

YOUR GUIDE TO THE 17 RULES OF SOCCER

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1. THE FIELD OF PLAY



- The field of play is the surface where the soccer game is played
- It can be a natural (grass) playing surface, an artificial playing surface, or a hybrid of both
- The field of play must be rectangular and have clearly marked boundary lines

Length of the field (touchline):

- minimum 100 yds (90 m); maximum 130 yds (120 m)

Width of the field (goal line):

- minimum 50 yds (45 m); maximum 100 yds (90 m)
- The touchline must be longer than the goal line.

2. THE BALL

All balls must be:

- spherical
- made of suitable material
- of a circumference of between **27 ins (68 cm)** and **28 ins (70 cm)**
- between **14 oz (410 g)** and **16 oz (450 g)** in weight at the start of the game
- of a pressure equal to **0.6–1.1 atmosphere (600 –1,100 g/cm²)** at sea level (8.5lbs/sq in–15.6 lbs/sq in)



3. THE PLAYERS



- A game is played by **two teams**, each with a maximum of **eleven players**; one must be the goalkeeper.
- A game may not start or continue if either team has fewer than seven players.
- The number of substitutes that may be named, from **three** to a maximum of **twelve**, is dependent on the rules of the specific competition
- A substitution can only be made during a stoppage in play and the referee must be informed before the substitution is made

4. THE PLAYER'S EQUIPMENT

- The compulsory equipment for a player comprises the following separate items: **a shirt with sleeves, shorts, socks, shinguards, and footwear**
- The two teams must wear colors that distinguish them from each other and the match officials.
- Each goalkeeper must wear colors that are distinguishable from the other players and the match officials
- A player must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous.
- **All items of jewelry are forbidden** and must be removed.



5. THE REFEREE



- Each game is controlled by a referee who has full authority to enforce the Laws of the Game
- **The decisions of the referee are final and must be respected**
- The referee controls the game in cooperation with the other match officials, acts as timekeeper, and keeps a record of the match

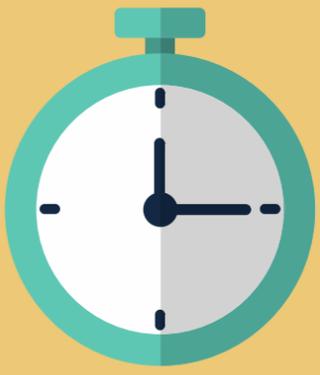
6. THE OTHER MATCH OFFICIALS

- The 'on-field' game officials **assist the referee** with offenses when they have a clearer view than the referee
- In pro games, there are a variety of different assistants that are available. These are: two assistant referees, fourth official, two additional assistant referees, reserve assistant referee, video assistant referee (VAR) and at least one assistant VAR (AVAR) may be appointed to the game



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7. THE DURATION OF THE GAME

- A soccer game lasts for **two equal halves of 45 minutes**, though this length is often reduced for youth games
- There is an interval at half-time, which should not exceed **15 minutes**
- Allowance is made by the referee in each half for all time lost during that half. The referee will add this "lost time" onto the end of the half

8. THE START AND RESTART OF PLAY

- A kick-off from the center of the soccer field starts **both halves of a game, both halves of extra time and restarts play after a goal has been scored**
- A coin toss before the game determines which team will take the kick off at the beginning of the game
- For the second half, the teams **change ends** and attack the opposite goals
- At kick off **all players**, except the player taking the kick-off, **must be in their own half** of the field of play



9. THE BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY



The ball is **out of play** when:

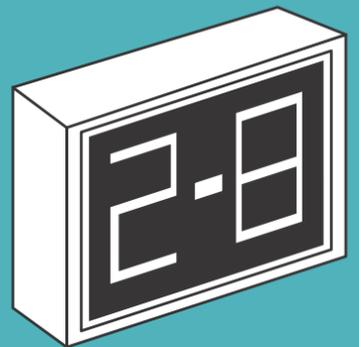
- it has wholly passed over the goal line or touchline on the ground or in the air
- play has been stopped by the referee

The ball is **in play** at all other times including:

- when it touches a match official and
- when it rebounds off a goalpost, crossbar or corner flagpost and remains on the field of play.

