



EXCEL
EXCELLENCE CENTER FOR ENHANCED LEARNING

***INDOOR SOCCER LEAGUE
OFFICIAL RULEBOOK***

Mission:

The mission of **ExCEL** is to champion the development of students and benefit the lives of community members by facilitating access to programs and resources that provide opportunities to enhance learning, acquire and refine skills, improve health, build character, and practice fellowship.

League Goal & Values:

The overall goal of every **ExCEL** Youth Sports League is to positively impact the lives of our student-athletes through physical, social, emotional, and educational growth opportunities that accompany participation in sports.

In order to accomplish this goal, it takes commitment, great effort, and “buy in” toward the following key values:

- **Players Have a Great Experience:**
All of our student-athletes should get to play in a safe & positive environment
- **Adults Focus on Development:**
Right now, getting better is way more important than getting trophies
We should strive to recognize and foster the development of both hard and soft skills:
 - Sport-specific skills, character, problem solving, teamwork, leadership, communication, resilience, and work habits
- **Everyone Takes Responsibility:**
We all contribute to the success of the league
 - Being Present, Prepared and On Time
 - Being Cooperative, Supportive, Knowledgeable, and Respectful
 - Being your Best

Final Note for Parents & Coaches:

Always remember that our players are impacted by all we say and do; whether at practices, games, in the car, or at the dinner table.

So, before saying or acting upon what may be on our minds...

Let's ask: *Is what I'm about to say or do going to make my Player or Team better at this sport? Will it make them better as a person?*

If not, we should move on to more important things so we can make sure, to the best of our abilities, that these athletes are developing as players, and young men & women.

Together, through our combined efforts, we can maintain these values, accomplish our goal, and fulfill the mission.

Thank you for being part of the **ExCEL**, and thank you for the investments you have decided to make toward the success of our youth.

Respectfully,

A.J. Knight
ExCEL Director

LEAGUE RULES

Rule 1 - The Field of Play

1.1 Field Dimensions:

- The field of play is 180ft. long x 90ft wide.

1.2 Field Marking:

- The field is marked with distinctive white lines that are five (5) inches wide. A Halfway Line divides the length of the field equally. The center of the Field of Play is designated with nine (9) inch circular mark at the midpoint of the Halfway Line. There is another circle with a fifteen (15) foot radius from the center of this mark. All Kick-Offs occur at this Center Mark.
- The field is divided into thirds by two (2) Attacker Lines that are equidistant into the Field of Play from each of the two (2) Goal Lines. At the midpoint of each Attacker Line is a nine (9) inch circular mark. The re-starts for all Superstructure Violations and Three-Line Pass Violations occur at these circular marks.

1.3 Penalty Area:

- At each end of the Field of Play, two lines are drawn at right angles to the Goal Line. They are nine (9) feet from the outside of each goal standard. These lines extend into the Field of Play a distance of twenty-four (24) feet. From the midpoint where these lines end there is an arch of 180° that completes the Penalty Area.

1.4 Free Kick Mark:

- At the apex of the arch that makes up the Penalty Area, a nine (9) inch circular mark is located. All Free Kick and Penalty Kick re-starts are taken at this Free Kick Mark.

1.5 Goals:

- A goal is placed at the center of each Goal Line within the perimeter wall. The Goals consist of two vertical goal standards 12 feet apart – each equidistant from the corner flags. The crossbar is 6 feet from the floor. This structure is netted on the left side, the right side and the top. The back wall is solid.

1.6 Team Benches:

- Team benches marked HOME and VISITOR are on either side of the scorekeeper area and the two (2) penalty boxes. Each bench has two (2) doors for access to the field. Each door has a latch which does not lock. The area above the shorted perimeter wall has netting that spans from six foot to the top of the structure.

1.7 Penalty Area:

- The Penalty Area is the shorter separated bench located in each team bench area (closest to the middle of the field).

1.8 Carpet/Turf:

- The turf is glued to the concrete floor. All of the field markings are permanent.
- **Note: Anyone spitting on the carpet or defacing it in any manner will be sent off. If it results in permanent damage, that individual may be barred from the facility permanently.**

1.9 Game Clock:

- The Game Clock will start at the scheduled time of the game and continue to run throughout unless the referee directs the clock operator to stop the clock. Usually, stoppage only occurs when a player cannot physically remove themselves or be removed from the field due to an injury / medical issue.
- Either the scorekeeper or the referee will present the current roster to the teams' representative (i.e. Coach, Manager, Team Parent) for signature. NOTE: No game shall be allowed to be whistled into play without a valid & signed roster from both teams. The facility shall have the ability to declare the match a forfeit if a team does not sign or validate its paperwork.

Rule 2 – The Official Approved Ball

2.1 Game Ball:

- The ball to be used for games at ExCEL shall be size appropriate and shall be provided by the facility. All game balls are property of the ExCEL Facility, and are to be returned to the scorekeeper or referee immediately following all games. No exceptions, to this policy.

NOTE: The use of individual or team balls is not allowed during game time. ExCEL stresses that teams are not allowed to bring extra balls. ExCEL is not responsible for lost or stolen soccer balls.

Team Level	Ball Size
U6 – U11	4
U12+	5

2.2 Ball Change:

- Only the referee may change the game ball.
All game balls must be inspected and approved by the referee.

2.3 Defective Ball:

- Any game ball that is damaged during match play will be replaced by the referee. The Re-Start will be where play was stopped by the referee.
If neither team had clear possession, there shall be a drop ball to re-start play.

Rule 3 – Teams, Players, Coaches and Substitutions

3.1 Teams:

- The game is played between two (2) teams. Team designations of “Home” and “Visitor” are determined per the ExCEL Schedule. The visiting team kicks off to begin the game.

NOTICE: Please see the Appendix for matrix of the number of players allowed per age group.

- In age groups that provide for it, one of the players shall be the Goalkeeper, and shall wear a jersey, shirt or pinnie that distinguishes themselves from all other players on the field.

3.1.1 Number of Players Per Team:

Age Group	# Players on Field	Min Req to Play
U10+	7 field players plus a GK	5

3.2 Minimum Player Participation Times (50% Rule):

- For ExCEL Indoor Soccer League there is a minimum amount of time that each player is REQUIRED to play.
 - All Players must play 50% of each half.
 - Players who show up late, have to leave early, or have violated team or conduct rules may be exempt from this requirement at coach’s discretion.

