

Vermont Soccer League Competition Rules Handbook

U10 Rules (7v7)

1. Match Format & Field

- **Players:** 7 players per side (6 outfield + 1 goalkeeper).
- **Substitutions:** Unlimited. Subs may enter on any stoppage with the referee's permission and at the halfway line. A substituted player may re-enter (re-entry allowed). Coaches should request substitution at the halfway line; referee signals restart when substitution is complete.
- **Field size (recommended):** Length 55–70 yards, Width 35–50 yards. Use what is available; mark a clear build-out line across the field (see §4).
- **Goals:** Small goals appropriate to 7v7 (commonly 6.5 ft × 18.5 ft / 2 m × 6 m), or as provided by facility.
- **Corner flags:** Required.
- **Ball:** Size 4.
- **Uniforms & equipment:** Standard shin guards required, socks over shin guards. No jewelry. Goalkeepers must wear a distinct color.

2. Duration & Officials

- **Match length:** Two halves of 25 minutes each.
- **Half-time interval:** 5 minutes.
- **Referees:** One referee is assigned to each match.

3. Start & Restarts

- **Kick-offs, free kicks, goal kicks, corner kicks, throw-ins:** Use standard laws adapted for 7v7.
- **Throw-ins:** The VSA implements throw-ins for all balls out of bounds on the sideline.

4. Build-Out Line — Purpose & Procedures

- **Purposes:**

- Protects the goalkeeper and allows teams to play out of the back without pressure.
- Serves as the offside line for U10.
- **Location & marking:** Marked equidistant between the halfway line and the penalty area, across the field parallel to the goal line.
- **When enforced:**
 - On goal kicks;
 - When the goalkeeper has the ball in their hands.
- **Requirements:** Opponents must retreat fully behind the line until the ball is in play.
- **Ball in play:**
 - Goal kick → when the ball is kicked and clearly moves.
 - GK possession → when the ball is released (kicked, thrown, or rolled).
- **Violations:** Failure to retreat = indirect free kick to goalkeeper's team.
- **Offside:** Build-out line = offside line.

5. Goalkeeper & Goal Kicks

- **GK possession:** Opponents stay behind the build-out line until release.
- **Distribution:** May release by kick, throw, or roll.
- **Goal kicks:** From anywhere in the penalty area. Ball in play when kicked and moves.
- **Punting/drop kicks:** Discouraged (not prohibited).
- **Back-pass rule:** Handling a deliberate teammate's kick = indirect free kick.

6. Offside

- No traditional offside in attacking half.
- The build-out line serves as an offside line.

7. Fouls, Free Kicks & Discipline

- **Direct free kicks:** For fouls such as kicking, tripping, pushing, deliberate handball.
- **Indirect free kicks:** For technical infractions, back-pass violations, dangerous play, and **all heading incidents.**
- **Distance:** Opponents retreat 8 yards.
- **Discipline:** Referee may issue cautions/send-offs. Coaches are accountable for sideline conduct.

8. Heading

- **No heading allowed.** Any occurrence → indirect free kick to opponents.
- **If goal scored by header:** Disallow, restart with indirect free kick.
- **Inside penalty area:** Restart at nearest point on penalty area line.

9. Penalty Kicks

- **Spot:** 8 yards from the goal line.
- **Procedure:** Standard, all players outside the box until the ball is kicked.

10. Corner Kicks

- **Procedure:** Standard.
- **Distance:** Opponents retreat 8 yards.

11. Referee Guidelines & Game Management

- **Educational approach:** Focus on teaching/game flow.
- **Cards:** Available but warnings encouraged first.
- **Build-out line:** Referees manage proactively.

12. Competition & Safety Notes

- **Roster:** Only rostered players/coaches may participate. If a player or coach is not on the matchday roster, they may not participate in the match. ***Only VSA has the authority to grant exceptions and special circumstances in specific scenarios if it is in the best interest of the players, teams, and leagues. Appropriate sanctions will be applied***

and enforced.

- **Concussions:** Suspected concussion = immediate removal, no same-day return.
- **Weather:** Follow VSA severe weather policy.

13. Disputes

- **Interpretation & appeals:** Directed to VSA Executive Director. Protests/appeals per VSA Protest Policy.

14. Quick Reference

- 7v7, Size 4 ball.
- Two halves of 25 minutes.
- One referee.
- Build-out line in effect (GK distribution + offside).
- No heading.
- Penalty spot = 8 yards.
- Unlimited subs with re-entry.

