

# MINI SOCCER AT A GLANCE

## 2024/2025 season:

	U7	U8	U9	U10
<u>Max permitted format</u>	5v5	5v5	7v7	7v7
<u>Ball Size</u>	3	3	3	3
<u>Offside</u>	No	No	No	No
<u>Throw Ins</u>	No	No	No	Yes
<u>Pass or Dribble In</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
<u>Back Pass Rule</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>Corners</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>Retreat Line</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>Power Play</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>Deliberate Heading Allowed</u>	No – if occurs an indirect free kick to the opposition	No – if occurs an indirect free kick to the opposition	No – if occurs an indirect free kick to the opposition	Yes unless league has opted to include U10s

## 2025/2026 season:

	U7	U8	U9	U10
<u>Max permitted format</u>	5v5	5v5	7v7	7v7
<u>Ball Size</u>	3	3	3	3
<u>Offside</u>	No	No	No	No
<u>Throw Ins</u>	No	No	No	No
<u>Pass or Dribble In</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>Back Pass Rule</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>Corners</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>Retreat Line</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>Power Play</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>Deliberate Heading Allowed</u>	No – if occurs an indirect free kick to the opposition	No – if occurs an indirect free kick to the opposition	No – if occurs an indirect free kick to the opposition	No – if occurs an indirect free kick to the opposition

## **Number of Players**

- U7s – 8s: the maximum number of players per team is 5v5 with a squad of 10 or less.
- U9s – 10s: the maximum number of players per team is 7v7 with a squad of 14 or less

## **Playing Equipment**

- Children cannot play Development Football without shin pads.
- These should be covered entirely by knee length socks. [Click here](#) for guidance on use of shin pads in grassroots football.
- Goalkeepers should wear a different coloured shirt to the rest of the team.
- Footwear should be appropriate for the playing surface – no metal studs on 3 and AGP pitches.
- If the weather is poor then players should wear appropriate clothing, but hoodies are not allowed

## **Referee**

- Any person who referees a game of Development Football has the authority to apply the Laws of Mini-Soccer even if they are not a fully qualified referee.
- The referee should always help the players to learn the game by explaining their decisions.
- Assistant referees are not required for Development Football

## **Playing Time**

Age maximum playing time in any one day:

U7s - U8s 40 minutes

U9s - U10s 60 minute

Children should not exceed the maximum playing time for their age in any one day. It is the responsibility of the junior club and/or the child's parent or carer to ensure this.

- Each league is allowed to determine its own playing time up to the maximum allowed.
- Half time should not be more than five minutes.
- Development games can be split into quarters within the maximum playing time allowed.
- For tournament football see the Standard Code of Rules for Youth Competitions.

## **Start and Restart of Play**

- A kick off from the centre mark starts the game, or restarts it after a goal is scored.
- It can be taken in any direction.
- The opposition must be five yards away and in their own half
- In Mini-Soccer a goal cannot be scored directly from a kick off or a dropped ball.
- In special circumstances a drop ball is used to restart the game, such as after an injury.
- If the game has stopped with the ball in the penalty area, the drop ball should be taken on the penalty area line.

## **Ball In and Out of Play**

- The goal line and touchlines are part of the field of play. The ball must be entirely over these lines to be out of play.

- If an attacker is the last player to touch the ball over the goal line, a goal kick is given.
- If a defender is the last player to touch the ball over the goal line, a corner kick is given.
- If a player touches the ball over the touchline, a “Pass or Dribble-In” is given to the opposing team.

### **Methods of Scoring**

- A goal is scored when the ball completely crosses the goal line between the posts and under the crossbar of the goal.
- If a foul or hand ball occurs the goal shall be disallowed

### **Offside**

- There is no offside in Development Football.
- The children can be in any area of the pitch at any time apart from when the Retreat Line is played.

### **Fouls & Misconduct**

- Free kicks are awarded when a foul is committed as in older age football.
- In mini soccer all free kicks are direct, except when a deliberate header has occurred.
- A goalkeeper is not allowed to pick the ball up from a back pass or a throw in.
- If this happens a free kick should be given on the penalty area line closest to where the incident occurs.
- For Under 7s to Under 9s (2024/25 season) and for Under 7s to Under 10s (2025/26 season); Deliberately heading the ball is an offence punishable by an indirect free kick. The indirect free kick is taken at the point where the ball was deliberately headed, except: Where a player deliberately heads the ball within their own penalty area, the referee will stop the game and restart with an indirect free kick to the opposition from the nearest side line of the penalty area where the offence took place.
- As with all other aspects of Development Football the children should be learning the game. Coaches in training, and referees on the day, should try to make sure the children understand all of the above

### **Free Kicks**

- For all free kicks defending players must be 5 yards from the ball

### **Penalty Kick**

- If a foul is committed in the penalty area by a defender a penalty kick will be awarded.
- All players except the defending goalkeeper and kicker must be outside the penalty area and at least 5 yards from the penalty mark.
- The ball must be kicked forward.

### **Pass or Dribble-in**

- When the whole of the ball passes over the touchline, on the ground or in the air, instead of a throw-in, a pass-in or dribble-in is awarded.
- A kicker taking a pass-in may choose to touch the ball again before it is touched by another player.

### **At the moment of delivering the ball:**

- The ball must be stationary on the touchline at the point where it left the pitch; only the kicker may be off the pitch.
- All opponents must stand at least 5 yards from the point on the touchline where the pass-in or dribble-in is to be taken. A goal cannot be scored directly from a pass-in. The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves.

U10s only in 2024/25: Normal throw-ins are allowed.

### **Goal Kicks**

- If an attacking player kicks the ball over the goal line a goal kick is awarded to the defending team.
- A goal kick can be taken from any point within the penalty area and by any player from the team with the ball.
- The team without the ball must retreat to their own half until the ball is in play.
- This is known as the Retreat Line.
- Once the ball is in play, the team without the ball can try and win it back.
- As with all the Laws of Development Football, the referee should help the players learn the game.

### **Corner Kicks**

- If a defending player kicks the ball over the goal line a corner is awarded to the attacking team.
- The defending players must remain at least 5 yards from the ball until it is in play.
- The player taking the corner may not touch the ball again until it has touched another player

### **Power Play**

**Development football is designed to create the best learning and fun experience for young players. To ensure an imbalance in ability does not spoil this, the FA has approved 'Power Play' as an option that mini-soccer and youth leagues can adopt.**

- If a team is losing by a four goal difference they can put an additional player on – so 5v5 becomes 6v5.
- If the score returns to less than a four goal difference the team takes off a player. It does not have to be the last player to come on
- If a team goes on to be losing by a six goal difference a further additional player can be added – so 6v5 becomes 7v5.
- The main aim of the Power Play option is that all players are being challenged and enjoying the game.
- Power Play is available through all mini soccer football formats 5v5 and 7v7.