



Mini Soccer Guide & Rules



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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this booklet is to support the Grass Roots Coach to better interact with their players when setting up successful coaching programs by understanding the new Ontario Soccer Association U'10 Mini and Tiny-Tot Soccer rules.

Whether you are a first time coach with little background in the game, or a veteran with years of experience, you will need to understand these very simple rules.

Until now we have been very fragmented as mini soccer rules in Ontario have been interpreted differently in terms of number of players playing to the size of field and goal sizes used - not the most conducive to what was best for the youngster's soccer development.

These new standardized rules will help all the U'10 players to learn and enjoy the mini game especially as the fragmentation will be eliminated and all Ontario U'10 mini players will be enjoying the same game.

As far as the Tiny-Tot game is concerned, coaches / parents must realize we are introducing the game to the youngsters. This first soccer impression must be a lasting impression, they must have the best time of their young lives. Coaches / parents must remember that players play organized Tiny-Tot soccer for their own "fun" and entertainment. They do not play to entertain the coach / parent.

MINI CODE FOR COACHES

- Your responsibility is to ensure that players are having "fun". (Remember children are not miniature professionals)
- Never ridicule or scold a youngster for a mistake. Remember no child intentionally makes a mistake.
- Applaud loudly a good effort by your team and the opponent.
- Coaching at this level is a collective collaboration. If we all work together, all our youngsters will improve.
- Encourage all youngsters to develop basic skills but remember to be reasonable in your demand on their energy and enthusiasm.

The following are all guidelines Mini Coaches should follow:

- Dress appropriately
- Be punctual
- Must be very positive and enthusiastic

- Must be organized
- Must be the most popular coach to their young players
- Personal Conduct (above reproach)
- Understand the rationale for Mini Soccer

MINI SOCCER RATIONALE

Mini Soccer and Developing Young Players

Common sense must prevail in terms of getting kids kicking a ball in an area that will allow them to interact within a game situation. They must be able to touch the ball allowing them situations that will guarantee them the opportunity to grow into the regulation game of full field and 11 v 11. That can only be done by educating them to make decisions, execute a skill, understand their role and enjoy learning this very enjoyable game.

Please review the diagram below which shows a typical 7 v 7 set-up and should help to visualize the rationale for the mini game. This format embraces The Ontario Soccer Association's "Possession of the Ball" philosophy.

As you can appreciate triangles are the basic shape for all passing and support movements and so you can understand why it is important to encourage play within a relative environment that will allow children to execute passing and receiving the ball with successful results. 7 v 7 will guarantee that our youngsters understand depth and width naturally which is conducive to the progression into the 11 v 11 game.

Summary

- 7 v 7 on a mini field will allow more contacts on the ball
- The field is long enough for these young defenders to pass the ball forward past pressure (Long Passing)
- Strikers have the opportunity to support deep with width capabilities and lateral support (Near and Far Support)
- Goalkeepers have a reduced size of goal allowing most U'10 youngsters to reach the crossbar
- Allows for possession of the ball in a supporting environment for positions (triangles) (Short Passing & Receiving)
- Laws/structure simplified, i.e., no off-side to allow for limited demands on the youngsters (simplifies and keeps the game fun)

MINI SOCCER RULES

RULE 1: The Field

- Field markings shall be clearly visible and of uniform width of approximately 5 inches (12.7cm). All lines are part of the area they encompass.
- The size of the goals shall be 16 feet (4.9M) wide and 6 feet (1.8M) high.
- The width of the goals shall be measured from the inside of one goal-post to the inside of the other goal-post, and the height from the ground to the underside of the crossbar.
- Whenever possible, goal-nets shall be used.
- Corner-posts shall stand not less than 5 feet (1.5M) from the ground and shall be placed in each corner of the field of play.

Off-side: Not applicable

RULE 2: The Ball

- The ball shall be spherical and shall be constructed of material which is not dangerous to the players.
- Ball size for U'10 players should be size 4.

RULE 3: Number of Players

- The game shall be played by two teams, each consisting of 7 players, one of whom shall be the goalkeeper.
- A maximum of 14 players can be dressed for a game.
- Unlimited substitution shall be allowed.
- Substitutions shall be allowed at stoppages, under the control of the referee.
- Both teams must have at least 7 players to start the game.
- The game should not continue if a team has less than 5 players.

