



# Small Sided Laws of the Game

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Supersedes all previous versions

## Table of Contents

|                                                 |    |
|-------------------------------------------------|----|
| Introduction.....                               | 2  |
| Law 1: The Field of Play .....                  | 3  |
| Law 2: The Ball.....                            | 4  |
| Law 3: The Players .....                        | 5  |
| Law 4: The Players' Equipment .....             | 6  |
| Law 5: The Referee .....                        | 7  |
| Law 6: The Other Match Officials.....           | 8  |
| Law 7: The Duration of the Match .....          | 8  |
| Law 8: The Start and Restart of Play .....      | 8  |
| Law 9: The Ball In and Out of Play.....         | 10 |
| Law 10: Determining the Outcome of a Match..... | 10 |
| Law 11: Offside .....                           | 10 |
| Law 12: Fouls .....                             | 11 |
| Law 13: Free Kicks .....                        | 12 |
| Law 14: The Penalty Kick .....                  | 13 |
| Law 15: The Pass-In.....                        | 14 |
| Law 16: The Goal Kick.....                      | 15 |
| The Retreat Line .....                          | 16 |
| Law 17: The Corner Kick .....                   | 16 |



## Introduction

The following Small Sided Laws of the Game are the Laws for use in Small Sided Games in the Province of Ontario. These Laws were revised based on the following principles:

To better reflect the game that is being played in many venues, leagues, and competitions across Ontario.

- To simplify the understanding of the game for both players and referees.
- To improve the technical quality of play in the small-sided game.
- To encourage participation and enjoyment in a safe and controlled environment.

Underlined content indicates Law Amendments.



## Law 1: The Field of Play

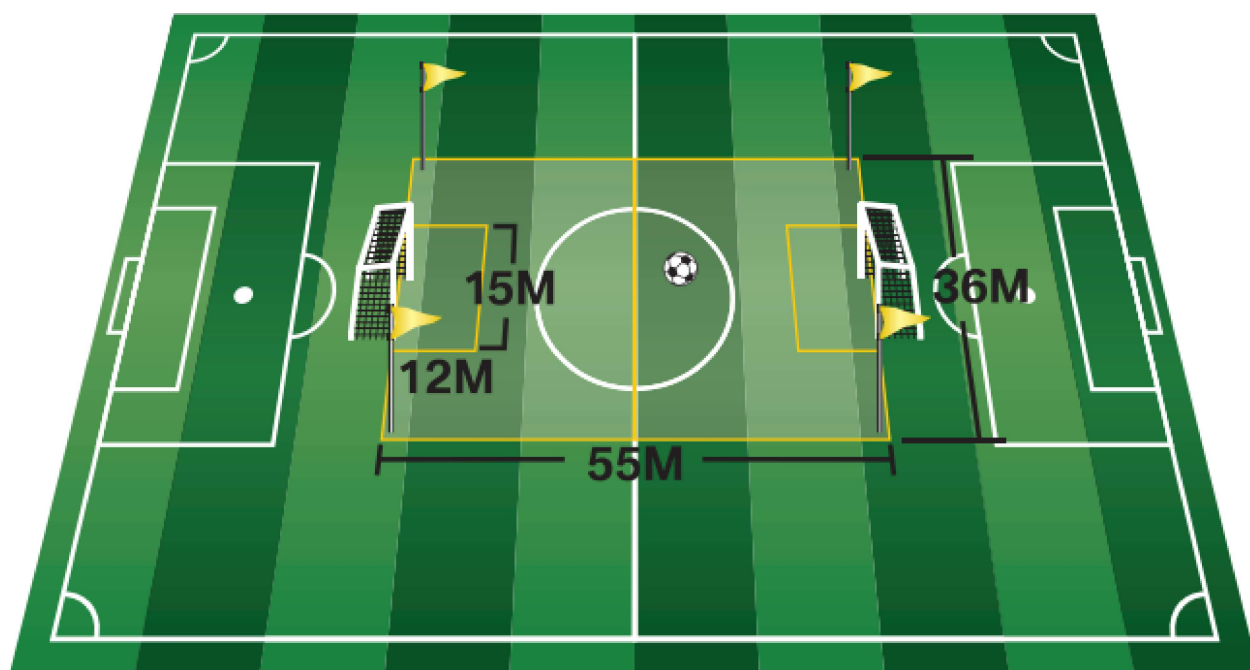
### Field Markings

The field of play must be rectangular and marked with lines or flat field markers. The lines or markers belong to the areas of which they are boundaries.

