



# **U8 Rules Quick Reference**

The following rules are specific Montclair Soccer Club rules that have been adapted from the FIFA laws governing the play of soccer.

**Law 1. Field of Play** – shall be rectangular 50-60 yards long by at least 30-40 yards wide. The referee should be sure that there are no unsafe playing conditions. Teams set up on opposite sides of the pitch, with the home team getting first choice. All players, coaches and fans shall stay within the technical area of their sideline. No coaching will be allowed near the goal area or behind the goal

**Law 2. The Ball** – will be a size 3 soccer ball. The home team provides the ball, and the referee makes sure it is in good shape and inflated properly.

**Law 3. The Number of Players** – on the field shall be a maximum of 7 one of whom must be the goalie. The minimum is 5.

**Law 4. Players Equipment** – shall consist of shirts, shorts, socks, shoes and shinguards. Soccer shoes are recommended. Tennis shoes are allowed. Football and baseball cleats are not allowed due to the extra toe stud. No hard shoes or shoes with metal or other dangerous appendages are allowed. No player is allowed to practice or play without shinguards. Socks must completely cover shinguards. Shirts must be tucked in. No orthopedic (even if covered) or hard casts are allowed.

**Law 5. Referee** – shall be a trained MSC U8 referee. Licensed referees are not required or preferred at the U8 level. The referee is the sole arbiter of points of fact. There is no dissent to decisions of the referee. If an MSC U8 referee is not available, the coaches will decide on a referee solution and the game will be played. The home team is responsible for providing the referee.

**Law 6. Assistant Referees** - (or linesman) may be employed by the referee at the referee's discretion to assist in calling direction and out of play for balls leaving the pitch. AR's remain off the field of play along the sideline. AR's are neither required nor recommended.

**Law 7. Duration of Games** - shall be two 20-minute halves, with a 1-2 minute timeout at the 10 minute mark of each half. Time shall not be added for injuries or wasted time. Half time shall be 3-5 minutes.

**Law 8. Start of Play** - To begin the game, after the substitution break, at the start of the second half, and after a goal is scored there will be a kickoff. Before the game a coin toss will be held. The team winning the coin toss will either select to take the kick-off or select a goal to defend; the other team will receive the other choice. At half time the teams switch sides and the team that did not kickoff at the start of the game shall take the kickoff. Any team scored upon will take the kickoff to restart play. The game is started by a kickoff in the center circle. Each team will be on their own side of the field, with only members of the kicking team allowed in the center circle on their side of the field. The ball must move forward and the kicker can not play the ball until another player (from either team) has touched the ball.

**Law 9. Ball In and Out of Play** – After the start of play, the ball is in play unless 1) the ball is completely kicked over the goal line or touch (side) line or 2) the referee stops the game. If the ball is kicked out of play see Laws 15 to 17 for the restart of play. If a

referee stops play, and the restart of play is not governed by other laws, the referee will start replay by a drop ball between a player from each team.

**Law 10. Method of Scoring** – is when the ball crosses completely over the goal line and within the goal posts and the cross bar. Score is not kept except as it relates to the “Sportsmanship Rule.” Note that a goal is scored even if kicked in by the defensive team or carried in by the goalie.

**Law 11. Offside** – is not called in U8 play unless there is obvious coaching to 1) position attacking players in front of the goal and well behind any defenders and 2) the attacking player(s) are able to distinctly control a pass made to them and shoot accurately at the goal without a challenge from the defense. The emphasis is that this must appear to be pre-meditated rather than just the result of a lucky (or lazy) play.