RULE 4: Player's Equipment

- Players shall not wear anything which endangers themselves or other players.
- Basic compulsory equipment shall consist of shorts, socks, shin guards, footwear, and a numbered shirt. Goalkeepers **must** wear colors which are distinguishable from all outfield players and the referee.
- 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.

RULE 5: The Referee

- The referee appointed to officiate a mini-soccer game will have the full authority to enforce the mini-soccer rules. Referee decisions regarding facts connected to play are final.

The referee shall:

- Enforce the rules of the game.
- Refrain from penalizing in cases where the offending team may gain an advantage.
- Report in writing to the appropriate authority, any misconduct by players, parents, spectators or other persons which takes place on the field of play or its vicinity at any time during the game.
- Control who may enter or leave the field of play.
- Stop the game immediately if a player appears to be Injured, bleeding or concussed.
- Signal to start the game, and to restart it after a stoppage.
- Decide if the field of play and all applicable equipment is suitable.

Referee Assistant: Not Applicable

RULE 6: Duration of the Game

- The game shall be divided into two equal halves, the length of which shall be 25 minutes. The half-time interval shall be 5 minutes.
- If for any reason, a game is terminated before full-time, the local organizers shall decide the outcome of the game.

RULE 7: Start of Play

- At the beginning of the game, choice of halves and the kick-off shall be decided by the toss of a coin. The team which wins the toss shall decide which goal to attack in the first half. The other team will take the kick-off. At a kick-off, all players shall be in their own half of the field of play. All players opposing the team taking the kick-off shall be not less than 6 yards (5.5M) from the ball until it is kicked-off. The game shall be started by the referee giving a signal. The ball will be in play when it is kicked forward into the opponent's half of the field.
- For any infringement of this rule, the kick-off shall be retaken.
- Should the player taking the kick-off play or touch the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player, a free-kick shall be awarded to the opposing team.
- After a goal has been scored, the game shall be restarted by a kick-off, to be taken by a player of the team against which the goal was scored
- After the first half of play, the teams shall change halves and the kick-off shall be taken by a player of the team opposing that which started the game.
- For any stoppage not mentioned elsewhere in these rules, the referee shall restart the game by dropping the ball at the place where it was when play was stopped, unless play was stopped in the penalty-area. In this case, the ball shall be dropped on the penalty-area line at the point nearest to where the ball was when play was stopped. The ball shall be in play as soon as it touches the ground.
- A goal may be scored directly from a kick-off.

RULE 8: Ball In and Out of Play

The ball is OUT of play:

- When the whole of the ball has crossed the goal-line, or touch-line, whether on the ground or in the air.
- When the play has been stopped by the referee.

The ball is IN play:

- At all other times including when it rebounds into play from a goal-post, a cross-bar, or a corner flag post, or referee and remains in the field of play.

RULE 9: Method of Scoring

- A goal is scored when the whole of the ball has crossed over the goal-line, between the goal-posts and under the cross-bar, provided it has not been thrown, carried or intentionally propelled by hand or arm, by a player of the attacking team, except by a goalkeeper from within his own penalty-area.
- The referee shall be the sole judge as to whether a goal has been scored.
- During the course of play, should any outside agent prevent the ball from passing into the goal or assist the ball into the goal, play shall be stopped. The referee shall restart the game by dropping the ball.

RULE 10: Free-kick

- For any infringement of the mini-soccer rules when the ball is in play, the referee may award a free-kick to the non-offending team. The free-kick shall be taken from the place where the infringement occurred, unless the free-kick is awarded to the attacking team within its opponents' penalty-area. In this case, the penalty-kick shall be taken from the penalty-mark.
- At the taking of a free-kick, the ball shall be stationary and all opponents shall be not less than 6 yards (5.5M) from the ball until it has been kicked. The ball shall be in play when it is kicked and moved.
- A player taking a free-kick within his own penalty-area shall kick the ball into play beyond the penalty-area. The ball shall be in play when it has been kicked and moved and has passed outside the penalty-area. All opponents shall be outside the penalty area and not less than 6 yards (5.5M) from the ball until it has been kicked. For any infringement of this rule, the free-kick shall be retaken.
- A player taking a free-kick shall not play or touch the ball a second time until it has been played or touched by another player. For any infringement of this rule, a free-kick shall be awarded to the opposing team.
- A goal may be scored directly from a free-kick

RULE 11: Penalty-kick

- A penalty-kick shall be taken from the penalty-mark. All players, with the exception of the defending goalkeeper and the player taking the kick, shall be outside the penalty area but within the field of play, not less than 6 yards (5.5M) from the ball until it has been kicked.
- The goalkeeper shall remain on his own goal-line facing the kicker, and between the goal-posts, until the ball has been kicked.
- The player taking the penalty-kick must kick the ball forward. The ball shall be in play when the ball is kicked and moves forward. The player shall not play or touch the ball a second time until it has been played or touched by another player.
- If necessary, the time of play shall be extended to allow a penalty-kick to be taken.