NOTE: The referee(s) will not be tracking playing time of the players on each of the teams – that is the responsibility of the coaches. Any issues or complaints of playing times should be directed toward ExCEL administration in order to be addressed.

3.3 Team Roster:

- ExCEL furnishes the official roster. This roster is printed out and is based upon the teams’ registration & schedules. The official roster at the scorer’s table is the official record for which team is deemed to be HOME and which team is deemed to be AWAY. If a coach requests a roster check during the game the referee shall complete this task at halftime of the game.

3.4 Team Substitutions:

- All players not participating on the field are called “substitutes” who are also under the jurisdiction of the ExCEL Playing Rules.
- Only players, coaches, and/or team managers, are allowed in the Team Bench Area. All coaching staff in the Bench Area must be wearing the official ExCEL Coaches Badge. Photographers, family members, etc... are not allowed in the Bench Area without an ExCEL Badge or current approved TISD background screening.

3.5 Unlimited Substitutions:

- Substitutions may be made any time during active play. Substitutions are unlimited. The substituted player must either be off the Field of Play completely within their own bench area or within the touchline within their own bench area BEFORE the substitute enters the Field of Play. Any substitute who enters the Field of Play prior to the player coming off is assessed a two (2) minute Timed Penalty.
- If either player (the substitute or the substituted player) touches or plays the ball while both players are on the Field of Play, a two (2) minute Timed Penalty will be issued to the player coming onto the Field of Play.
- The player entering the Field of Play MAY NOT be the first player to touch or play the ball directly upon entering the Field of Play while the ball is in play. Such violation shall result in a two (2) minute team penalty.

3.6 Timed Substitutions:

- During any of the “guaranteed substitution” opportunities, both teams shall be allowed approximately twenty (20) seconds to complete ALL player substitutions.

3.7 Goalkeeper Substitution:

- Goalkeeper substitutions shall be done by notifying the referee before the substitution is made and will be made during the next guaranteed substitution. Any goalkeeper change requires that there be a stoppage in play. Any goalkeeper shall wear a jersey that distinguishes themselves from all of the other players. The coach must also inform the nearest referee of the change in goalkeepers.

3.8 Guaranteed Substitutions:

- During guaranteed substitution occurrences, the teams shall be allowed about twenty (20) seconds to complete all player substitutions. The restart of play will be delayed to allow the completion of the substitution(s) for the following occurrences:
 - After a goal has been scored.
 - After a timed penalty has been assessed.
 - For an injury (with clock stoppage).
 - At any unusual stoppage acknowledged by the referee.
 - Any other referee managed restart.

3.9 Inadvertent Restart:

- If play is inadvertently restarted with the incorrect number of players after a guaranteed substitution, the referee (or scorekeeper) shall stop play and correct the number of players. Play shall be restarted with the appropriate number of players. No time penalty shall be assessed.

3.10 Injured Player:

- In the case of an injured player, the facility game clock may be stopped.
- **It is NOT a requirement for the game clock to stop. The decision whether to stop the game clock or keep it running is made by the referee(s) or the league coordinator.**
- The coach (or their designee) is beckoned onto the field of play by the referee to tend to the injured player. That player must be substituted for and shall not return to the field of play until a normal stoppage and must be approved by the referee.

- If medical assistance is required (such as EMT or paramedics), the facility reserves the right to stop the game clock. If the time delay is greater than the remainder of the game, that game shall stand as of the time of said injury.
- **If the decision is made to stop the game clock, the actual time will be paused the moment the coach (or their designee) steps onto the field of play. The game clock will then resume normally once the injured player and the coach (or their designee) has left the field of play.**

3.11 Blood:

- The referee shall send any player to their team bench who requires treatment for any sort of bleeding, regardless whether the blood is that player's or another player's. Any player who is removed for either having blood on their uniform or is actively bleeding shall not return until being inspected by the referee. No player shall be allowed to return with blood on any part of their person or uniform.

Rule 4 – Player's Equipment

4.1 Usual Equipment:

- The coach certifies that the team is in complete compliance with these rules:
- The equipment worn by a player during the entire game shall consist of:
 - Shirt with same or similar color to the rest of the team and a pair of shorts. Jerseys are the responsibility of the team. Each player must have a unique number to identify them. Teams should have a dark and light (white) version of their jersey or one unique color that is different from other teams. In the case of two teams with similarly colored shirts, the VISITING team will be required to wear pinnies of an alternate color that will be provided by the ExCEL. Shin guards – Completely covered by the appropriate size socks.
 - Indoor Soccer Footwear – Outdoor soccer cleats are allowed on the turf.
 - Baseball cleats or American football cleats are NOT allowed.
 - **NOTE: Teams may practice / warm up (futsal style) on the basketball courts and players must NOT wear any cleats while on the courts. Flat soled tennis shoes only.**

4.2 Footwear:

- Players must wear shoes. A player's footwear must conform to the following standards: Flat Soled shoes (courts) or other footwear designed for soccer (turf) must be worn.

4.3 Shin Guards:

- A player must wear age appropriate shin guards during play.

4.4 Goalkeeper:

- The goalkeeper shall wear colors that would distinguish that positional player from any other player on the field. Anyone replacing the goalkeeper shall also wear a distinctive color shirt. The goalkeeper may wear approved protective headgear or gloves.

4.5 Dangerous Equipment:

- Players are not permitted to wear any jewelry during the game. Any items medically necessary or that cannot be removed must be addressed to ensure that they do not present a danger to the wearer or any other player.
 - Requests to allow earrings to be worn or covered in newly pierced ears can be made to the Referee. Granting these requests is at the sole discretion of the Referee.
- Players wearing any of the prohibited items, once play has begun, shall be removed to their team bench area immediately and must be re-inspected at a normal stoppage by the referee before they may re-enter the field.
- By ExCEL rules, **NO HARD CASTS ARE PERMITTED** – Splints or braces are at the discretion of the referee(s).