10. DETERMINING THE OUTCOME OF A GAME

- A goal is scored when **the whole of the ball passes over the goal line**, between the goalposts, and under the crossbar.
- The team scoring **the greater number of goals** is the winner. If both teams score no goals or an equal number of goals, the game is drawn.
- When competition rules require a winning team the procedure to determine the winning team is: **two equal periods of extra time** not exceeding 15 minutes each, followed by an equal amount of **kicks** by each team **from the penalty mark**



11. OFFSIDE

A player is in an offside position if:

- any part of the head, body or feet is **in the opponents' half** (excluding the halfway line)
- **and** any part of the head, body or feet is **nearer to the opponents' goal line than both the ball and the second-last opponent**

A player is only penalized for being offside **when, and if, they become actively involved with the play.**

A player cannot be penalized for being offside if they receive the ball directly from a throw-in, corner kick, or goal kick



12. FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

- A **foul** is any action that is: **considered to gain an unfair advantage**. This includes the use of hands or any action considered to be a dangerous play.
- These offenses are penalized by the referee by awarding a free-kick to the team on the receiving end of the offense.
- If the offense is considered serious enough, the offending player may be shown a **yellow card**, indicating they have been cautioned. If a player is shown a 2nd yellow card they will also be shown a red card.
- Being shown a **red card** means they must leave the field of play immediately and can take no further part in the game. The team cannot replace this player



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13. FREE KICKS

There are two types of free kick in a soccer game:

- A **direct free kick** is a kick where the player taking the free-kick can score a goal directly without any other player having to touch the ball first. Usually results from a contact foul or a handball.
- An **indirect free kick** is a free-kick where the player taking the kick cannot score directly from the kick. The ball must touch another player before a goal can be scored. most other types of foul apart from from a contact foul or a handball
- **All free kicks** are taken from the place where the offense occurred
- The kicker **must not touch the ball again** until it has touched another player



14. THE PENALTY KICK

- A penalty kick is awarded if a player commits a direct free kick offense inside their penalty area
- A goal may be scored **directly from a penalty kick**.
- The defending goalkeeper **must remain on the goal line** until the ball has been kicked.
- The players other than the kicker and goalkeeper must be at least **10 yds (9.15 m)** from the penalty mark behind the penalty mark



15. THE THROW IN

- A throw-in takes place when the ball has **gone out of play over the touchline**, or sideline, of the soccer field.
- The opposing team of the player who **last touched** the ball is required to throw the ball back into play with their hands.
- A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw-in

At the moment of delivering the ball, the thrower must:

- stand facing the field of play
- have part of each foot on the touchline **or** on the ground outside the touchline
- throw the ball **with both hands** from behind and over the head **from the point** where it left the field of play



16. THE GOAL KICK

- A goal kick is awarded when the **whole of the ball** passes over the goal line, on the ground or in the air, having **last touched** a player of the **attacking** team.
- After the ball is in play the kicker cannot touch the ball again **before** it has touched another player
- The ball must be stationary and is **kicked from any point within the goal area** by a player of the defending team
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves
- Opponents **must be outside the penalty area** until the ball is in play



17. THE CORNER KICK

- A corner kick is awarded when the **whole of the ball passes over the goal line** at the end of the field having last touched a player of the **defending** team.
- The ball must be placed in the **corner nearest to the point where the ball passed over the goal line**
- A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick.
- After the ball is in play the **kicker cannot touch the ball again** before it has touched another player
- Opponents must remain at least **10 yds (9.15 m)** from the corner arc until the ball is in play



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Hopefully you have found this information helpful. This guide is a simplified version of the 17 official rules of soccer as decided on by the International Football Association Board. If you want to find out more about the game of soccer head over to www.yoursoccerhome.com where you will find all sorts of information about soccer how the game is played.