For any infringement of this rule:

- By a member of the defending team, the kick shall be retaken if a goal has not been scored.
- By a member of the attacking team, if a goal is scored it shall be disallowed and a free kick awarded to the defending team, to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred.
- By a member of both teams, the kick shall be retaken whether a goal has been scored or not.
- If, after the kick has been taken, the ball or the goalkeeper is interfered with by an outside agent, the kick shall be retaken.

RULE 12: Fouls and Misconduct

A player who, in the opinion of the referee, intentionally commits any of the following offences, shall be penalized by the awarding of a free-kick to the opposing team:

- Spits at an opponent
- Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent
- Trips or attempts to trip an opponent
- Jumps at an opponent
- Charges an opponent
- Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent
- Holds an opponent
- Pushes an opponent

- Handles the ball deliberately, (except a goalkeeper from within his own penalty area)
- Tackles an opponent to gain possession of the ball, making contact with the opponent before touching the ball

Should a player commit one of the above offences within his own penalty-area, a penalty kick shall be awarded.

RULE 13: Throw-In / Kick-In

U8 & Younger: Kick-In

- When the whole of the ball has crossed the touch-line, either on the ground or in the air, the ball shall be kicked-in from the point where it left the field of play, by a member of the team opposing that of the player who last played or touched it.
- The player taking the kick-in shall:
 - a. Face the field of play and
 - b. Kick the ball from on, or behind, the touch line.
- The ball will be in play immediately after it enters the field of play.
- If the player taking the "kick in" plays, or touches, the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player, a free kick shall be awarded to the opposing team.
- At the taking of a kick-in, all opponents must be at least 2 yards (1.8 meters) from the ball.
- A goal may not be scored directly from a kick-in.

Under-10: Throw-in

- When the whole of the ball has crossed the touch-line, either on the ground or in the air, the ball shall be thrown-in from the point where it left the field of play, by a member of the team opposing that of the player who last played or touched it.
- The player taking the throw-in shall:
 - a) Face the field of play,
 - b) Have part of each foot on the touch line or on the ground outside the touch line,
 - c) Use both hands, and
 - d) Deliver the ball from behind and over her/his head.
- If the player fails to throw the ball in correctly, she/he shall be permitted a second attempt. If the second attempt is unsuccessful, a throw-in shall be awarded to the opposing team.
- The ball will be in play immediately after it enters the field of play.

- If the player taking the throw-in plays or touches the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player, a free-kick shall be awarded to the opposing team.
- At the taking of a throw-in, all opponents must be at least 2 meters from the ball.
- A goal may not be scored directly from a throw-in.

RULE 14: Goal-kick

- When the whole of the ball has crossed the goal-line, either on the ground or in the air, excluding that portion between the goal-posts, having last been played or touched by a member of the attacking team, a goal-kick shall be awarded to the defending team. The ball shall be kicked into play from a point within that half of the penalty area nearest to where the ball crossed the goal-line.
- At the taking of a goal-kick, all opponents shall be outside the penalty-area until it has been kicked into play. The ball shall be in play when it has traveled directly beyond the penalty-area.
- If the player taking the goal-kick plays or touches the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player, a free-kick shall be awarded to the opposing team.
- A goal may be scored directly from a goal-kick.

RULE 15: Corner-kick

- When the whole of the ball has crossed the goal-line, either on the ground or in the air, excluding that portion between the goal-posts, having last been played or touched by a member of the defending team, a corner-kick shall be awarded to the attacking team.
- The corner-kick shall be taken from within the corner-arc nearest to where the ball crossed the goal-line. All opponents shall be not less than 6 yards (5.5M) from the ball until it has been kicked. The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves.
- If the player taking the corner-kick plays or touches the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player, a free-kick shall be awarded to the opposing team.

! A goal may be scored directly from a corner-kick.