



ESA Indoor Soccer League RULES OF SOCCER

REVISION 09/27/2023

Rule I: Players, Coaches, and Substitutes

- A. **Turf fields:** A team will field not more than 6 players at a time. If a team's score lags by 5 or more goals, an "extra player" may be added until the goal differential is less than 5. The count includes the goalkeepers.
- B. **Half Field:** U-8 teams not have more than 6 players at a time. The "extra player" rule does not apply.
- C. Teams must have a **minimum of 5 players** to start a game on the large field and 4 players to start on the small field. Failure to do so will result in a forfeiture of the game, with a 4-0 score. A team may continue to play a game after dropping below the minimum number of players required to start the game without forfeiting the game. The team now has the option of forfeiting in order to add players who are rostered on another team within the same league.
- D. In **Adult Coed games and any High School Coed games**, each team must have 2 female players on the field at all times. If 2 females are not on the field, the team plays short a player for each missing female. (Does not apply for u14 and younger)
- E. **Substitutions** for players in all positions are unlimited and are made "on the fly". The player being substituted for must be off the playing floor before the substitute enters the field. Teams gaining an unfair advantage may be assessed a free kick **OR** a yellow card and 2-minute penalty and a free kick at the official's discretion.
- F. Each team's **roster will be limited to 18 players**, which includes all rostered substitutes. Double-rostering of any youth player (U-6 through High School leagues) will be permitted with respect to the following guidelines: (Does not apply to second session 2023)
 - a. A youth player (U-6 through High School Leagues) may roster on a **maximum of two teams** in the same league with one team being a Competitive Division team and the other being a Recreational Division team.
 - b. If there are **multiple Competitive Divisions** with the same league, a player may roster on a **maximum of two** Competitive Division teams as long as those team are **not** in the same Competitive division. This player would **now be unable** to roster on a Recreational Division team also.
 - c. If there is **only one level of play** offered in a league (no divisions), a player may roster on a **maximum of two teams** within that league. If a player is rostered on two teams within the same league which has no divisions, the player may only participate on one of those teams during the playoff tournament.
- G. **The following personnel shall be permitted in the bench area:** the rostered team players for that team, 1 rostered head coach, and 2 rostered assistant coaches. At least 1 coach must be a minimum of 21 years of age. Teams out of compliance will be asked to correct the issue and may be assessed a yellow card and a 2-minute penalty. The team will play short-handed for the entire 2 minutes, regardless of the opponent's score.
- H. It shall be the **coaches' responsibility** to ensure that all players are properly dressed and equipped, to control the actions of all players on and off the field, and to assist the official in controlling the match at all times.
- I. **Any player or coach who is verbally or physically abusive anywhere on the property** shall **immediately** receive a suspension from the facility, the length of which will be determined by ESA Indoor Soccer League management.

Rule II: Player Equipment

- A. **Plaster casts, metal/plastic or unyielding braces** shall be disallowed, unless wrapped with 1/2" of soft padding.
- B. Only goalies and women are allowed to wear **long pants**.
- C. **Numbers** are recommended to be on the backs of uniform shirts in all divisions.
- D. **Pinnies** will be available to the home team and/or goalies when uniform colors do not distinctly define the players. If pinnies are required, they must be obtained by the team and/or player requiring their use from the front desk and must be returned to the front desk at the conclusion of the game.
- E. **Shin guards** are mandatory.
- F. **No jewelry** is allowed, although medical tags are acceptable.
- G. **Indoor shoes** (flat-soled) with non-marking soles are to be worn on the small/multipurpose field. Outdoor cleats are not allowed on any surface. Both indoor flat-soled and turf shoes are allowed on the turf fields.
- H. **Mouth guards** are highly recommended.

Rule III: Start of Play

- A. The **guest team shall be awarded the game opening kick-off**. The home team shall be awarded the kickoff for the second half.
- B. A goal shall **not** be scored directly from a kick-off. (The restart is a goal kick.)
- C. At the **beginning of the game**, the referee will signal for the game to start and one player will take the kickoff. The kicker shall not touch the ball a second time until it has been touched by another player. The penalty shall be a direct free kick from the point of infraction. The ball may travel forward or backward at the start of a play.