The two longer lines are called touch lines; the two shorter lines are called goal lines.

The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line, which joins the midpoint of the two touch lines.

The field and goal dimensions outlined below shall be considered as desirable guidelines. Failure to conform to the recommended field and goal dimensions shall not be the subject of protest. It is understood and agreed that clubs/teams may be unable to provide the desired fields, equipment, etc. Flexibility is understood and allowed.



### Dimensions

The field of play must be rectangular. The touch line must be longer than the goal line. Recommended field dimensions are as follows:

| Width                               | Length                               |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 30 m – 36 m<br>(98.42ft – 118.11ft) | 40 m – 55 m<br>(131.23ft – 180.44ft) |

### The Corner Area

The corner area is defined by a quarter circle with a radius of 1 m (1 yrd.) from each corner flag post drawn inside the field of play. Corner flags are mandatory.

## The Goal Area

The goal area is the same as the penalty area.

## The Penalty Area

Two lines are drawn at right angle to the goal line, five (5) metres (or six (6) yards) from the inside of each goal post. These lines extend into the field of play for a distance of twelve (12) metres (or 13 yards) and are joined by a line parallel with the goal line. The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is the penalty area.

Within each penalty area, a penalty mark is made nine (9) metres (or ten (10) yards) from the midpoint between the goalposts and equidistant to them.

## Penalty Arc

An **optional** penalty arc with a radius of five (5) metres (or six (6) yards) from each penalty mark is drawn outside the penalty area.

## Flagposts

A flagpost, not less than 1.5 m high, with a non-pointed top and, a flag must be placed in each corner.

## Goals

A goal must be placed on the centre of each goal line.

A goal consists of two vertical posts equidistant from the corner flagposts and joined at the top by a horizontal crossbar or two flat markers equidistant from the corner flags.

The size for goals is as follows:

| Width        | Height      |
|--------------|-------------|
| 4.8m (16 ft) | 1.8m (6 ft) |

Safety: Goals (including portable goals) must be firmly secured to the ground.

## Law 2: The Ball

Size 4 or 5 light balls can be used

### Requirements for size 5 light balls:

| Requirement   | Circumference                                            |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Shape         | Spherical                                                |
| Composition   | Leather or Suitable Material                             |
| Weight        | 350-370g                                                 |
| Circumference | 68-70cm                                                  |
| Pressure      | 8.5 lbs/sq. in – 15.6 lbs/sq. in<br>0.6 – 1.1 atmosphere |



If the ball becomes defective during the match, play is stopped until a replacement ball is found. Play is restarted by dropping the replacement ball at the place where the original ball became defective.

If the ball becomes defective at a kick-off, free kick, goal kick, corner kick or kick-in, the restart is retaken.

If the ball becomes defective during a penalty kick as it moves forward and before it touches a player, crossbar or goalposts, the penalty kick is retaken.

## Law 3: The Players

A match is played by two teams, and one player from each team must be a goalkeeper. The minimum, maximum number of players and roster size are listed below:

| Minimum number of players | Maximum number of players | Maximum Roster Size |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| 5                         | 7                         | 12                  |

If a team has fewer than five (5) players because one or more players has deliberately left the field of play, the referee is not obliged to stop play and the advantage may be played, but the match must not resume after the ball has gone out of play if a team does not have the minimum number of five (5) players on the field of play.

## Substitutions

Unlimited substitutions may be made throughout the game. All substitutions are only allowed at the discretion of the referee, who shall be advised of all substitutions.

