

# 8U Guidelines

---

## **The Field:**

The field size for 8U games is 25-35 yards long, 15-25 yards wide.

## **The Markings:**

Distinctive lines recommended. Halfway line the width of the field, marked equidistant between the goal lines.

## **The Goals:**

Maximum four feet high and six yards wide.

## **The Ball:**

A size 3 ball is used for 8U games.

## **The Players:**

- **Numbers:** Five Players per team on field; No goalkeepers. Seven maximum on roster, Four minimum to start or continue a match.
- **Substitutions:** After 1<sup>st</sup> quarter, at halftime, after 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter and for injuries.
- **Playing Time:** Minimum of two periods per game and no player should play four periods until everyone has played three.
- **Teams:** Separate girls and boys teams should be promoted at all levels of play.

## **Player Equipment:**

Shoes and shinguards, covered by the socks are mandatory at all practice and game activities. Soccer shoes, tennis shoes, or similar type athletic shoes are recommended. The type and condition of cleated shoes must be inspected for safety before use.

## **Duration of Game:**

Four 10-minute quarters. Halftime break of 5 minutes.

## **8U Officials:**

AYSO certified 8U Officials or higher are required for 8U games. The 8U Official should briefly explain any infringements to the player(s) and encourage proper play and sporting behavior. As with all games, every effort should be made to keep the game moving and free from stoppages for doubtful infractions. Let them play and enjoy.

**Coin Toss:**

Team captains are called to the center circle for a coin toss. The Away Teams picks heads or tails. The winner of the toss selects the direction of attack. The team losing the toss Kicks-off to start the match.

**The Kick-off:**

The game is started with a kick-off in the middle of the field. Opponents must be six yards from the center mark while kick-off is in progress.

**2<sup>nd</sup> half Kick-off:**

Teams switch sides at halftime. The game is restarted with a kick-off in the middle of the field by the opposite team that kicked off at the start of the game. Opponents must be six yards from the center mark while kick-off is in progress.

**Ball In and Out of Play:**

The ball is out of play in all age group games when the ball completely crosses the touch line (side line) or goal line (end line), either on the ground or in the air.

**Method of Scoring:**

A goal, in all age groups, is awarded when the ball completely crosses the goal line into the goal.

**Fouls:**

The opposing team must be at least six yards from the ball when free kicks are taken in 8U games. The following, if done deliberately, are the fouls most likely to occur in 8U games: kicking, tripping, pushing, holding, handling the ball and dangerous play. Officials must remember that there is no need to stop play for technical violations that do not interrupt the flow of the game. It's a players game and not a game of how many infractions can be identified, so keep the fun going and let them play.

**Misconduct:**

Misconduct should be rare in 8U games. There is no need for the public cautioning and sending off of young players (leave the red and yellow cards at home). Officials should work cooperatively with the coach when a player may need a 'time out'.

**Free Kicks:**

All free kicks in 8U are direct kicks. Opponents must be at least six yards from the ball or on the goal line between the goal posts during free kicks. Free kicks awarded to the attacking team inside the defending teams goal area are to be taken from the nearest point on the goal area line parallel to the goal line.

**Offside:**

No offside.

**Throw-In:**

Throw-ins are replaced with kick-ins or dribble-ins at 6U and 8U. Opponents should be two yards from the ball. A goal can not be scored directly from a Kick-in.

**Goal Kick:**

A goal kick is awarded to the opposing team, in 8U and older, when the attacking team last touched the ball before it crosses the goal line but without scoring a goal. The goal kick may be taken from any point inside the goal area. The opposing team must be at least six yards away from the ball when the goal kick is taken in 8U games.

**Corner Kick:**

A corner kick is awarded to the opposing team, in 8U and older, when the defending team is last touched the ball before it crosses the goal line but not scoring a goal. The opposing team must be at least six yards from the ball when the corner kick is taken in 8U games.

**Hand Ball:**

A hand ball infraction occurs when a player handles the ball deliberately. The 'hand' includes the entire arm up to the top of the shoulder. Instinctive, self-protective reactions are not penalized at this young age. Accidental contact (ball striking hand or arm with no intent by the player) is not an offense and should not be penalized.

**No Heading:**

Consistent with the US Soccer mandates on heading the ball, heading is banned for all division 11U (12U and below for programs without single age divisions) and below in both practices and matches. A free kick will be awarded to the opposing team if a player deliberately touches the ball with his/her head during a match (taken where the player touched the ball with his/her head).