Rule IV: Duration of Regular Season Game

- A. A **full game will consist of two 24-minute periods**, with a running clock. The clock may be stopped for serious injuries, at the discretion of the referee. Games are not extended if the score is tied at the end of regulation play. (Please see Exhibit A for updates to this for 2023 Season)
- B. **Half time will be 1-3 minutes in length**, as determined by the referee, guided by the need to end and start games on time.
- C. **Games will start at the scheduled times**. Teams failing to show, or teams who are late for a scheduled match, will receive a forfeiture of the game with a 4-0 score. In this case, teams may intermix rostered players from the same league and use the referee, if desired, for a "friendly" match.

Rule V: Ball In and Out of Play

- A. **The ball is out of play when it has traveled beyond the out of bounds line, has touched a person on the bench, or has touched a net**. The re-start is a in-direct free kick when it can be determined which team caused the out-of-bounds situation, or a drop ball when no determination can be made. In the case of a person reaching out of the bench area, the restart is for the opponent, and is not determined by who kicked the ball.
- B. **For balls out of bounds on the sides**, for corner kicks, the position is the white semi circle on the appropriate side. For goal kicks, the ball may be placed anywhere in the penalty box.

- C. **For balls off of the ceiling**, ball will be considered live and game will play on.
- D. **Re-starts for all goalie violations** will be on the dot at the top of the penalty area, (but only awarded as a Penalty Kick when warranted by the offense).
- E. **When the ball was not in play at the time of an infraction**, the re-start is the spot where it would have been placed, had the infraction not been called. (That is, bring it back in bounds right where it went out of bounds, not at the spot of the off-the-ball violation that the referee called, and most likely, assessed a time penalty and/or a card.)
- F. **The kicker shall not touch the ball a second time until it has been touched by another player**, the result is a direct free kick for the opponent.
- G. The **ball is in play when it rebounds off of the referee**.

Rule VI: Methods of Scoring

- A. A goal is scored when the **entire ball has crossed the goal line** prior to the horn's sounding.
- B. The **referee shall signal a goal** by pointing to the center circle. A whistle will be used only when there is a need to stop players from continuing to play after a goal has been scored.

Rule VII: Goalkeeper Restrictions

- A. **Goalie throws** must touch the floor or any player **before** crossing the middle white line. A violation will result in a in-direct free kick for the opponent from the center line.
- B. The **goalie may not dropkick or punt the ball**. After playing the ball with his/her hands in the box, the goalie may immediately play the ball with his/her feet only after the ball is no longer bouncing.
- C. The **goalie will have a maximum of 5 seconds** to place the ball on the floor or distribute the ball after having it in his/her hands.
- D. The goalie may not play the ball with his/her hands when intentionally **passed back** by a teammate's foot.
- E. The goalie **may not dribble the ball into the box** from outside the penalty area, and then pick the ball up.

Rule VIII: Fouls and Misconduct

- A. A player may not **intentionally handle the ball**, which is to carry, strike, or propel the ball with hand or arm. Handling shall not be called on a man who protects his groin or on a woman who protects her chest when he/she is in a stationary position. If a ball strikes a hand and is judged as 'not handling', it is moot as to whether an advantage has been gained or not. Goalies may not be called for handling when their hands meet the ball inside of the penalty area. Because handling is judged by where, on the field, the ball meets the hand or arm, it does not matter whether a goalie is standing inside or outside of the penalty area.
- B. The following offenses are considered as indoor fouls:
 - Dangerous play along the nets, whether or not there was contact.
 - Encroachment: Defending player being closer than 9 feet from the ball at a start of restart.