Substitutions may be made on any stoppage.

## Offences and Sanctions

The coach and other officials named on the team list (with the exception of players or substitutes) are team officials. Anyone not named on the team list as a player, substitute or team official is an outside agent.

If a team official, substitute, or outside agent enters the field of play, the referee must:

- only stop play if there is interference with play
- have the person removed when play stops

If play is stopped and the interference was by:

- a team official or substitute, play restarts with an indirect free kick or penalty kick
- an outside agent, play restarts with a dropped ball

If the ball is going into the goal and the interference does not prevent a defending player from playing the ball, the goal is awarded if the ball enters the goal (even if the contact was made with the ball) unless the ball enters the opponents' goal.



## Goal Scored with an Extra Person on the Field of Play

If, after a goal is scored, the referee realizes, before play restarts, or an extra person was on the field of play when the goal was scored:

The referee must disallow the goal if the extra person was:

- A player, substitute, or team official of the team that scored the goal; play is restarted with a free kick from the position of the extra person
- An outside agent who interfered with play unless a goal results as outlined above in 'extra persons on the field of play'; play is restarted with a dropped ball

The referee must allow the goal if the extra person was:

- A player, substitute, or team official of the team that conceded the goal
- An outside agent who did not interfere with play

If, after a goal is scored and play has restarted, the referee realizes an extra person was on the field of play when the goal was scored, the goal cannot be disallowed. If the extra person is still on the field of play, the referee must:

- Stop play
- Have the extra person removed
- Restart with a dropped ball or free kick, as appropriate

The referee must report the incident to appropriate authorities.

## Law 4: The Players' Equipment

Players must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous to themselves or other players.

Basic compulsory equipment shall consist of:

- A jersey or shirt with sleeves – pinnies are also accepted
- Shorts
- Socks
- Appropriate footwear
- Shin guards

Shin guards must:

- Be covered by the socks
- Be made of a suitable material
- Provide a reasonable degree of protection

Colours:

- The two teams must wear colours that distinguish them from each other and the referee
- Each goalkeeper must wear colours which are distinguishable from the other players and the referee. Pinnies/bibs are recommended to save jersey switching.



Non-uniform clothing is allowed based on weather conditions, but uniforms must still distinguish teams.

A player who is asked to leave the field of play because of defective or dangerous equipment may not re-enter the field of play until the referee is satisfied that the equipment is permissible. The equipment may only be inspected during a stoppage in play.

Jewelry is not permitted and cannot be taped. Medic Alert bracelets and Medic Alert necklaces are the exceptions, provided that they are fastened securely, so as not to bring danger to any other player. The referee should be aware of any player that is wearing one of these.

Any hair apparel must be of soft fabric, no plastic or metal items are to be worn. Sports hijabs / headscarves are permitted.

Referees have the final say on the safety of equipment.

## Law 5: The Referee

### The Authority of the Referee

Each match is controlled by an Ontario Soccer-accredited referee who has full authority to enforce the Laws of the Small Sided Game. The decisions of the referee regarding facts connected with play, including whether or not a goal is scored and the result of the match, are final.

### Powers and Duties

The referee:

- Enforces the Laws of the Small Sided Game
- Ensures that any ball used meets the requirements of Law 2
- Ensures that the players' equipment meets the requirements of Law 4
- Acts as timekeeper and keeps a record of the match
- Stops, suspends or abandons the match, at their discretion, for any offences of the Laws
- Stops, suspends or abandons the match because of outside interference of any kind
- Stops the match if a player is injured and ensures that they are removed from the field of play. An injured player may only return to the field of play after the match has restarted.
- Ensures that any player bleeding from a wound leaves the field of play. The player may only return on receiving a signal from the referee, who must be satisfied that the bleeding has stopped.
- Takes action against team officials who fail to conduct themselves in a responsible manner and may, at his/her discretion, expel them from the field of play and its immediate surrounds
- Ensures that no unauthorized persons enter the field of play
- Indicates the restart of the match after it has been stopped
- Provides the appropriate authorities with a match report, which includes information on any disciplinary action taken against players and/or team officials and any other incidents that occurred before, during or after the match.