4.6 Infringement:

For any infringement of Rule 4:

- The player(s) in violation shall be removed off the field of play to the team bench to adjust the equipment or the portion of the uniform which was found to be in violation.
- The player(s) shall not return without first reporting to a referee, who shall re-inspect said violation(s) and be satisfied that the necessary repairs and or adjustments have been completed.
- The player(s) shall re-enter **ONLY** at a guaranteed substitution.
- Should player(s) re-enter without satisfying these requirements, said player(s) shall be assessed a five (5) minute non-power play game misconduct and shall serve the complete time of that assessment. The Player shall be replaced and the team will still play full strength.

Rule 5 – The Powers and Duties of the Head Referee

5.1 Head Referee:

- Enforces the rules of the game.
- Stops play if a player has committed a foul.
- Stops play if there is a serious injury.
- Keeps the official time of the game.
- Requires any bleeding player to leave the field of play.
- Prevents anyone from coming onto the field of play unless beckoned by the referee.
- Acts on the advice of the scorekeeper of any rule infringements which may (or may not) result in a timed penalty or game ejection.
- Provides the official report of the game.
- Ensures the field, the ball, and the players' equipment are safe and legal.
- Suspends or abandons the game if necessary.

5.2 Powers:

- Referees' decisions on points of fact connected with play shall be **FINAL**. The referees' power to assess penalties and maintain control of the game extends to violations of these rules committed during play, during stoppages, and as players or other team personnel proceed to and from the field of play.

5.3 Warn/Penalize/Report/Caution/Eject:

- From the time the referee enters the facility, he has the authority to penalize or report any team player or bench personnel (as required by these rules) for fouls, time penalties, or warnings including all BLUE, YELLOW, and RED card offenses, regardless whether the ball is “in play”. Should a player(s) simultaneously commit two (2) or more violations, the referee shall penalize the most serious violation.
 - **Apply Advantage:** The Referee may allow play to continue when the team against which an offense has been committed will benefit from such an advantage. The Referee may penalize the original offense if the anticipated advantage does not ensue at that time.
 - **Exercise Discretionary Power:** The Referee has discretionary power to stop the game for any violation and to suspend or terminate the game because of the elements, interference by spectators, or any other cause which he or she deems necessary. Terminated games require a written report by all Officials within forty-eight (48) hours.
 - **Prohibit Entry onto the Field:** The Referee ensures that no unauthorized persons enter the Field of Play. Bench personnel may enter the field only at normal and/or scheduled times during the extent of the game.
 - **Halt Play Due to Injury:** The referee may stop the game, if a player has been injured. Whether the clock is stopped or not is dependent solely on the discretion of the referees.
 - **Non-Player Discipline:** The referee may penalize or eject, as set forth under rule 12, any coach or non-playing team personnel who enters the field of play without referee permission.
 - **Restart Signal:** The referee signals the restart of the game after all stoppages. A whistle is required for penalty kicks, kick-offs, three line & superstructure violations and restarts from the free kick mark.
 - **Ball Approval:** The referee decides whether or not the ball meets the specifications as outlined in rule 2.
 - **Halt Play Due to Injury:** The referee may stop the game if a player has been injured. The clock may be stopped dependent solely at the discretion of the referee.
 - **Non-player Discipline:** Penalize or Eject as set forth under Rule 12 any coach or non-playing team personnel who enters the field of play without referee permission.

5.4 Game Report:

- The completed team roster at the scorer’s table is the official game report. This should be signed by all referee(s) officiating the match. It includes not only both teams’ rosters, but also the results of the game, and any disciplinary actions taken against anyone.

Rule 6 – The Assistant Referee/Other Game Officials

6.1 Co-Equal Referees:

- One (1) referees shall officiate each game unless where ExCEL rules mandate there to be two (2) referee. Each referee may exercise the full duties and powers listed in Rule 5.

6.2 Senior Official:

ExCEL Senior Official may be part of the officiating crew. He/She has the power and authority to:

- Advise the referee(s) on the field of play on the rules of the game or ExCEL playing procedures and guidelines.
- Notify the referee(s) on the field of play of any infringements, game misconducts, or any other actions which could result in game ejections.
- Discipline or eject any coach, assistant coach, team manager, or substitute a play (or anyone else allowed in the team bench area) for unsporting behavior.
- Assist the timekeeper with managing the door of the penalty box for expiration of timed penalties.

6.3 Scorekeeper Powers & Duties:

- The scorekeeper retains no authority over the game, other than to document various occurrences per the referee(s).
- The duties of the Scorekeeper shall be (but not limited) to act as the official scorer and timekeeper of the game. The Scorekeeper shall assist the Referee(s) with an accounting of the players by means of a team's official signed roster and shall document the score as well as any Time Penalties, Misconducts, or Ejections on said teams' roster.
- ExCEL utilizes the Scorekeeper to act as the Penalty Box Attendant. Under the direction of the Referee, the Scorekeeper shall document the time in as well as the time out for each timed Penalty. The Scorekeeper also indicates when a team has accumulated their sixth (6th) team foul.
- The sixth (6th) team foul accumulation is utilized for U10 – U14+. Any individual players who are issued timed cards (BLUE - 2 minute, YELLOW - 5-minute Game Misconduct, or RED game ejections) do not count as "Team Fouls" and should not be tallied toward the team foul accumulation.

Rule 7 – Duration of the Game

7.1 Duration of the game:

- The duration of regulation games shall be two (2) twenty (20) minutes halves.

7.2 Interval Between Halves:

- There is a timed two (2) minute interval between halves. NOTE: ExCEL utilizes a running clock. If your team is NOT on the field ready to play, the time will continue to run with or without your team.

7.3 Interval Between Games:

- The facility clock is reset to twenty-five (25) minutes immediately at the end of the previous game. ExCEL uses a running clock and the next game will start when the clock runs down to twenty (20). This allows for an optional five (5) minute warmup and time for coaches to submit official game roster and meet with the officials.

7.4 After the game:

- All Coaches / Team Managers are asked to quickly remove their teams, their game bags, and trash as quickly as possible from the bench areas.