- Swinging any part of the body **toward** the ball before or as it is kicked in a free kick restart.
- C. **No heading allowed for any age groups.** A foul will be assessed to a player who has intentional contact with the ball with any part of the head. (The restart will be a free kick awarded to the non-offending team.)
- D. The following offenses may result in a **yellow card and a 2-minute penalty**:
- Any offense resulting in a penalty kick
 - Persistent infringement
 - **Slide tackling** by any player
 - **Sliding to play the ball**, with the exception being the goalie in the box
 - Sliding by the goalie, **outside the penalty area**
 - Charging in a violent or dangerous manner
 - Boarding ("Netting")
 - Intentional handling
 - Delaying the game
 - Encroachment
 - **Incidental foul language**
 - Unsporting behavior
- E. The following offense may result in a **yellow card and a 5-minute penalty**:
- Flagrant intentional handling of the ball in the penalty area
- F. The following offenses may result in a **red card (ejection) and 5-minute penalty (served by the offending player's team)**:
- Fouling an opponent on a break-away
 - **Foul and/or abusive language**
 - Serious boarding ("Netting")
 - **Violent behavior**
 - Flagrant misbehavior
 - Spitting
 - **Major misconduct**-fighting, attempting to injure, etc.
- G. A **yellow card and a 2-minute penalty** is issued for serious first offenses or a second offense by the same player. A yellow card may also be issued to a coach. A team whose coach has been issued a yellow card must designate a player to serve the penalty and play down for the 2-minute penalty.
- H. A **red card and a 5-minute penalty** is issued for extreme offenses, or for an accumulation of yellow cards (2 or more) in one game based on referee discretion. Any player receiving two (2) red cards in one session will be suspended from participation in any league the player is playing in for the remainder of the session at a minimum. A red card received in the game immediately prior to the start of playoffs will result in that player being ineligible for any playoff games in any division that the player is participating in.
- I. **Players or coaches who are issued a red card must leave the playing area immediately.** They will be permitted to remain within the confines of ESA only if

their actions and behavior are no longer disruptive or inappropriate as determined by ESA officials and staff. They are also subject to further ESA Indoor Soccer League suspensions (**a minimum of 1 game, which applies to all leagues, age groups and divisions in which a red-carded player participates**). The offending player or coach's team must play short-handed for a full 5-minute penalty.

- J. Any player or coach who leaves his/her bench area and enters the field during an altercation on the field will **automatically be ejected (red card)** from the game and must serve a minimum one game suspension. The team of the offending player or coach must designate a player to serve the penalty and play down for the 5-minute penalty.
- K. A person guilty of fighting a 2nd time **will be suspended** for a **minimum** of the remainder of the season.
- L. Any team intentionally providing inaccurate information about the carded player's name will face additional disciplinary action by ESA Indoor Soccer League.
- M. The referee will log each card with the ESA front desk and will inform the manager on duty about any red cards prior to leaving the building.
- N. **Expulsion of teams:** ESA Indoor Soccer League reserves the right to expel/dismiss teams from participation. This decision will be based upon individual issues and circumstances. Coaches will be informed when their team is on a probationary status. This may be done by letter, telephone call, email, and/or a meeting with the coach or coaches. It shall be the coach's responsibility to convey all information relevant to the probation to the players' parents and anyone else who may be associated with the team. **Refunds of the league fee, whether complete or partial, will not be given** to the team or to individual players **in the event of the expulsion/dismissal from league play.**

Rule IX: Serving Penalties

- A. The player who is assessed a penalty shall proceed immediately to the team's bench. Any delay by that player shall result in that player being assessed an additional 2-minute penalty for delay of game. The referee will declare the time at which the penalty will be considered fully served, taking into account that the penalty doesn't start until the ball is put back in play.
- B. **Goalies must serve their own penalties.** A teammate must dress as goalie during that time.
- C. The referee will release a player from the penalty by notifying the player that the penalty has been fully served.
- D. If a team is awarded a goal while an opponent is serving an unmatched, 2-minute penalty, the person serving the penalty may re-enter the field of play even though the full 2 minutes have not been served.
- E. **All 5-minute penalties must be fully served.**
- F. For matching time penalties, each team plays short-handed, and the penalties are served in full. If a player from each team is ejected, teams will play short-handed for the duration of the 5-minute penalty, because **all 5-minute penalties must be served in full.**
- G. At no time can a player receive more than 5 minutes in time penalties at a stoppage.
- H. The completion of a late first-half penalty must be served at the start of the 2nd half.

Rule X: Penalty Kicks

- A. A penalty kick, when deserved, **must be taken even if time has expired.**
- B. Other than the kicker and goalie, all players must be positioned behind the mid field line.

- C. **The offending player must serve the penalty**, regardless of how many teammates are already serving penalties. If the penalty kick is successful, the player who was most recently penalized is the only player released back onto the field.
- D. After the ball is kicked and contacts either the goalie or the post, **the ball is live**. If the ball contacts the post, but not the goalie, it can be played by any player **except for the player who just took the PK** if time has not expired. If the ball contacts the goalie before it contacts any other player, **it can be played by any player, including the player who just took the PK** if time has not expired.