## Law 6: The Other Match Officials

There shall be no assistant referees or a 4<sup>th</sup> official on 5v5 or 7v7 games.

## Law 7: The Duration of the Match

### Periods of Play

The match shall consist of two 25-minute halves and shall not exceed 50 minutes.

### Half-time Interval

Players are entitled to a half-time interval of 5 minutes.

### Allowance for Time Lost

Allowance is made in either period for all time lost through:

- Substitutions
- Assessment and/or removal of injured players
- Medical stoppages permitted by competition rules (e.g., 'drinks' breaks or 'cooling' breaks)
- Wasting time
- Any other cause

The allowance for time lost is at the discretion of the referee. The referee shall not compensate for a timekeeping error during the first half by increasing or reducing the length of the second half.

## Law 8: The Start and Restart of Play

A kick-off is a way of starting or restarting play:

- At the start of a match
- After a goal has been scored
- At the start of the second half
- At the start of each period of extra time, where applicable.

A goal may be scored directly from a kick-off, but only against the opponents; if the ball directly enters the kicker's goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opponents.

### Procedure

Before the start of the match:

- A coin toss is held by the referee between a player of each team
- The team that wins the toss decides which goal it will attack in the first half or to take the kick-off
- In the second half of the match, the teams change ends and attack the opposite goals
- The team that did not take the kick-off to start the match takes the kick-off to start the second half.



## Kick-off

- After a team scores a goal, the kick-off is taken by the other team
- All players, except the player taking the kick-off, must be in their own half of the field
- The opponents of the team taking the kick-off must be five (5) metres (or six (6) yards) away from the ball until it is in play
- The ball must be stationary on the centre mark
- The referee gives a signal
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves

## Offences and Sanctions

For any offences, including those listed below, the kick-off is retaken:

- Players not in their own half of the field
- Opponents encroaching within five (5) metres (or six (6) yards) of the ball
- Players encroaching into opposing half
- Ball not on center mark or clearly moves
- Kick-off taken before signal
- Kicker touches the ball a second time with their feet

If the player taking the kick-off touches the ball again with their hands before it has touched another player, an indirect free kick is awarded.

## Dropped Ball

A dropped ball is a method of restarting play when, while the ball is still in play, the referee is required to stop play temporarily for any reason not mentioned elsewhere in the Small Sided Laws of the Game. Some examples of this are an injury or interference by an outside agent or the ball touching the Referee as explained in Law 9.

## Procedure

The ball is dropped for the defending team goalkeeper in their penalty area if, when play was stopped:

- The ball was in the penalty area or,
- the last touch of the ball was in the penalty area

In all other cases, the referee drops the ball for one player of the team that last touched the ball at the position where it last touched a player, an outside agent, or the referee. All other players (of both teams) must remain at least 4 metres (4.5 yards) from the ball until it is in play.

The ball is in play when it touches the ground.

A goal cannot be scored directly from a dropped ball.

## Offences and Sanctions

The ball is dropped again if it:

- touches a player before it touches the ground
- leaves the field of play after it touches the ground, without touching a player.



If the ball enters the goal without touching at least two players, play is restarted with:

- a goal kick if it enters the opponents' goal
- a corner kick if it enters the team's goal

## Law 9: The Ball In and Out of Play

### Ball out of play

The ball is out of play when:

- It has wholly passed over the goal line or touch line, on the ground, or in the air
- Play has been stopped by the referee
- It touches the referee, remains on the field of play and:
  - a team starts a promising attack or
  - the ball goes directly into the goal or
  - the team in possession of the ball changes

In all these cases, play is restarted with a dropped ball.

### Ball in play

The ball is in play at all other times when it touches a match official and when it rebounds off a goalpost, crossbar or corner flagpost and remains on the field of play.