Rule 8 – Start and Restatrt of Play

8.1 Beginning the Game:

- A Kickoff from the Center Mark starts play at the beginning of each half and after every goal. The Visiting team always kicks off to start the game. For U10+: The Home Team shall occupy the Player Bench marked “HOME” and the Visiting Team shall occupy the Player Bench marked “VISITOR”. Each team’s defensive end will be designated by their own Player Bench.
- Team designations are controlled by the ExCEL schedule.
- Once the previous game personnel have cleared the Player Bench area, the teams may take their appropriate Player Bench.
- Immediately prior to the Kickoff, all players remain in their respective defensive halves, and all defending players are outside of the Center Circle. Once the Referee whistles for the Kickoff to begin, a player of the team having the Kickoff has 5 seconds to play the ball in any direction. The same player may not again play the ball until it touches another player – Two (2) Touch rule applies on the Kick Off. A goal can be scored directly from a Kick-Off.

8.2 Start of First and Second Half:

- The Visiting Team always takes the opening Kickoff to start the game. The Home Team will then take the opening Kickoff of the Second Half.

8.3 Kickoff After Goal:

- Except at the end of a Half, play restarts after each goal with a Kickoff by the team who was scored against.

8.4 Encroachment by the Defending Team:

- The Referee’s whistle does not start the game. Only when the attacking team touches or plays the ball is the game started. If a defending player does not give up the required five (5) yards on the kickoff, encroachment has occurred. The offending player may be issued a five (5) minute Yellow Card Game Misconduct. This is a non-Power Play Timed Penalty. So, the penalized team may add an additional player to bring the team to full strength. The offending player will be required to serve the entirety of the five (5) minute Timed Penalty. The player may reenter the Field of Play only after the time has been served and there is a Guaranteed Substitution.

NOTE: The player must enter the field of play before returning to the team bench area.

8.5 Restarts:

- A Restart is the manner of resuming play after a goal or other stoppage in play. Restarts take place by a Kickoff, Free Kick, Goalkeeper Distribution, or Dropped Ball, as set forth elsewhere in these Rules. The team which is NOT responsible for the stoppage takes the Restart. Except for a Dropped Ball, the same player who takes a Restart may not again make contact with the ball until touched by another player.

8.5.1 Free Kick:

If a team commits an infraction causing a stoppage of play, the opposing team is awarded a “Free Kick” restart.

- The Referee may allow a Free Kick to be taken from a point within a three (3) foot radius of the point of the infraction. Unless, in the Referee’s opinion, a team gains an unfair advantage. In which case, the kick shall be retaken.
- Before a Free Kick is taken, the ball must be stationary and the kicker shall have five (5) seconds within which to play the ball after being spotted and signaled to play by the Referee.
- A Goal may be scored directly against either team from any restart.
- In such cases where a Free Kick is taken from the opponent’s Free Kick Spot, Shootout Spot, Corner Spot, or otherwise controlled by the Referee, the Referee signals the restart with a whistle.
- Except for a Drop Ball, if the kicker (after taking the Free Kick) plays the ball a second time before another player has touched it, Two-Touch has occurred. A player of the opposing team shall now take a Free Kick. Playing the ball twice includes playing the ball on the rebound off the perimeter wall before being touched by another player.
- During the taking of a Free Kick, all opposing players must be AT LEAST five (5) yards (15 feet) from the ball until it is in play.
- Failure to put the ball in play within five (5) seconds will result in the restart being “turned-over” to the opponent.

8.5.2 Dropped ball Restart:

- If neither team has clear possession of the ball at a stoppage, the Referee restarts play with a Dropped Ball. A Dropped Ball occurrence inside the Penalty Arch is taken at the nearer Free Kick Mark. Otherwise, the Dropped Ball occurs at the spot of stoppage. The ball is “in play” once the ball contacts the ground untouched.

8.5.3 Goalkeeper Distribution:

- Play restarts with a Goalkeeper Distribution after an attacking player has last touched the ball before crossing the perimeter wall and between the corners of the field or for any infraction committed by the attacking team in the Penalty Arch. The distribution shall be taken from any point within the Penalty Area, by the Goalkeeper. The ball is considered in play, once the ball travels outside the Penalty Area. The following provisions also apply:
 - The Goalkeeper has five (5) seconds to distribute the ball once the Goalkeeper controls the ball and the Referee signals the Restart.
 - Opposing players shall remain outside the Penalty Area until the ball leaves the Penalty Area. Any opponent infringing this may be assessed a Misconduct – Technical Infraction resulting in a five (5) minute Timed Penalty against the offending player(s).

Rule 9 – Ball In and Out of Play

9.1 Ball in Play:

The ball is in play at all times from the start of the game to the finish, including the following:

- If the ball rebounds from a goalpost, a crossbar, or perimeter wall into the field.
- If the ball rebounds off a Referee when they are on the Field of Play.
- In the event of a supposed infringement of the Rules until a decision has been made by the Referee.

9.2 Ball out of Play:

The ball is out of play for the following:

- When the ball has wholly crossed the perimeter wall.
- When the ball has made contact with any part of the building superstructure above the Field of Play or upon entering the Team Area. Such contact will result in a Free Kick from the Attacker Mark nearest to the Attacker line where the ball was last played.
- When the game has been stopped by the Referee.
- In situations not covered above, a Dropped Ball shall occur. In accordance with Rule 8.5.2

Rule 10 – Method of Scoring

10.1 Legal Goal:

- Except otherwise provided by the Rules, a Goal is scored when the whole of the ball has passed over the whole of the Goal Line – between the goal posts and under the crossbar – provided that the ball was not thrown, carried, or intentionally propelled by hand or arm, by a player of the attacking side (except in the case of a Goalkeeper within their own Penalty Area when legally propelling the ball).

10.2 Scoring:

- All goals shall have equal value. The team scoring the greater number of goals shall be declared the winner.

10.3 Outside Interference:

- A goal cannot, in any case, be allowed if the ball has been touched or prevented by some outside agent from passing over the Goal Line. If this happens in the normal course of play, the game shall be restarted with a Dropped Ball in accordance with Rule 8.5.2 where the infraction occurred.

Rule 11 – Delay of Game Violations

11.1 Three-Line Pass:

- If a player, including the goalkeeper, plays the ball over three lines (the two (2) Attacker Lines and the Halfway Line) in the air towards his opponent's goal without the ball touching another player, the perimeter walls, or the Referee; a Free Kick shall be awarded to the opponent at the Shootout Mark of the first Attacker Line the ball crossed. This Restart requires a whistle to legally put the ball in play.