Rule XI: Playoffs

- A. All playoff games, except for the championship match, will be one 25-minute game unless otherwise designated by ESA. The final (championship) match will be two 24-minute halves. One 5-minute sudden victory overtime period will be added if the score is tied at the end of regulation time. If a tie still exists, a shoot-out will break the tie.
- B. **Shoot-out:** The players on the field at the end of the sudden victory period will be the first players in the 5-player shoot-out. The winner of a coin toss must choose to shoot first. The official will be given an ordered list of the shooters by each team, which will include both the shooters' names and jersey numbers. Shooters will gather at mid-field; goalies will wait near the corner kick areas. Teams will alternate kickers only until such time as a win is clearly defined. (Note that all kickers might not need to kick, depending on previous results.)
If the score is still tied at the conclusion of 5 kicks per team, a sudden death shootout begins. The 6th persons from each team, (still on the field), are the first 2 shooters in the sudden death shootout. If their score is still tied, a player is released from each bench to become the next pair of shooters. This is repeated until such time as a winner can be declared or until at least one bench is emptied. **In the event that every player from one team has shot and the other team still has players on the bench**, it is that team's choice as to whether all the remaining players will be exhausted before players shoot a 2nd time. A team may elect to have every player shoot. The other option is to have only as many shooters as the other team has. **It is not a choice to have only "some" of the remaining players on the bench shoot, while others don't participate.** The order of the 2nd round of players may be changed on the fly, but must be fully completed prior to a 3rd round starting.

Rule XII: General Rules

- A. A **mid-field infraction** occurs when the ball is propelled through the air and completely passes over the mid-field line without hitting any part of the floor or a player. For violating this rule, the ball will be placed on the mid-line where the ball first crossed that line.
- B. All free kicks will be deemed to be in-direct free kicks. No direct kicks except for penalty kicks.
- C. **A team will have 5 seconds to put the ball in play after it has been accurately set.** For violating this rule, the ball will be re-awarded to the opponent. This is the only instance when a dead ball, once awarded to a given team, is re-awarded to an opponent.
- D. Size 4 futsal balls will be used for all ages and will be supplied by ESA.
- E. **No gum chewing** is allowed within the confines of the building.
- F. **A 9-goal differential is the largest that will be displayed on the arena clock.** A maximum difference of 4 goals will be awarded to calculate standings, **regardless** of how much above 4 is the difference.
- G. ESA Indoor Soccer League will determine the winner of a **match that was terminated by a referee**. The match will **not** be rescheduled or replayed.

- H. Due to inclement weather or other situations out of its control, ESA Indoor Soccer League will determine the fairest method of applying wins and losses for the purpose of standings.

Exhibit A: Additional ESA Rules

- A. **The ball is out of play when it has traveled completely beyond the sidelines or goal lines which are striped on the fields.** The re-start is an in-direct free kick-in, a goal kick, or a corner kick. The restart position for a ball out of play over the sideline is on the sideline where the ball traveled out of play. For corner kicks, the position is the white dot on the appropriate side. For goal kicks, the ball may be placed anywhere in the penalty box.
- B. No offsides for any age group.
- C. Goalies will only throw underhand, no over hand throwing allowed.
- D. Only coaches are allowed on the sidelines of the field. Bench players will be outside of the doors on the concrete in a "bench area" set up for each team. The coach when subbing will open the door and allow the players entering the game to stand on the side of the field until the player coming off of the field has left the field of play. Once all players are thru the door and off the field, the coach must close the door.
- E. Parents are not allowed in and around the bench area. This will be strictly enforced.
- F. U6 will play on the "Small Field" located under the mezzanine. The nets will be the out of bounds markers.
- G. U8 will play on 1/2 of the big field. Full goals will be used. Yellow lines will be the boundaries.
- H. U10 will play on 1/2 of the big field using the orange/yellow lines and a full goal.
- I. U12, U14, and above will play on the full field using the outside white lines and will use the white aluminum goals on site for each game unless otherwise specified by ESA.
- J. Any and all rules may be adjusted by ESA to create a proper playing environment. These updates will be listed below with the date they were updated:

- i. .
- ii. .
- iii. .
- iv. .
- v. .
- vi. .
- vii. .
- viii. .
- ix. .