## Law 10: Determining the Outcome of a Match

A goal is scored when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, between the goalposts and under the crossbar, provided that no offence of the Small Sided Laws of the Game has been previously committed by the team scoring the goal.

When goalposts are not available and cones are used instead, a goal is scored when, if in the opinion of the referee, the whole of the ball passes over the goal line between or above the cones, below two (2) meters, as shown on the picture below:



## Law 11: Offside

There is no offside for 5v5 or 7v7 games.



## Law 12: Fouls

The referee shall attempt to explain **ALL** offences to the offending player.

### Fouls

An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following offences:

- A. Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent
- B. Trips or attempts to trip an opponent
- C. Jumps at an opponent
- D. Charges an opponent
- E. Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent (including head-butt)
- F. Pushes an opponent
- G. Tackles or challenges an opponent
- H. Throws an object at the ball, an opponent or the referee, or makes contact with the ball with a held object
- I. Holds an opponent
- J. Impedes an opponent with contact
- K. Bites or spits at someone on the team lists or the referee
- L. Handball offence

If any of offences above occurs inside the penalty area, a penalty kick is awarded.

An indirect free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following offences, regardless if the offence is committed in the penalty area or not:

- M. Plays in a dangerous manner
- N. Impedes the progress of an opponent without any contact being made
- O. Prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from its hands or kicks or attempts to kick the ball when the goalkeeper is in the process of releasing it
- P. Is guilty of dissent, using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or action(s) or other verbal offences
- Q. Commits any other offence, not previously mentioned in Law 12

An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a goalkeeper, **inside their own penalty area**, commits any of the following four offences:

- R. Controls the ball with the hand/arm for more than 6 seconds before releasing it
- S. Touches the ball with the hand/arm after it has been deliberately kicked to them by a team-mate
- T. Touches the ball with the hand/arm after receiving it directly from a pass-in/dribble-in taken by a team-mate
- U. Touches the ball with the hand/arm after releasing it and before it has touched another player.



## Law 13: Free Kicks

All free kicks are indirect, with the exception of penalty kicks.

### Procedure

For all free kicks, the ball must be stationary when the kick is taken. The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves. The kicker must not touch the ball again until it has touched another player.

A goal can only be scored from a free kick if the ball is touched by another player before it enters the goal.

- If a free kick is kicked directly into the opponents' goal, without being touched by a second player, a goal kick is awarded
- If a free kick is kicked directly into the team's own goal, without being touched by a second player, a corner kick is awarded

### Position of the Free Kick

#### Free Kick inside the Penalty Area

Indirect free kick for the defending team:

- All opponents must be at least five (5) metres (or six (6) yards) from the ball
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves
- A free kick awarded in the penalty area may be taken from any point inside that area

Indirect free kick for the attacking team

- All opponents must be at least five (5) metres (or six (6) yards) from the ball
- For offences A to L from Law 12:
  - A penalty kick is awarded.
- For offences M to U from Law 12:
  - The indirect free kick shall be taken from the penalty area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the offence occurred.

#### Free Kick outside the Penalty Area

Indirect free kick for either team:

- All opponents must be at least five (5) metres (or six (6) yards) from the ball
- All opponents must be behind the Retreat line if the free kick is within the team's defending 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the field
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves
- All free kicks are taken from the place where the offence occurred except for:
  - Offences involving a player entering, re-entering, or leaving the field of play are taken from the position of the ball when play was stopped.
  - If a player commits an offence off the field of play, play is restarted with a free kick taken on the boundary line nearest to where the offence occurred; which for offences A to L in Law 12, results in a penalty kick if the offence is within the offender's penalty area.



Where three or more defending team players form a 'wall', all attacking team players must remain at least 1 metre (1 yard) from the 'wall' until the ball is in play.

## Offences and Sanctions

For any infringements, including those listed below, the free kick is retaken:

- Opponents encroaching within 5 metres (or six (6) yards) of the ball
- Kicker touches the ball a second time with their feet

If the kicker touches the ball a second time with their hands, an indirect free kick is awarded. If the offence occurred inside the kicker's penalty area and the kicker was not the goalkeeper, a penalty kick is awarded.