11.2 Superstructure-Violations:

- If the ball makes contact with any part of the building superstructure above the Field of Play or any of the implements protruding below the ceiling, a Free Kick shall be awarded to be taken at the Shootout Mark nearest to the Attacker Line where the ball was last played. This Restart requires a whistle to legally put the ball in play.

Rule 12 – Fouls and Time Penalties

12.1 Fouls:

A Foul is assessed to a player who commits any of the following offenses in a manner that the Referee considers careless, reckless, or involving excessive force:

- Kicking or attempting to kick an opponent.
- Tripping an opponent.
- Jumping at an opponent.
- Charging an opponent from behind unless the latter is shielding the ball in a legal manner.
- Striking or elbowing an opponent.
- Pushing an opponent.

Regardless of degree, a Foul occurs if a player:

- Holds an opponent.
- Handles the ball – except by the Goalkeeper within his team's Penalty Area.
- Intentionally playing the ball with the head – also known as 'Heading the Ball'
- Plays in a dangerous manner
- Impedes the progress of an opponent. When not playing the ball, a player is intentionally obstructing an opponent, i.e. running between the opponent and the ball, or interposing the body so as to form an obstacle to an opponent.
- Prevents the Goalkeeper from releasing the ball from their hands.
- Charging fairly at an improper time – when the ball is NOT within playing distance.
- Charging the Goalkeeper except when the Goalkeeper is outside the Penalty Area.
- Boarding, i.e. propelling an opponent into the perimeter wall. A two (2) minute Power Play time penalty MUST be assessed for Boarding. This restart requires a whistle to legally put the ball in play.

Should a player simultaneously commit multiple Fouls, the Referee penalizes the more serious one.

12.2 NO Sliding:

Sliding is not permitted during any level of play. This includes (but is not limited to) the following:

- No slide tackles.
- No sliding to play the ball.
- No sliding on the turf to celebrate a goal.

Any and all subsequent offenses shall merit a two (2) minute Power Play time penalty to be assessed against all players for committing this offense.

Bench Warning (For U10 and below)

In U10 and below, the first such sliding infraction shall cause the Referee to stop play and issue a Bench Warning to both Team Benches. This Bench Warning stipulates that the next occurrence of a sliding infraction will result in a two (2) minute Timed Penalty regardless of which team commits the infraction. Play is resumed with a Free Kick for the opponent. This restart requires a whistle to legally put the ball in play.

12.3 No Heading of the Ball Allowed:

- In all age groups (High School level and below), intentionally playing the ball with the head is no longer allowed. Any infractions of this rule shall result in a Free Kick to the opponents of the player who committed the Heading Foul at the spot of the infraction. The Free Kick Restart will follow the guidelines listed in Rule 13.4.

12.3.1 Denying an Obvious Goal or Goal Scoring Opportunity by Heading:

- If a Heading Foul is committed inside the Penalty Area and, in the Referee's opinion, there was a Denial of a Goal or an Obvious Goal Scoring Opportunity; then a Penalty Kick shall be awarded. However, there will be NO Red Card Misconduct Timed Penalty assessed to the player. See Rule 14 for the Penalty Kick procedures.

12.4 Unsporting Behavior:

The Referee stops play for Unsporting Behavior, resulting in a Free Kick and possible Timed Penalty for the following offenses:

- Illegal Substitution: See Rule 3.4
- Equipment Violation: Re-entering play without an ordered uniform adjustment.
- Leverage: Using the body of a teammate or any part of the Field of Play to gain an advantage.
- Encroachment: Entering the protected area of an opposing player taking a Free Kick.
- Trickery: Passing the ball to a Goalkeeper by trickery
- Dissent: Committing any of the following offenses, whether before, during, or after the game:
 - i. Referee Abuse – Words or actions directed by any player or team personnel at an official in dissent.
 - ii. Breach of Penalty Box Decorum – Delay in entering the Penalty Box or premature (or unpermitted) exit from the Penalty Box
- Other – Any behavior which, in the Referee's discretion, does not warrant another category of penalty (e.g. taunting, foul language, etc).

12.5 Goalkeeper Violations:

For the following violations by a Goalkeeper, the opposing team receives a Free Kick:

- **Illegal Procedure Handling** – The goalkeeper is NOT allowed to receive the ball from outside the Penalty Arc, bring it inside the Penalty Arc, and then use their hands.
- **Goalkeeper Distribution Violation** – After a Goalkeeper Distribution, the goalkeeper is not allowed to touch the ball again until another player (from either team) has touched the ball first.
- **Pass Back** – The goalkeeper is not allowed to handle the ball after a teammate has directly kicked the ball to them. The goalkeeper may handle any ball which a teammate passes to them by chest or knee and without “trickery” (the use of a wall or foot to flick the ball to the chest or knee before making the pass). A player may deliberately use the wall to make such a pass to the goalkeeper and the goalkeeper would be allowed to handle the ball. However, it must be a deliberate use of the wall. Incidental contact with the wall on a pass back to the goalkeeper is NOT deliberate use of the wall.
- **Five (5) Second Limit** – The Goalkeeper controls the ball with their hands inside their own Penalty Area for over five (5) seconds.

12.6 Time Penalties:

- The Referee may award a Timed Penalty against any player or bench personnel who acts in an unsportsmanlike manner, at any time.
- Time penalties shall be classified and noted as follows:
 - 2-Minute Power Play Penalties (BLUE CARD)
 - 5-Minute Misconduct: Non-Power Play (YELLOW CARD)
 - Send Offs / Ejections: Possible Power Play (RED CARD)

12.7 Two (2) Minute Power Play Penalties:

- A two (2) minute Power Play Timed Penalty may be assessed against players for committing any of the offenses as outlined in Rule 12.1 (a. – n.) while the ball is in or out of play. A Timed Penalty MUST be assessed for incidents of Boarding, Elbowing, Spitting, Striking, or any other offenses deemed severe, blatantly tactical, or blatant in nature.
- Play will be stopped and the offending player shall be issued a two (2) minute Timed Penalty (Blue Card). Said penalties shall be administered by the showing of a Blue Card by the Referee and shall be two (2) minutes in length.

