



Referee Field Guide for 6U and 8U Games

1. General guidance

- a. Your #1 job is to make the game **Safe, Fair, and Fun** for the kids.
- b. Smile and be friendly when on the field. Educate players about the Laws of the Game by verbalizing all your decisions. Example: When a player picks up a rolling ball with their hands during play, you whistle, and tell them that in soccer they can't use their hands when the ball is in play, only their feet. Don't coach though. Don't tell players where they should play or what they should do. That's the coach's job.
- c. Start the game on time and end on time! This is crucial! Any reason to delay your game should cut into your game's time and not delay the start of the next game.
- d. Don't stop your watch. Let your stopwatch time run through fouls, goals, substitutions, etc., for the entire half.
- e. Keep the game moving! The half goes by very fast. Don't be the source of delays by over-talking to players, being picky about where a restart should be, or having the team do more than one re-take of a restart. Let the kids play.
- f. Hustle the kids along to set up for kick-offs (especially after a goal), goal kicks, and corner kicks.
- g. Ball management: try to get the players to retrieve ball when it leaves the field. Similarly, get them to place the ball at the proper place (with your direction) for restarts (kick offs, kick-ins, throw-ins, goal kicks, corner kicks, indirect free kicks, etc.).
- h. Understand that 6U and 8U players will need your help to learn what to do.

2. Pre-game activities and duties

- a. Come equipped with referee shirt, a watch, whistle, flipping coin, pencil or pen and paper.
- b. Arrive at the field about 20 minutes before game time.
- c. Inspect field and equipment for safety. Check field for holes (ankle breakers!) and have a coach mark any bad spots with flat cones and tell players to avoid those areas.
- d. Inspect players for proper shinguards and shoes, and ensure that players are not wearing jewelry and other unsafe items. Taping over jewelry is *not* allowed.
- e. **Note:** We do not use game cards in 6U-8U. Referees do not need to record or submit any paperwork.
- f. Get and inspect a game ball from home team. No rough edges or surfaces. Size 3 ball.
- g. Conduct coin toss at center circle with team captains.
 - i. Do introductions and captains' handshakes.
 - ii. Toss the coin and let the visiting team call "heads" or "tails" while the coin is in the air.
 - iii. Winner of coin toss chooses either 1) which direction to attack or 2) to kick off. The opposing team gets the other choice. At the start of the

second half, the teams switch sides, and the team that did not kick off at the start of the first half gets to kick off to start the second half (in the same direction).

- iv. Record team kicking off and direction.

3. Kick-off

- a. Count the number of players (4v4, but 3 players is enough for a game). Teams don't have to play with an equal number of players on the field. Player sharing from one team to another is fine.
- b. Check that players are in their own half of the field. Ask them which goal they are kicking toward and have them point in the correct direction.
- c. Check that defenders are outside center circle. If a center circle is not lined, assure that opponents are at least 5 yards from the ball.
- d. Start your watch (check to make sure it is running!) and then whistle for the kick-off. This is the recommended approach in order to make sure the watch is running and you avoid the panic of finding mid-way through the game that you forgot to start it.
- e. If the defending team encroaches (enters the center circle or steps across the half-way line) before the team has kicked the ball, blow the whistle, educate the players, and retake the kick-off.
- f. The kick-off can go in any direction.
- g. If the player who kicks-off touches the ball a second time before anyone else ("double touch"), blow the whistle, educate the player, and allow them to kick-off again (Law says to give indirect free kick to the other team. At this level, we educate and encourage second tries). If an infraction occurs for a third time and doesn't seem to affect the game (i.e., is trifling), let it go and **KEEP THE GAME MOVING!**

4. Stopping play and how to restart play

- a. In general, let them play and interfere as little as possible. Whistle only if necessary (e.g., all fouls, or when kids don't recognize that the ball is out of play and are continuing to play the ball). State the nature of stoppage and the proper restart and team taking the restart, e.g., "tripping by green team, blue takes an indirect free kick," or "out on blue, throw-in for green," or "out off red, goal kick for yellow."
- b. **Kick-in (6U)** — When used: ball passes completely over the touchline, in the air or the ground. Signal with your arm outstretched at a 45-degree angle pointing in the direction that the team taking the kick is attacking, and say which color team gets the kick, e.g., "Kick-in for Green." If you forget which way Green is going, just say the words and don't point. You can also indicate the proper spot to take the kick-in if there is any confusion, but no need to be picky.
- c. **Throw-in (8U)** — Similar to above for kick-ins. Don't be too picky about throw-ins. Trying giving instructions before the throw-in to improve the chances of success, like, "try and keep both feet on the ground, ok?" or "hold the ball with two hands and throw it over your head." Opponents must be at least 2 yards away and cannot distract or impede the thrower; encourage them to back up if they are close. A goal cannot be scored from a throw-in.
- d. **Goal kick** — When used: ball passes over the goal line – and not a goal, last

touched by an attacker. Spot the ball about 5-6 yards out from the goal line and 1-3 yards to the outside of the goal post closest to the side it went out on. Assure that opponents are back at least 5 yards from the ball. The ball is in play once it is kicked and clearly moves.