## Law 14: Penalty Kick

Penalty kicks are part of the game. The reasons for awarding a penalty kick are outlined in Law 12 (offences A through L). A goal may be scored directly from a penalty kick.

### Position of the Ball and Players

The ball:

- Must be stationary on the penalty mark (9 metres/10 yards from the goal line), and the goalposts, crossbar and goal net must not be moving

Player taking the penalty kick:

- Must be clearly identified

Defending goalkeeper:

- Must be on their goal line, facing the kicker, between the goalposts, without touching the goalposts, crossbar or goal net, until the ball has been kicked
- When the ball is kicked, the goalkeeper must have at least part of one foot touching, or in line with, the goal line.

The players other than the kicker and goalkeeper must be located:

- Inside the field of play
- Outside the penalty area
- Behind the penalty mark
- At least five (5) metres (or six (6) yards) from the penalty mark.

### Procedure

- After the players have taken their positions in accordance with this Law, the referee signals for the penalty kick to be taken
- The player taking the penalty kick must kick the ball forward; backheeling is permitted provided the ball moves forward



- The kicker must not play the ball again until it has touched another player
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves.

The penalty kick is completed when the ball stops moving, goes out of play, or the referee stops play for any offence.

## Offences and Sanctions

The below chart outlines the offences of this Law

| Outcome of the Penalty Kick                                |                        |                                                      |
|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                            | Goal                   | No Goal                                              |
| Encroachment by Attacking Player                           | Retake                 | IDFK for Defending Team                              |
| Encroachment by Defending Player                           | Goal                   | Retake                                               |
| Encroachment by Players from Both Teams                    | Retake                 | Retake                                               |
| Offence by Goalkeeper                                      | Goal                   | <u>Saved: Retake.</u><br><u>Not Saved: No Retake</u> |
| Ball is Kicked Backwards                                   | IFK for Defending Team | IFK for Defending Team                               |
| Illegal Feinting                                           | IFK for Defending Team | IFK for Defending Team                               |
| Wrong Kicker                                               | IFK for Defending Team | IFK for Defending Team                               |
| Goalkeeper and Kicker at the same time                     | IFK for Defending Team | IFK for Defending Team                               |
| Ball is touched a 2nd time by the kicker using their Feet  | Retake                 | Retake                                               |
| Ball is touched a 2nd time by the kicker using their Hands | IFK for Defending Team | IFK for Defending Team                               |

## Law 15: The Pass-In or Dribble-In

A pass-in or dribble-in is a method of restarting play. The kicker may conduct either a pass-in or dribble-in as a method of restarting play throughout the duration of the match.

A pass-in or dribble-in is awarded to the opponents of the player who last touched the ball when the whole of the ball passes the touch line, on the ground or in the air.

A goal cannot be scored directly from a pass-in/dribble-in. If the ball enters the goal without touching at least two players, play is restarted with:

- A goal kick if the ball enters the opponents' goal,
- A corner kick if the ball enters the team's goal

## Procedure

- The ball is kicked from the touchline at the point where the ball left the field of play,
- The ball must be stationary,



- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves.

All opponents must stand no less than three (3) metres (or three (3) yards) from the point at which the pass-in or dribble-in is taken.

## Offences and Sanctions

For any offences the pass-in/dribble-in is retaken, however, an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if the kicker touches the ball a second time with their hands.

## Law 16: The Goal Kick

A goal kick is a method of restarting play.

A goal kick is awarded when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, on the ground or in the air, having last touched a player of the attacking team, and a goal is not scored.

A goal may be scored directly from a goal kick, but only against the opposing team; if the ball directly enters the kicker's goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opponents.