**Law 12. Fouls and Misconduct** - A player that intentionally commits any of the following offenses may have committed a foul:

1. Kicking or attempting to kick an opponent.
2. Tripping an opponent.
3. Intentionally jumping at an opponent.
4. Charging violently or dangerously. Charging in soccer is body contact. Players are always allowed to challenge for a ball and must rely on shoulder to shoulder contact to challenge fairly. Any charge that appears to be aimed at a player rather than as an act to challenge for the ball is not allowed.
5. Striking, or attempting to strike an opponent.
6. Holding an opponent.
7. Pushing an opponent.
8. Hand-ball: Deliberately playing, striking or propelling the ball with the hand or arm. Balls touch arms and hands all the time and are not necessarily hand balls.
9. Dangerous Play.
  - High-Kicking. If an opponent is too close when a kick extends the foot higher than the opponent’s waist than you may have a foul.
  - Slide-Tackling. In soccer a tackle is an attempt to tackle the ball – not the player. Any tackle that is accomplished by sliding is a slide tackle. **Slide Tackling is not allowed under any circumstances in U8 play.**
  - Obstruction. Blocking another opponent from making a play on the ball when the ball is not within playing distance.
  - **Charging the goalkeeper.** The goalie is in control of the ball if s/he has only one finger on it. Charging is avoidable contact when the goalie has control of the ball. We play “one finger possession”: even if a goalie has only one finger on the ball, the other players should not kick it.
10. Special Goalkeeper Rules. The goalie can only touch the ball with the hands inside the goal area. The goalies may kick or head the ball anywhere on the field. The rule for regulation play is that the goalie has only 6 seconds to release the ball after gaining control and the play ends. After gaining control the goalie must kick or throw the ball back into play (encourage the goalie to punt or throw the ball from the edge of the box). The goalie cannot pick up a ball that was deliberately passed by a teammate.
11. All re-starts (other than drop balls) are with standard Indirect Kicks from the spot of the infraction (the ball must touch another player – which may include the goalie - other than the player kicking the ball before entering the goal).

## **Law 12. Fouls and Misconduct - *continued***

12. Yellow and Red Cards are not used in U8 play. However, the following types of misconduct should result in the player being substituted out. The player should generally sit out for a reasonable amount of time depending on the severity of the action:
- Persistent and deliberate fouling.
  - Showing disrespect to or taunting players, coaches or referees.
  - Using inappropriate language.
  - Violent Behavior.
- Spectator behavior is the responsibility of the coach of the team that they are associated with (as is the coach's behavior of course).

**Law 13. Free Kicks** - All free kicks are indirect kicks in U8 soccer. An indirect kick means that the ball must touch another player on either team before a goal can be scored – this includes goalies. All free kicks shall be taken from outside the goal area if the kick will be taken by an attacking team. Players on the defending team must remain 6 yards from the ball in all directions.

**Law 14. Penalty Kicks** - are not awarded in U8 play.

**Law 15. Throw In** - When the ball completely crosses the touch (side) line, the ball is thrown in by a player of the opposing team of the player who last touched the ball before it went out. In U8 play we allow multiple re-throws if performed incorrectly. Both feet must be on or behind the touch line, the thrower must be facing the pitch, the ball must be thrown from behind and over the head with both hands.

**Law 16. Goal Kick** - When the ball completely crosses the end line, but not in the goal, and the last player to touch the ball was an attacking player, a goal kick is awarded to the defensive team and may be taken from any point within the goal area. Encourage the kick to be taken from the edge of the goal area box, and the ball is not in play until it leaves the goal area box.

**Law 17. Corner Kick** - When the ball completely crosses the end line, but not in the goal, and the last player to touch the ball was a defensive player, a corner kick is awarded to the offensive team from within the corner circle. A corner kick that goes directly into the goal will be allowed as a score. The player taking the corner kick may not kick the ball a second time until the ball has been touched by another player. The ball is in play when it has been touched by the kicker.

- ❖ Sportsmanship Rule. If one team gets ahead by more than 3 goals, that team must remove one player for every goal differential above 3. If an imbalance continues to exist the coaches should take efforts to affect a more competitive game. If the goal differential decreases the winning team shall be allowed to add players at the same rate until full strength occurs again at a 3 goal differential. (Note when playing Rockridge teams: RSC adds players for each goal above a differential of 3. Work out in advance with coaches on how [removing versus adding players] they will address an imbalanced match.)