12.8 Misconduct Penalties

12.8.1 Misconduct by Players:

- A five (5) minute Misconduct Penalty shall be assessed against players who show disapproval (by word or by action) of any decision of the Referees (or other game official), or acts in a severe unsportsmanlike manner. These Time Penalties shall be administered by the showing of a Yellow card and shall be AT LEAST five (5) minutes in length. This is NOT a Power Play opportunity. The opponent team does not play short-handed.
- Misconduct Penalties are cumulative. The second Misconduct Penalty received by a single player in a game will result in a send-off for that player for Misconduct After a Caution.

12.8.2 Misconduct by Non-Players:

- A Misconduct involving non-playing personnel shall be considered administrative in nature and shall be forwarded to ExCEL as a separate Game Report.

12.8.3 Team Misconduct:

- A Team Misconduct is any physical or verbal abuse of the Referees or other players where the offender is not identifiable. A Team Misconduct shall be issued to the Coach of the offending team. NOTE: NO Card shall be SHOWN directly to a Coach. That incident shall be written up on a separate Game Report Form, and sent to the Director of the Soccer Program.

12.8.4 Ball Played or Thrown Off the Playing Field:

- During a stoppage of play immediately following a goal being scored, should a player intentionally kick, throw, or otherwise delay the restart of the game, such player shall be assessed a five (5) minute non-Power Play Game Misconduct Timed Penalty.

12.8.5 Misconduct Technical Infractions:

- A five (5) minute non-Power Play Timed Penalty may be assessed for the following offenses:
 - Player leaving the Penalty Box prior to the expiration of the Timed Penalty.
 - Player guilty of gesticulation (i.e. jumping up and down and yelling to distract the kicker) on a Free Kick
 - Player violating procedures for a Penalty Kick after a team warning.
 - Player commits delay of game violation.
 - Encroachment
 - Any other Unsporting Behavior violation
 - Vaulting the wall of the Team Bench area to either enter or leave the Field of Play. If this violation occurs after the game is over, a RED CARD is given, instead.

12.9 Ejections with a Power Play Timed Penalty:

- A player or non-player shall be ejected and the offending team given a two (2) minute Power Play Penalty (the team plays short) for the following offenses. The player chosen to serve the Penalty Time is allowed to return to the Field of Play and is not booked for serving said Time Penalty.
- Ejections are awarded for incidents of:
 - Violent Conduct or Serious Foul Play
 - Foul or Abusive Language
 - Head Butting
 - Third player into an altercation
 - First player off the bench joining an altercation
 - Leaving the penalty box to join in an altercation
 - Spitting on an opponent, game official, or anyone else.

12.10 Ejections without a Power Play Timed Penalty:

- Any player who accumulates three (3) Timed Penalties or two (2) Misconduct Timed Penalties shall be ejected. No additional two-minute power play time penalty accompanies such an ejection. However, another player may need to serve the timed penalty that led to the Red Card. (i.e. the 3rd blue card offense).

12.11 Ejected Players:

- Any ejected player is required to leave the Playing and Team Areas. Those players who are underage with no parent or guardian present may stay in the Team Area provided that player wears a pennie or other shirt not to be confused with the other active, valid players.

12.12 Goalkeeper Restrictions:

- Listed below are special restrictions associated with the Goalkeeper. The first two are infractions that shall cause the Referee to stop play and award a Free Kick to the opposing team at the Free Kick Spot (Top of the Penalty Arch).
 - Ball played to Goalkeepers Hands from a Teammate - A goalkeeper is not permitted to play the ball with their hands in the event that the ball has been deliberately kicked to him by a teammate. If in the opinion of the Referee the goalkeeper has used trickery to circumvent the rule, the goalkeeper shall be issued a five (5) minute Misconduct Non-Power Play Timed Penalty, for this attempt to avoid the Rule.
 - Illegal Procedure Handling - A Goalkeeper who receives the ball outside of the Penalty Area SHALL NOT handle the ball inside the Penalty Area.
 - Goalkeepers serve their own Penalty Time. The team has twenty (20) seconds to replace the offending goalkeeper. Any delay may result in a two (2) minute Timed Penalty given to the offending team.
 - Player positions – Opposing players remain outside the Penalty Area until the ball leaves the Penalty Area. Encroachment shall result in a five (5) Minute non-Power Play Penalty issued to the offending player.
 - Goalkeeper Distribution Infraction – A goalkeeper taking a distribution may not play the ball again with their hands until after the ball has left the Penalty Area and has been touched by another player. Otherwise, the opposing team shall be awarded a Free Kick where the violation occurred.
- Punting – A Goalkeeper may NOT punt the ball out of the Penalty Area at any time. Any infringement will result in a Free Kick from the Free Kick Mark at the top of the Penalty Area.

12.13 Goalkeeper Privileges:

- Obstructing Goalkeeper - If a player intentionally obstructs the opposing goalkeeper in an attempt to prevent him from putting the ball into play, the Referee shall award a Goalkeeper Distribution. The obstructing player may be cautioned for Unsporting Behavior and be issued a five (5) minute non-Power Play Misconduct. This restart requires a whistle to legally put the ball in play.
- Charging Goalkeeper - In cases of body contact in the Penalty Area between an attacking player and the opposing goalkeeper **NOT IN POSSESSION OF THE BALL**, the Referee shall stop the game if, in the Referee's opinion, the action of the attacking player was intentional, and award a Goalkeeper Distribution. The player guilty of charging may be cautioned for Unsporting Behavior and be issued a five (5) minute non-Power Play Misconduct. This restart requires a whistle to legally put the ball in play.
- Endangering the Goalkeeper – A player who intentionally commits a foul against the goalkeeper which (in the opinion of the Referee) falls short of Serious Foul Play (Ejection) but nevertheless endangers the goalkeeper beyond what is considered to be normal hazard of play is guilty of Unsporting Behavior. The offending player is given a five (5) minute non-Power Play Misconduct. This restart requires a whistle to legally put the ball in play.

- Goalkeeper Possession – Players are NOT allowed to further challenge for the ball once the Goalkeeper is in control of the ball with their hands and has maintained possession of the ball. This includes (but is not limited to):
- When the ball is between the hands
- When the ball is between the hand and any surface (either the ground or their own body) or by touching it with any part of the hands or arms
- When holding the ball in an outstretched open hand
- When bouncing it on the ground or throwing it in the air

12.14 Goalkeeper Penalties:

- All Time Penalties assessed to a goalkeeper shall be served by the offending goalkeeper.