- e. **Corner kick** — When used: ball passes over the goal line – and not a goal, last touched by a defender. Help place the ball, if necessary, within a yard of the corner (imagine a corner arc). Assure that opponents are at least 5 yards from the ball. The ball is in play once it is kicked and clearly moves.
- f. **Goal:** Say e.g., “goal for blue, green kick off”; have the team that will kick off bring the ball to the center and place the ball at the center mark. Record the goal, quickly get everyone in position (their own side of the field, defenders out of the center circle), move out of the way, and whistle for the kickoff.
- g. **Fouls (Indirect Free Kick restart):** For fouls such as kicking, tripping, charging, pushing, holding, deliberate handling, dangerous play, deliberate heading, etc. Whistle, then point in the direction that the kicking team is attacking, while saying the nature of foul and which team gets the free kick. If you are momentarily confused about the direction of the restart, just say which team gets the free kick. All fouls result an Indirect Free Kick in 6U and 8U – that means a goal cannot be scored directly from this kick (Direct Free Kicks will be used beginning in 10U). Spot the ball in the general location of the foul. Assure that opponents are at least 5 yards from the ball. For all free kicks by the attacking team near the opponent’s goal, move the ball back (away from the goal) to a point about 10 yards (6U) or about 15 yards (8U) from the goal. Why? Since we are not using goalkeepers, the defenders will be standing on the goal line to stop the kick. By moving the ball back, it provides the defending team more time to react to a ball kicked at them and avoid an injury from the ball hitting them in the face, stomach, etc. The ball is in play once it is kicked and clearly moves.

5. Substitutions

- a. Substitution opportunities occur:
 - i. About mid-way through the first half,
 - ii. Half-time,
 - iii. About mid-way through the second half, and
 - iv. Injury (for the injured player).
- b. About mid-way through each half (6U: 5 min; 8U: 10 min), look for natural stoppage of play, such as kick-in in 6U, throw-in in 8U, goal kick, or corner kick. If no natural stoppage occurs around this time, stop play when ball is around the midfield area. Whistle and yell “Substitution break, one minute!” Do not stop play during an attacking/goal scoring opportunity — wait a few more seconds until the ball is played out toward mid-field/away from goal.
- c. After 30 seconds, begin to encourage the coaches to get their players back on the field. Note: this is a substitution/water break, not a time for coaches to talk strategy. Allow one minute for substitution.
- d. Restart game according to the nature of original natural stoppage. If the ball was in play when you stopped the game, then restart with a dropped ball at the place where the ball was when you stopped play.

6. Injuries

- a. Referee blows the whistle to stop the game immediately when a player is injured in 6U and 8U games. You must protect the child.
- b. Assess the injury; call the coach on to handle it if more than just a minor “owie”.
- e. If not serious, but the player is slow to respond to whether they want to continue playing, or there is blood that needs to be dealt with, have coach walk player off the field to deal with the injury, so that the game can continue. Game time is running! Don’t stop the watch or add time on for injuries (the next game needs to start on time).
- f. If you stop play for an injury, restart with a dropped ball at the location where the BALL was when you blew the whistle (not where the injury occurred). The only exception is when the ball is less than 6 yards from the goal when play is stopped. In this case, you move the dropped ball restart back from the original spot out about 6-8 yards from the goal line. If you stop for injury at a restart, continue with the original restart.
- g. A coach can substitute for an injured player at that time or wait, play down a player, and return the injured player to field when the player is able to return.

7. Half-time

- a. Whistle 2 tweets and signal with your arm out stretched and pointing toward the center circle for half time. Yell “Half-time!”
- b. Duration of each half (there are two halves in a game):
 - i. 6U: 11 minutes (10 half +1 minute for substitutions);
 - ii. 8U: 21 minutes (20 half +1 minute for substitutions).
 - iii. Never stop your watch within a half. Let it run and just add the 1 minute for substitution break to the total time allowed for each half.
- c. Gather the game ball.
- d. Record the half-time score.
- e. Allow 5 minutes for the half-time break. Start encouraging players onto the field after the 4-minute mark so that kick-off can happen on time.
- f. Ensure teams switch sides for second-half kick-off.
- g. The team that didn’t take the kick-off in the first half takes the second half kick-off.
- h. Make sure to restart your watch again (from zero) for the second half.

8. End of game

- a. Whistle 3 tweets and signal with your arm outstretched pointing toward the center circle for the end of game. Yell “That’s Game” or something to that effect.
- b. Gather the game ball and return to the coach.
- c. Since there won’t be game cards to report match issues on, contact the Referee Administrator (refereeadmin@davisayso.org) if there are any issues/problems with coaches/parents.
- d. Watch the players’ handshakes to ensure sportsmanship is observed by all.

9. Special rules for this age group

- a. **No goalkeepers in 6U or 8U.** Be aware of players who are playing as a “De facto goalkeeper” where they stand in front of their own goal and never move, no matter

where the ball is during play. Don't confuse this with defenders playing near the goal or in the goal when the attackers/ball is nearby. That's proper defense. The objective is to have the kids involved with the game, and not stand back and guard the goal when the ball/opponents are far from their goal. Talk to the coach if you feel a kid is playing as a "de facto goal keeper" and remind the coach that they can't play in that role and encourage them to make the player more active, some kids have natural defensive tendencies though, so encourage, but be tolerant.

- b. **No deliberate heading.** No deliberate heading is allowed in 12U and younger. This is a special safety rule. The restart if this occurs is an indirect free kick for the opposing team where the heading occurred.

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