

## Laws of Mini-Soccer and Youth Football

Update November 2012

The FA Youth Development Review, since 2010, has seen the advancement of football across the country culminating in the 25 recommendations that were taken through to FA Board in 2012. Parts of these recommendations included the development of the grassroots game to implement a new player pathway and approach to competition for young people. This update serves to inform you of the key changes to Laws when working with, and training new officials, and supporting existing referees.

### Under 7 and Under 8

1. U7 and U8 will be moving to 5v5, being phased in from season 2013-14 with the U7 and then season 2014-15 for the U7 and U8. This is the maximum number of players and therefore teams can play 4v4 matches.
2. Pitch size will be 40yds x 30yds maximum and this is the preferred size. Smaller pitches are permitted with 30yds x 20yds as the minimum.
3. A team needs a minimum of four players to start or continue a game.
4. All team members should receive equal playing time where possible with a best practice recommendation of 50% per player for each game.
5. The duration of the game will be a maximum of 2 x 20 minutes.
6. Development matches may be split into quarters instead of just halves.
7. Children can roll the ball in underarm with one or both hands **or** take a normal throw-in – the children have the option to choose.
8. The halfway line acts as a retreat line on goal kicks. The opponents must drop off to the halfway line to help the goalkeeper learn to play out from the back. However, if they want to play quickly they can do. The ball is in play as soon as it leaves the goal area – this Law is **mandatory**.
9. U7 and U8 can play three trophy events per season (typically Sept-April), lasting a maximum of two weeks each in season 2013/14.
10. As previously, the ethos of the 'referee as educator' remains strongly in place with a key role being to help young children learn about playing football.

### Under 9 and Under 10

1. U9 and U10 will be staying at a maximum of 7v7. This is the maximum number of players and therefore can play 5v5/6v6.
2. Pitch size will still be 60yds x 40yds maximum and this is the preferred size. Smaller sizes are permitted with 50yds x 30yds as the minimum.
3. The ball for U9 is a size 3 and for U10 is a size 4.
4. A team needs a minimum of five players to start or continue a game.
5. All team members should receive equal playing time where possible with a best practice recommendation of 50% per player for each game.
6. The duration of the game will be a maximum of 2 x 25 minutes.
7. Development matches may be split into quarters instead of just halves.
8. The halfway line acts as a retreat line on goal kicks. The opponents must drop off to the halfway line to help the goalkeeper learn to play out from the back. However, if they want to play quickly they can do. The ball is in play as soon as it leaves the goal area – this Law is **mandatory**.

9. In season 2013/14 U9 can play three trophy events per season (typically Sept-April), lasting a maximum of four weeks each. U10 can still continue to play in a regular league season if they wish in 2013/14.
10. In season 2014/15 U9 and U10 can play three trophy events per season (typically Sept-April), lasting a maximum of four weeks each.
11. As previously, the ethos of the 'referee as educator' remains strongly in place with a key role being to help young children learn about playing football.

### **Under 11 and Under 12**

1. U11 and U12 will be moving to 9v9, being phased in from season 2013-14 with the U11 and then season 2014-15 for the U11 and U12. This is the maximum number of players and therefore can play 7v7 etc.
2. Pitch size will be 80yds x 50yds maximum.
3. Goal size is 16ft x 7ft preferably but 21ft x 7ft is acceptable.
4. A team needs a minimum of six players to start or continue a game.
5. All team members should receive equal playing time with a best practice recommendation of 50% per player for each game.
6. Development matches may be split into quarters instead of just halves.
7. Offside **is** included within the Laws and is **mandatory**.
8. Distance from all free kicks is 10 yards.
9. In 2015/16 U11 can play in three trophy events per season (typically Sept-April), lasting a maximum of six weeks each. U11 can still continue to play in a regular league season if they wish in 2013/14 and 2014/15 as the new approach is phased in.
10. As previously, the ethos of the 'referee as educator' remains strongly in place with a key role being to help young children learn about playing football.

All other Laws that aren't highlighted above will be as they currently exist with no changes. Please see [www.thefa.com/kidsfootball](http://www.thefa.com/kidsfootball) for PDF downloads of all resources highlighting the Laws of Mini-Soccer and Laws of 9v9 as we move forward into a new era of youth development in this country.

We are also in the process of writing a bespoke 'Mini-Soccer Referees Course' that will then form the pathway to becoming a qualified Mini-Soccer Referee; this will link into the full qualification for becoming a referee too. More information will be available in 2013.

The key focus for these changes are about developing better players and putting the young person and their needs at the heart of the game. If you have any queries about the above, please don't hesitate to contact us.

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