12.15 Ejected Coach:

- A Coach who has been ejected the game shall leave the playing area, team area and/or building if requested by the game official. If there is no other coach or parent with an ExCEL Coaches Badge present to take over for the Ejected coach, the game may be deemed complete. This incident shall be written up on a separate ExCEL Game Report Form, and sent to the Director of the ExCEL. An Ejected Coach who refuses to leave the building within a reasonable amount of time shall cause that game to be abandoned by the Referee(s).

12.16 Duration/Expiration of Time Penalties

12.16.1 Two (2) Minute Power Play Timed Penalties:

- Two (2) minute Timed Power Play Penalties issued to players shall be subject to the following conditions in regards to duration and expiration of Penalty Time.
- Power Play Goal – If a team is reduced to a lesser number of players on the Field of Play than its opponents due to Time Penalties, and such team is scored upon by its opponent, then the player having the least amount of un-expired Power Play time remaining may return to the game.
- Equal Number of Penalties – In situations where an equal number of players from each team are serving Time Penalties and a goal is scored, NO PLAYER shall be released and NO PENALTY TIME voided, as it is not a Power Play goal.
- Multiple Penalties (Team) – There must always be a minimum number of players on the Field of Play for each team. Each player that receives a Timed Penalty must go to the Penalty Box. If the number of field players fall below the required minimum, that player may be replaced by a substitute. If there is no substitute remaining, the game is over.
 - The Penalty Time for the third (3rd) player in the Penalty Box will not commence until that of the first (1st) player has elapsed.
 - The first (1st) player may not return to the Field of Play until a Guaranteed Substitution after the expiration of his Penalty Time or the opposing team scores a Goal.
 - Should both the first (1st) and second (2nd) Penalty Times elapse while all three players are still in the Penalty Box, then the first (1st) penalized player may rejoin play.
 - Likewise, in the case where the third (3rd) player's Penalty Time elapses, the second (2nd) player may rejoin play.
 - In the final case, the third (3rd) player may exit the Penalty Box at the first Guaranteed Substitution after the expiration of his Penalty Time.

- Multiple Penalties (Player) – For multiple Time Penalties assessed against a player in a single instance, the guilty player shall serve the entire accumulated time. That player may be replaced by a substitute after the Power Play Penalty Time has elapsed.
- Penalty Box Exit – Once a player enters the Penalty Box, the player shall remain there for the duration of the Penalty Time.
 - Should a player leave the Penalty Box prior to the expiration of Penalty Time to participate in play, a five (5) Minute Game Misconduct is given to the player.
 - Should a player leave the Penalty Box prior to the expiration of Penalty Time to participate in dissent or an altercation, this shall be considered Violent Conduct and the player shall be ejected.

12.16.2 Five (5) Minute Non-Power Play Misconduct Penalties:

Five (5) minute non-Power Play Misconduct Penalties issued to players shall be subject to the following conditions in regards to duration and expiration of Penalty Time.

- The player must serve the entire five (5) minute Penalty Time
- The player may not return to the Field of Play until a Guaranteed Substitution after the expiration of his Penalty Time.
- The player must step onto the Field of Play whether or not they are going to participate in play or enter the Team Bench area.

Rule 13 - Restarts

13.1 Definition:

- A “Restart” is a manner of resuming play after a stoppage other than a kickoff. For a stoppage of play while the ball was in play on the playing field, the following are possible:
 - FREE KICK (Rule 8.5.1)
 - SHOOTOUT (not used in youth play) (Rule 14.5)
 - PENALTY KICK (Rule 14.1)
 - SUPERSTRUCTURE VIOLATION (Rule 11.2)
 - THREE-LINE PASS (Rule 11.1)
 - DROP BALL (Rule 8.5.2)
- For a stoppage in play because the ball left the Field of Play, the following are possible:
 - KICK-IN (Rule 15.1)
 - CORNER KICK (Rule 15.3)
 - FREE KICK RESTART (Rule 13.4)

13.2 Definition of Playing Field:

- For purposes of determining restarts, the playing field includes the Players Bench and Designated Team Area.

13.3 Restart Regulations and Restrictions:

- If a team commits an infraction causing a stoppage of play, the opposing team is awarded a “Free Kick” restart. The Referee may allow a Free Kick to be taken from a point within a three (3) foot radius of the point of the infraction unless, in his opinion, a team gains an unfair advantage in which cases the kick shall be retaken. Before a Free Kick is taken, the ball must be stationary and the kicker shall have five (5) seconds within which to play the ball after being spotted and signaled to play by the Referee.
- A Goal may be scored directly against either team from any restart.
- In those cases, where a Free Kick is taken from the opponent’s Free Kick Spot (Top of Penalty Arch), Attacker Spot, Corner Spot or otherwise controlled by the Referee, the Referee signals the restart with a whistle.
- Except for a Drop Ball, if the kicker (after taking the Free Kick) plays the ball a second time before another player has touched it, a player of the opposing team shall take a Free Kick. This is known as two-touch. Playing the ball twice includes playing the ball on the rebound off the perimeter wall before being touched by another player.
- During the taking of a Free Kick, all opposing players must be AT LEAST five (5) yards (15 feet) from the ball until it is in play.
- Failure to put the ball in play within five (5) seconds will result in the restart being “turned-over” to the opponent.

13.4 Free Kick Restart:

- When play has been stopped for a foul listed in Rule 12 or for an infraction listed elsewhere in the Rules, play shall be restarted with a “free” kick taken by a player of the opposing team or goalkeeper distribution as listed below.
 - The restart for any infraction committed by the attacking team in the defensive Penalty Area will be a Goalkeeper Distribution.
 - Any Free Kick awarded to the attacking team for a foul or an infraction which occurred in its opponents’ penalty area shall be taken at the Free Kick Mark.
 - If play is stopped for an infraction which occurred in the Team Bench area or Penalty Box, the game shall be restarted with a Free Kick taken by a player of the opposing team from the place where the ball was when play was stopped.