U12 Rules (9v9)

1. Match Format & Field

- **Players:** 9 players per side (8 outfield + 1 goalkeeper).
- **Substitutions:** Unlimited, re-entry allowed.
- **Field size (recommended):** Length 70–80 yards; Width 45–55 yards.
- **Goals:** 6.5 ft × 18.5 ft.
- **Ball:** Size 4.
- **Equipment:** Shin guards, no jewelry, distinct GK jersey.

2. Duration & Officials

- **Match length:** Two halves of 30 minutes.
- **Half-time interval:** 5–10 minutes.
- **Referees:** One referee assigned.

3. Restarts

- Standard Laws of the Game.
- Throw-ins used.

4. Goalkeeper & Goal Kicks

- **Goal kicks:** From within the penalty area, ball in play when kicked and moves.
- **Distribution:** May punt, throw, or roll.
- **Back-pass rule:** Standard (no handling a deliberate teammate kick).

5. Offside

- **Full offside law in effect** (halfway line = reference).

6. Fouls, Free Kicks & Discipline

- **Direct/indirect kicks:** Standard. Opponents retreat 8 yards.
- **Cards:** Yellow/red cards used when necessary.

7. Heading

- **Heading allowed.** Referees penalize only dangerous/reckless heading.

8. Penalty Kicks

- **Spot:** 10 yards.
- **Procedure:** Standard.

9. Corner Kicks & Throw-ins

- Standard Laws. Opponents retreat 8 yards.

10. Referee Guidelines

- **Solo referee:** Authority for all decisions. Coaches and spectators must respect the referee.

11. Competition & Safety

- **Roster:** Only rostered players/coaches may participate. If a player or coach is not on the matchday roster, they may not participate in the match. ***Only VSA has the authority to grant exceptions and special circumstances in specific scenarios if it is in the best interest of the players, teams, and leagues. Appropriate sanctions will be applied and enforced.***
- **Concussion:** Immediate removal, no same-day return.
- **Weather:** Follow VSA weather policy.

12. Quick Reference

- 9v9, Size 4 ball.
- Two halves of 30 minutes.
- One referee.
- Heading allowed.
- Full offside.
- Penalty spot = 10 yards.

U14-U19 Rules (11v11)

1. Match Format & Field

- **Players:** 11 players per side (10 outfield + 1 goalkeeper).
- **Substitutions:** Unlimited, re-entry allowed.
- **Field size:** Full-size field (100–120 × 55–75 yards).
- **Goals:** 8 ft × 24 ft.
- **Ball:** Size 5.

- **Equipment:** Standard; GK distinct.

2. Duration & Officials

- **Match lengths:**

- U14 = 2 × 35 minutes
- U16 = 2 × 40 minutes
- U18/19 = 2 × 40 minutes

- **Half-time interval:** 5–10 minutes.

- **Referees:** Standard three-referee system (referee + 2 ARs). If unavailable, use solo referee or club ARs.

3. Restarts

- All restarts per FIFA Laws of the Game.

4. Goalkeeper & Goal Kicks

- Standard Laws.

5. Offside

- Full offside law applies.

6. Fouls, Free Kicks & Discipline

- Standard application of Laws.
- Opponents retreat 10 yards on free kicks.
- Cards fully enforced. Coaches responsible for sideline conduct.

7. Heading

- Heading permitted. Referees to manage dangerous/reckless challenges.

8. Penalty Kicks

- **Spot:** 12 yards.

9. Corner Kicks & Throw-ins

- Standard Laws. Opponents retreat 10 yards.

10. Referee Guidelines

- Referees and ARs work as a team.
- Solo referee authority if only one is assigned.

11. Competition & Safety

- Roster rules enforced. Only rostered players/coaches may participate. If a player or coach is not on the matchday roster, they may not participate in the match. ***Only VSA has the authority to grant exceptions and special circumstances in specific scenarios if it is in the best interest of the players, teams, and leagues. Appropriate sanctions will be applied and enforced.***
- Concussion protocols in effect.
- Weather policy followed.

12. Quick Reference

- 11v11, Size 5 ball.
- Half lengths: U14 = 35 min, U16 = 40 min, U18/19 = 40 min.
- Three referees (where possible).
- Heading allowed.
- Full offside.
- Penalty spot = 12 yards.