1. Place the ball on or anywhere in the arc and pass the ball in
2. Dribble the ball out of the arc

NOTE – Defending players must be 5 yards from the arc and the ball is not live until it comes out of the arc

Goal Keeper - 2nd - 4th grade - Each team will have a goalkeeper

1. A player may not play more than 2 Quarters in goal per game 2. Once the keeper has possession of the ball, they can:
   a. Throw the ball out with their hands
   b. Pass the ball to a teammate
   c. Dribble out of the goal box area
3. Keepers are not allowed to punt the ball, drop punt, or bounce and punt the ball
4. Once a keeper has possession, no defenders are allowed in the arc until the keeper passes or throws the ball out of the arc or dribbles outside of the arc
5. Referees will encourage the keeper to get the ball in play within 6 seconds
6. Otherwise, FIFA rules apply

Goal kicks

When the ball goes completely over the end line, the goalkeeper has two options to restart the play.

1. Place the ball on or anywhere in the arc and pass the ball in
2. Throw the ball out of the arc

NOTE – Defending players must be 5 yards from the arc and the ball is not live until it comes out of the arc

Goal Keeper - 5th-8th grade

- Each team will have a goalkeeper

Notes - FIFA rules apply

22. Handball

Play is whistled stopped when the ball is **deliberately** handled by a player other than the keeper. Unintentional touching of the ball should not be whistled and play should continue. It is at the referee's discretion as to if a hand ball is deliberate or unintentional.

23. Heading

In K-5th grade, heading is NOT allowed, unless contact is accidental. This is at the referee's discretion. If a player heads the ball intentionally, the result is an indirect free kick for the opposing team from where the ball was headed.

Note – Heading should NOT be taught in grades K-5

24. Off-side

K – 4th grade – There is no offsides

Note – In the spirit of the game, coaches should not have players purposefully cherry picking to score goals.

5th – 8th grade – There is offsides, FIFA rule will apply

25. Slide Tackling

For grades K-5, no slide tackling is allowed. Sliding to block a shot or pass is allowed, if the official deems it safe and no contact with the player is made.

If a player slide tackles, an indirect free kick is given to the opposing team. If the official deems the action dangerous/reckless, a yellow card will be given (Even if not shown) and the player must remain off until the end of the quarter (Note – 5thto 8th grade, the player receiving a yellow must go off for one possession and then can reenter). After a yellow (Whether the card is shown or not, it's at the official's discretion to issues a red card (Shown or not shown) if the player slide tackles again in a reckless manner.

For grades 6-8, FIFA rules apply for slide tackling

26. Substitutions

To maximize participation of all players, frequent substitution is encouraged. After receiving permission from the referee, either team may substitute during any dead ball or stoppage of play.

All players must enter the field at the half way line and not until the player they are subbing for has come off the field

Note: As the only official timekeeper, the referee may "add time" if s/he feels a coach is wasting time during substitutions. However, should the referee be forced to add time, the coach must be warned for time wasting upon the first occurrence and cautioned upon the second occurrence.

27. Throw ins, Kick ins, and Corner kicks

Throw ins/Kicks

Grades K-1

- No throw ins, there will be kick ins

  For kick ins, a player may place the ball on or just behind the line ○ The player's feet may not go all the way on the field. If it does, it is an illegal kick in. The player will have one chance to try again before the ball, is then, turned over to the opposing team.

Note – Kick ins are indirect and opposing players must be 5 yards from the ball

Grades 2-8

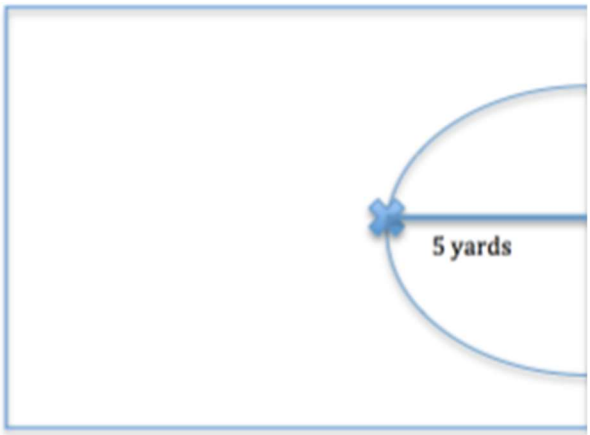
- FIFA rules apply

Note – Throw ins are indirect

Corners

Grades K/1

- If any ball goes out of bounds for a "kick in" or "corner" past the hash mark (Noted below in red), the result is a kick in at the Hash mark. This will be marked on the field. We want to encourage players to pass the ball from the "kick in" and not shoot on goal (A kick in is indirect).



Grades 2-8

- FIFA rules apply

29. Injuries and other stoppages

Play is stopped in the case of an injury, inclement weather, or if the referee feels the environment is unsafe. **Upon noticing or being informed of an injured player the referee must stop play regardless of the advantage/disadvantage situation.**

Play is restarted with a dropped ball at the location when the referee stopped play. If a team clearly has position, we encourage the fair play rule where the opposing team kicks it back to the other team.

30. Yellow and Red Cards

For yellow and red cards, the cards themselves may not actually be shown, but the official may make it clear to the coach that the player is coming off for a yellow card offense.

Notes

a. For K-4th grade, a yellow or red card may not be shown. However, the official can remove a player for the remaining quarter instead of showing a yellow card so the player can speak to the coach (The official should let the player know what foul(s) he/she committed). If a player repeatedly commits fouls and/or endangers other players, knowingly or unknowingly, the official can remove the player for the remainder of the game but not show a red or show a red card and then remove the player from the game. It's a the official's discretion.

b. For 5th-8th grade, it's at the official's discretion to show a yellow or red card or adhere to the rules for K-4th grade. The exception is if a player receives a yellow, they must go off for at least one possession before returning to play.

c. Again, this is at the official's discretion but the goal here, for all ages, is to teach players what is acceptable and what is not acceptable during the game. Most younger players are not purposely reckless, but when it endangers other players, it must be called and the official and coaches must use it as a teaching moment so players continue to learn and grow

31. Field Sizes

Y5/Kindergarten..80x105 feet
1st Grade……80x105 feet
2nd Grade……..90x135 feet
3rd & 4th Grade….90x150 feet
5th Grade……..120x160 feet
Middle School……..195x135 feet

COED Team 1st/2nd Grade will follow 1st grade rules, <u>except a goalkeeper is allowed</u>

Team Sports Staff

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