13.5 Encroachment:

- If a player of the opposing team encroaches into the Penalty Area or within five (5) yards (15 feet) of the ball before a Free Kick is taken, and a member of the team taking the kick requests compliance with Rule 13.1, the Referee shall delay the taking of the kick until the player complies. If upon the request of the Referee that player(s) does not comply by immediately retiring the proper distance, he shall be considered guilty of encroachment. This restart also requires a whistle.
- If a defending player within five (5) yards (15 feet) intentionally interferes with the taking of a Free Kick, he shall be considered guilty of encroachment. For the first violation, the Referee shall issue a Team Warning for encroachment to BOTH Team Bench areas. ALL subsequent violations after being appropriately warned for encroachment, this shall be deemed a Misconduct-Technical infraction resulting in five (5) minute penalty assessed against the offending player(s)

13.6 Vaulting the Wall – At any time:

- If a player or team personnel vaults the wall at any time during or before the game that player(s) shall be adjudged a Game Misconduct and shall serve a five (5) minute non-Power Play Penalty.
- If a player or team personnel vaults the wall after the game is over, a RED CARD is issued to said player and will be noted in the Game Report filed by the Referee to the ExCEL.

Rule 14 – Penalty Kick, Shootout, & Sixth (6th) Team Foul

14.1 Penalty Kick:

- A Penalty Kick is a Free Kick taken from the Free Kick Mark at the top of the Penalty Arc taken by a properly identified opponent against the Goalkeeper without any interference by other players.
- A Penalty Kick shall be awarded for the following fouls committed by a defending player in their own defensive half of the field. A Red Card **MUST** be issued for these two specific Denial of a Goal Scoring Opportunity infractions. If a Blue Card is issued instead (for Unsporting Behavior – Tactical Foul), then a Penalty Kick would NOT be awarded.
 - A foul from behind against an attacking player, having control of the ball, and one or no defensive players between them and the goal.
 - A foul committed by any defender (including the Goal Keeper) who is the last player on their team between the attacking player with the ball and the goal.
- As outlined in Rule 12.3, if a Heading Foul is committed inside the Penalty Area and, in the Referee’s opinion, there was a Denial of a Goal or an Obvious Goal Scoring Opportunity; then a Penalty Kick shall be awarded. However, there will be NO Red Card assessed to the player committing the Heading Foul.

14.2 Player Position During Penalty Kick:

- The Referee will not whistle for the taking of a Penalty Kick until the players are positioned in accordance with the following:
 - All players, with exception of the properly identified player taking the kick and the opposing Goalkeeper, must be on the field of play but behind the Attacker Line.
 - The defending Goalkeeper remains on their own Goal Line, facing the kicker, between the Goal Posts until the ball is kicked. Any encroachment from this position to interfere with the kicker will result in a warning. Subsequent violations shall result in a five (5) minute Misconduct Non-Power Play timed penalty.

14.3 Ball in Play:

- The player taking the kick may kick the ball in any direction. The ball shall be deemed in play after it has been played (touched and moved).

14.4 Infringements/Sanctions:

- If the Referee gives the signal for the Penalty Kick to be taken and, before the ball is in play, one of the following situations occurs:
 - Violation by Kicker: The player taking the Penalty Kick infringes the rules; the Referee allows the kick to proceed.
 - If the ball enters the goal, the kick is re-taken
 - If the ball does NOT enter the goal, the kick is NOT re-taken.
 - Violation by Goalkeeper: The goalkeeper infringes the Rules; the Referee allows the kick to proceed.
 - If the ball enters the goal, the goal is awarded
 - If the ball does NOT enter the goal, the kick is re-taken.
 - Violation by Defending Team: A teammate of the goalkeeper crosses the Attacker Line; the Referee allows the kick to proceed.
 - If the ball enters the goal, the goal is awarded.
 - If the ball does NOT enter the goal, the kick is re-taken.
 - Violation by Attacking Team: A teammate of the kicker crosses the Attacker Line; the Referee allows the kick to proceed.
 - If the ball enters the goal, the kick is re-taken.
 - If the ball does NOT enter the goal, the kick is NOT re-taken.
 - Violation by Both Teams: If a player from both the defending and attacking teams infringe the Rules, the kick is re-taken.

14.5 Shootout:

- The Shootout is NOT USED.

14.6 Sixth (6th) Team Foul:

- For Fifth (5th) Grade and older age divisions, the fouls for each team are tracked. A Blue Card is given to a team once they have accumulated 6 fouls in a game. The coach or team captain will choose the player to serve the two (2) minute Timed Penalty and the team will play short. Any individual serving the Timed Penalty for the team is not booked for the team infraction.
- The foul count **DOES NOT** reset at halftime. Any ‘Team Fouls’ committed in the first half shall carry over into the second half. The tally will reset back to zero (0) only after the 6th foul has been reached and a Team Blue Card has been issued.

14.6.1 Included in the 6th Team Foul Total:

- Fouls (kicking, tripping, jumping at, charging, striking, elbowing, pushing, PIADM, Handling, Impeding, Preventing GK from releasing ball)
- Illegal handling by GK, pass back, taking longer than 5 secs for GK to release ball, etc.

14.6.2 Not Included in the 6th Team Foul Total:

- Ball out of play, loss of possession (5 sec rule)
- Superstructure / 3-line pass violations
- Heading fouls
- Any foul where a Blue/Yellow/Red Card is issued

Rule 15 – Restarts – Ball Over the Perimeter Wall

15.1 Kick-In:

- When the ball is played over the perimeter wall along the Touchline, a Kick-In shall be awarded from the point it crossed the perimeter wall to the opponent of the team who last touched the ball before it went out of play. If the ball touches a player or other team personnel on the bench, who are inadvertently extending into the playing field, or if the ball exits the field through an open door of a Team Bench, the Kick-In shall be awarded to the opposing team.

15.2 Goalkeeper Distribution:

- When the ball crosses the perimeter wall between the corner flags and is last touched by an attacking player, play restarts with a Goalkeeper Distribution in accordance with Rule 13.6.

15.3 Corner Kick:

- When the ball crosses the perimeter wall between the corner flags and is last touched by a defensive player (excluding when a legal goal has been scored), a Corner Kick is awarded to the attacking team. A goal may be scored directly from a Corner Kick.
 - Placement - The whole of the ball shall be placed on the Corner Spot at the nearest Corner Flag Post, and it shall be kicked from that position.
 - Whistle - The blowing of the whistle by the Referee shall take place PRIOR to the taking of a Corner Kick.

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