

# 5U/6U Guidelines

**Ball:** size 3 is used for 5U/6U games

**Players:** Play 3 vs 3 with no goalkeepers

**Player Equipment:** Shoes and shin guards (covered by the socks) are **mandatory** at all practices and games.

**Playing Time:** Players should play a minimum of two periods per game and no player should play four periods until everyone has played three. The game consists of four 5-minute periods with a halftime break of 5 minutes.

**Substitutions:** Between periods, at halftime, and for injuries

**Start of Play:** The game should be started with a kick-off in the middle of the field.

**Kick-off:** The team that wins the coin toss can choose to take the kick-off or which goal to attack. Opponents must be ten feet from the center mark while the kick-off is in progress. Do not insist the opponent always be ten feet from the ball, as this is just a guide to give the kicker room to kick the ball without it immediately hitting an opponent. The ball is in play the moment it moves in any direction.

**Ball In and Out of Play:** The ball is out of play in all age group games when it completely crosses the touch line (side line) or goal line (end line), either on the ground or in the air.

**Kick-In:** A kick-in is awarded when the ball passes over the touch line or goal line. It is taken by the opponent of the team that last touched the ball. Opponents should be ten feet from the ball.

**Method of Scoring:** A goal is awarded when the ball completely crosses the goal line into the goal.

**Fouls:** The following, if done deliberately, are the fouls most likely to occur in 5U/6U games: kicking, tripping, pushing, holding, handling the ball, and dangerous play. Players at this age often kick one another as they are yet to possess total coordination. Officials must remember that there is no need to stop play for technical violations that do not interrupt the flow of the game. Keep the fun going and let them play. Explain how to play better; never shame. However, some players may need a 'time out,' and coaches must be aware and work cooperatively with each other.

**Pushing or Shoving:** Pushing fouls can potentially become problematic. The criteria for a foul remains the same regardless of the age level. An offense becomes a foul when it is committed in a manner considered to be careless, reckless, or using excessive force. Players may touch other players and are allowed to feel around them to know where other players are. Older players often run with their arms outstretched. This is acceptable, so long as they do not shove or push off. Often, a gentle reminder that pushing is dangerous is all that is needed.

**Hand Ball:** A hand ball infraction occurs when a player handles the ball deliberately. The 'hand' includes the entire arm up to the top of the shoulder. Instinctive, self-protective reactions are not penalized at this young age. Accidental contact (ball striking hand or arm with no intent by the player) is **not** an offense and should **not** be penalized.

**No Heading:** Consistent with the US Soccer mandates on heading the ball, heading is banned for all divisions 12U and below in both practices and matches. Any heading results in an indirect kick for the opposing team.

**5U/6U Officials:** Officials should briefly explain any infringements to the player(s) and encourage proper play and sporting behavior. As with all games, every effort should be made to keep the game moving and free from stoppages for doubtful infractions. Let them play and enjoy.