## Procedure

- The ball is kicked from any point within the penalty area by a player of the defending team
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves
- All opponents must be behind the retreat line and cannot cross the retreat line until the ball:
  - Is touched by a player of the team taking the goal kick **OR**,
  - Leaves the field of play **OR**,
  - Crosses the retreat line.

If the kicker chooses not to wait for the opposing players to retreat, and takes the goal kick quickly, the opponents are permitted to challenge for the ball without going back to the retreat line.

## Offences and Sanctions

For any offences, including those listed below, the goal kick is retaken:

- Opponents cross the retreat line before they are permitted,
- Kicker touches the ball a second time with their feet
- The goalkeeper takes the goal kick and touches the ball a second time with their hands inside of their penalty area.

An indirect free kick is awarded if the kicker touches the ball a second time with their hands, except for a goalkeeper inside their penalty area.

The indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team from the position where the second touch occurred (see Law 13 – Position of free kick).



## Retreat Line

The retreat line will come into play when the ball has gone out for a goal kick or when the goalkeeper has the ball in their arms. The retreat line shall be marked at the 1/3 yards of the field. The use of field markers outside the field of play to indicate the retreat line is recommended.

The ball is in play once it is kicked and clearly moves. All opponents must be behind the retreat line and cannot cross the retreat line until the ball:

- Is touched by a player of the team releasing the ball **OR**,
- Leaves the field of play **OR**,
- Crosses the retreat line.

If the goalkeeper chooses not to wait for the opposing players to "retreat" and releases the ball quickly, the opponents are permitted to challenge for the ball without going back to the retreat line.



## Law 17: The Corner Kick

A corner kick is a method of restarting play.

A corner kick is awarded when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, on the ground or in the air, having last touched a player of the defending team, and a goal is not scored.

A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick, but only against the opposing team; if the ball directly enters the kicker's goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opponents.

### Procedure

- The ball must be placed within the corner area nearest to where the ball passed over the goal line,
- The corner flagpost must not be moved,
- Opponents must remain five (5) metres (or six (6) yards) from the corner area until the ball is in play,
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves; it does not need to leave the corner area.



## Offences and Sanctions

For any offences, including those listed below, the corner kick is retaken:

- Opponents encroaching within 5 metres (or six (6) yards) of the ball
- Kicker touches the ball a second time with their feet

An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if the kicker touches the ball a second time with their hands.

## Restarts & Offences Review

This chart outlines when a goal can be scored directly and what the restart is in the event that a second touch occurs with either the hands or feet.

| Type               | Goal Scored Direct? | Offends w/ Hands             |                  | Offends w/ Feet  |                  |
|--------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
|                    |                     | Attacker Offence             | Defender Offence | Attacker Offence | Defender Offence |
| Kick-Off           | Yes                 | IFK                          | IFK              | Retake           | Retake           |
| Kick-In/Dribble-In | No                  | IFK                          | IFK              | Retake           | Retake           |
| Corner Kick        | Yes                 | IFK                          | IFK              | Retake           | Retake           |
| Indirect Free Kick | No                  | IFK                          | IFK              | Retake           | Retake           |
| Dropped Ball       | No                  | IFK                          | IFK              | Retake           | Retake           |
| Goal Kick          | Yes                 | IFK                          | IFK/<br>Retake   | Retake           | Retake           |
| Penalty Kick       | Yes                 | Varies – See table in Law 14 |                  |                  |                  |

## Rules at a Glance

The following chart briefly outlines the fundamental Small Sided rules that mirror the Ontario Soccer Grassroots Outdoor Recreational Matrix Standards.

| Item               | Description                          |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Playing Format     | 7v7 (including GK)                   |
| Substitutions      | Unlimited (at any stoppage of play)  |
| Game Duration      | 2 x 25 min. halves                   |
| Half Time Duration | 5 minutes                            |
| Throw Ins          | No (Pass-In/Dribble-In) (see Law 15) |
| Retreat Line       | Yes – 1/3 <sup>rd</sup> of Field     |
| Offside            | No                                   |
| Ball Size          | 4 (or 5 Light)                       |



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