

BENICIA YOUTH SOCCER

Modified Laws of the Game

Recreational Division

Under 10 Age Group

U10 recreational games follow the standard FIFA laws of the game with the following exceptions and clarifications:

- Players on the field (boys): 9 v 9 (includes the goalkeeper)
- Players on the field (girls): 7 v 7 (includes the goalkeeper)
- Ball size: 4
- Game duration: 2x 25 minute halves, 10 minute halftime
- Throw-ins: Enforced. Referees have discretion to allow one re-throw attempt and may briefly instruct players in proper technique.
- Offside: Enforced.
- Goal kicks: Taken from anywhere within the penalty area. Indirect.
- Corner kicks: Indirect.
- Free kicks: Indirect.
- Penalty kicks: None.
- Location: Free kicks for infractions inside penalty area are ceremonial and taken at the top of the penalty area nearest the spot of the infraction.
- Distance: Opponents 10 yards from spot of the kick.
- Slide tackles: Not permitted. Infraction results in a free kick for opponents. Safety level of tackles (discipline) enforced by referee.
- Discipline: Cautions (yellow cards) and send offs (red cards) are enforced. Any discipline will be noted in the game report.
- Dismissals: Referees are advised to follow “Ask, Tell, Dismiss” protocol. Head coaches are responsible for behavior of their staff, players and spectators. If a coach is dismissed from the pitch, the referee will file an incident report with the disciplinary committee.

Substitution Opportunities

A substitute shall not enter the field of play until given a signal or beckoned by the referee. An unlimited number of players from either team may be substituted at the following times:

- Prior to a kick-off;
- Prior to a goal kick;
- Prior to a throw-in; and
- After an injury or caution, when the referee stops play.

Overview of U10 Recreational Soccer

Soccer games at the Under 10 Recreational level are intended to be low-risk and high-reward in order to develop skills and self-confidence in players, foster leadership and self-discipline in coaches, give opportunities to exercise good judgment for referees, and provide a positive, recreational, athletic experience for everyone involved.

There are some very interesting dynamics that come together at the U10 age group. Games become more formal for the coaches, players, and parents. Additional laws of the game are enforced. New referees, often teenagers, are frequently assigned to these games.

Standings

- There are no standings.
- Match results (game scores) are not officially kept.
- Player development continues with more emphasis on teamwork.
- Referee development continues with formal licensing and crews of three officials.
- Players, coaches and referees may make mistakes from time to time. This is an expected part of the learning process. Please keep the game in perspective.

Referees

- This is the first year paid, licensed referees officiate games. In the U6, U7 & U8 age groups, referees were parent volunteers. For the U10 age group, officials are required to go through substantial training and certification. Many U10 referees are new to officiating soccer. Many are young teenagers. They are learning how to do their job properly, so please be supportive.
- *This league has a zero tolerance policy for dissent—by coaches, spectators or players—against any referee, in particular youth referees. Please, DO NOT GO THERE.*
- There will be an experienced adult referee mentor at the facility each day. Mentors help new referees improve their officiating and may intervene if there is conflict or dissent. Mentors also act as field marshals to help manage games. However, mentors can't see everything going on.
- It is worth repeating: Referees are new at this age group. Rookie mistakes will be made. But please remember, referees are a critical part of our soccer community. Encourage them too, and consider becoming one yourself! Contact referees@beniciasoccer.org for more information.

Coaches

- Many coaches in this age group are also new. Rookie coaches are learning as well, in particular the more formal structure of a “real” soccer game. The modified laws of the game are in full effect, including fouls and the often perplexing offside law.
- If the coach has just moved up from a younger age group, there may be some culture shock. In the U10 age group, a new youth referee, who may have never refereed a game before, has *absolute authority* to tell the coach, players, and parents what they can and can not do. For example, coaches can not move on and off the field without the permission from the referee, even to assist a player who may be crying or otherwise seems to be hurt.

Players

- Many players in this age group are new and not used to structure. Like the referees and new coaches, they are learning as well.
- Players may not run on and off the field without the permission of the referee.
- Subs must be from the mid-field line.
- In some years, the number of boys and girls on the field may not be the same. This is because the roster sizes are different based on the number of coaches available to divide the player pool.

Parents

- Most parents are used to the loose atmosphere in the younger age groups. However, things become more formal in this age group. It is a transition year for all. Again please keep the game in perspective.
- Parents should set a positive and respectful example for their children and other families who are part of their team.
- Enjoy your kids having fun while playing “*the beautiful game!*”

Player Equipment

The “Five Esses” are mandatory: shirt, shorts, shin guards, socks and shoes. Shin guards must be entirely covered by socks; and must be worn on the inside of the socks. In general, anything that could possibly be dangerous to the player, or any other player, shall not be worn. This includes baseball cleats (shoes with a single front cleat). Absolutely no bracelets, earrings, necklaces, watches, jewelry, plastic or metal hair ties, casts or splints are allowed. At this age, injured players should focus on healing. Referees have discretion to use their judgment to decide what is dangerous and prohibit such items. The *ONLY* exception to this rule is a medical bracelet which should be secured to the wrist and covered with adhesive tape.

Common Issues

- **NEW REFEREES:** This is the age group where new referees start their officiating careers. Many of them have never officiated sports before. Some are still teenagers, possibly children of your neighbors. Understand that referees sometimes ignore trifling infractions to maintain game flow. It takes time and experience for new referees to learn to assert themselves under pressure. Officiating is mentally demanding for a new youth referee, let alone an adult, working in the midst of 50 or more people with varying degrees of knowledge about the laws of the game of soccer who scrutinize every decision.
- **INJURIES:** Player safety is the most important factor for every decision a referee makes. In the event of an apparent injury, referees are encouraged to stop the game quickly due to age and skill of the players. Please understand that a referee may decide to wait a moment to let play flow if the incident appears to be minor. *If a coach, assistant or parent enters the field to attend to an injured player, including a goalkeeper, that player shall be substituted before play resumes.*
- **OFFSIDE:** Offside is enforced. This law of the game is the most misunderstood, particularly for new coaches, parents, and young players without formal training. It is not an infraction to be in an offside position. It is an infraction to participate or interfere with play from an offside position.
- **SLIDE TACKLES:** Not permitted. Infraction results in a free kick for opponents. Safety level of tackles (discipline) enforced by referee.
- **INDIRECT FREE KICKS:** All free kicks are indirect free kicks. That means that once the ball is kicked and moves, another person from either team must touch the ball before a goal can be scored.
- **PENALTY KICKS:** There are no penalty kicks. Infractions inside the penalty area result in a free kick taken from the top of the area at the spot nearest the infraction.
- **HANDLING THE BALL DELIBERATELY:** Coaches, parents, and players are often not aware of what constitutes deliberately handling the ball. There is no such thing as “handball.” It is common for the ball to unintentionally hit the hands and arms of players. Unless it was a deliberate act the call should not be made. Referees are trained to use their judgment consistent with the laws of the game.
- **DISSENT:** *Coaches are responsible for the behavior of their entire sideline, including substitute players and spectators.* Referees and mentors are advised to follow the “Ask, Tell, Dismiss” protocol for dealing with sideline dissent. If a coach is dismissed, there is an automatic one-game suspension and a report will be filed with the disciplinary committee for further sanctions.
- **TECHNICAL AREA:** The technical area starts at the halfway line and continues 10 yards to the left. Coaches and substitute players must remain in the technical area at all times. Coaches may not wander on and off the field as in the younger age groups. Coaches need permission from the referee to enter the field, even to attend to an apparently injured player.

Common Sense

At all times use common sense. Players play soccer to have fun. Referees protect player safety, inspect fields and equipment, manage the game, and maintain the flow of the action. Coaches coach the players, and project a positive attitude. Parents cheer and provide positive encouragement. Coaches are responsible for the behavior of their entire sideline (coach, assistant coaches, players, and spectators).

All participants, particularly coaches, parents and referees must exhibit good sportsmanship and, if needed, take action to ensure that others do. Running up the score, is perceived by many as poor sportsmanship, even during a game where official match results are not kept.

Do not argue with the referee or mentor. Dissent (constantly questioning calls, arguing, verbal abuse, etc.) is not tolerated. If there are issues with a referee, the coach should contact the on-site adult mentor or email the league referee coordinator (referees@beniciasoccer.org).

Again, there is a zero tolerance policy for dissent toward any referee. Do not get into to a confrontation with any youth referee. Dissent toward a youth referee is treated as a much more severe offense.

Remember, the coach of each team is directly responsible for maintaining proper conduct of their players and spectators. Verbal abuse of players and referees is not tolerated. Referees are instructed to follow the “Ask, Tell, Dismiss” protocol by interacting only with the *head coach* of the team who shall take responsibility for their entire sideline. A referee may stop the match until the bad behavior ceases. All such cases shall be reported to the Disciplinary Committee for applicable follow-up.

Substitution Procedure

A coach may substitute players by calling out to the referee “Substitution!” or “Sub, please!” The referee may then give permission for the substitution. However, a stoppage of play does not guarantee that a substitution will occur: the referee may not hear the coach above enthusiastic cheering or play may restart too quickly. Do NOT repeatedly shout “Sub!” after the referee has indicated for the restart to take place, when a player is in the process of taking the restart, or after the ball is in play. Be patient and wait for the next opportunity which usually takes only a few seconds.

The player to be substituted onto the field of play should be up and ready at midfield before the coach requests the substitution. The substitute shall wait off the field of play, by the center flag if any, until beckoned by the referee. The referee manages the number of players on the field and must see which players are leaving the field before allowing the substitutes to enter—this is especially important when both teams want to substitute or when one team wants to substitute many players. The referee should blow the whistle with two quick blasts to stop play and then acknowledge the substitute request. The referee will blow the whistle to restart play after the substitute has entered the field and arrived at their position.