

Portland Parks & Recreation Youth Soccer

4v4 Rules | DK/K & 1st Grade

THE FIELD

A. Dimensions:

The field of play shall be rectangular, its length being not more than 35 yards nor less than 25 yards and its width not more than 25 yards not less than 20 yards. The length in all cases shall exceed the width.

B. Markings:

1. Distinctive lines not more than five inches wide.
2. A halfway line shall be marked out across the field.
3. A center circle with a five yard diameter.
4. Goal area: A three yard radius arc is added in front of the goal, which is a NO ENTRY area.

C. Goals:

The size of hockey goals or an approved portable goal size.

EQUIPMENT

1. Size three (3) soccer ball – provided by Portland Parks & Recreation
2. **SHINGUARDS – REQUIRED**
3. Soft cleats – permitted but not required, tennis shoes are fine

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

1. Maximum number of players on the field is four (4) per team, **played without goalkeepers**
2. Substitutions permitted during injuries or between periods of play
3. Teams may be coed.

DURATION OF THE GAME

1. **Prior to the game will be a 24-minute practice. Teams will each use half of the field.**
2. The game shall be divided into four (4), seven (7) minute quarters.
3. There shall be a brief one-minute break between quarters for substitution.
4. A coach or parent shall be the official timekeeper. *Clock will run continuously during quarters.*
 - a. No stoppage time.

THE START OF PLAY

1. Home team will kick off to start of the game. Remaining quarters will alternate
2. Opponent must be outside the center circle when the ball is kicked
3. The ball may not be touched again by the same player until it has been touched by another player of either team.
4. The ball may not travel backward on the first touch.
5. A goal cannot be scored directly from the kickoff
6. When a goal is scored, the game will restart with a kickoff from the team that did not score.
7. Drop balls on the field to restart play will NOT be used.

BALL IN & OUT OF PLAY

The ball is out of play during the following circumstances:

- a. When it has completely crossed a boundary line (on the ground or in the air)
- b. When the game has been halted by a coach

METHOD OF SCORING

1. A goal is scored when the whole ball passes over the goal line.
2. The ball must cross the goal line between the goal posts and under the crossbar.
3. Score will not be kept.

OFFSIDES & PENALTY KICKS

There shall be no offsidess or penalty kicks taken during the games.

NO ENTRY AREA

1. In front of every goal is an arc that represents a “no entry area”
2. This allows defensive players to be more involved in the play and keeps players from camping out in front of the goal.
3. It also encourages more accurate shooting skills – players cannot dribble the ball into the goal.
4. A “dead ball” or stopped ball within the goal box is automatically restarted back into play with a goal kick regardless of who touched the ball last.

GOAL KICK

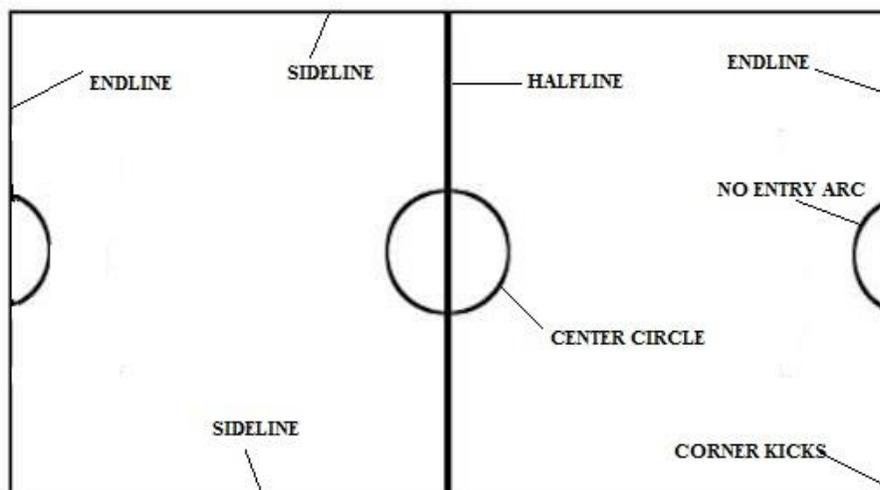
1. Awarded to the defending team when the ball crosses the endline after being touched last by the opposing team/attacking team.
2. The ball shall be kicked from anywhere on the “no entry arc” line.
3. The opposing team must be no closer than five yards from the ball when it is being kicked.
4. The player taking the goal kick must not touch the ball after the kick until it has been touched by another player

CORNER KICK

1. Awarded to the offensive team when the ball crosses the endline after being touched last by the opposing team.
2. The kick is taken at the corner nearest from where the ball crosses the endline.
3. A goal may be scored directly from the corner kick.
4. The opposing team must be no closer than five yards from the ball when it is being kicked.
5. The player taking the corner kick must not touch the ball after the kick until it has been touched by another player.

THROW INS

1. When the ball goes over the sideline it shall be put back into play by the opponent of the player who last touched the ball before it crossed the sideline.
2. A player must be facing the field when they put the ball back into play.
3. Both feet must be on the ground.
4. The thrower must keep both hands on the ball and deliver it from behind their head.
5. The thrower must not be the first player to touch the ball once it is thrown.



Special Considerations and Emphasis

Kids playing soccer at this age should have fun to develop an appreciation for the game of soccer. At this age group, there still is no goalkeeper, but there is a “no entry arc” in front of the goal. This is a no-man zone, where neither offense nor defensive players are allowed. The analysis of most soccer experts is that small-sided games for young children are most beneficial for learning basic motor skills, basic rules, and the fundamental concepts of the game. They also learn how to interact with their peers within a game involving a ball. What is not supported is the use of goalkeepers in this format. Children want to run, kick the ball, and score goals. Every child should experience the triumph and success of scoring a goal. They don't do well when told to stand in one place. If the action is at the other end of the field, a young goalkeeper will find some other activity to hold his or her attention.

The major emphasis for the youngest players should be on getting comfortable with controlling the ball and learning to pass. “Coaching” should still be kept to a minimum; teach through enjoyable games and exercises. Allow the game to be the teacher. Tactics are not important at this age, but defining passing and defending should be emphasized. **Be patient!**

The 4v4 model allows for many formations. One of the most common is the diamond, which gives players the most options during game-play. Players can move the ball forwards, backwards and side to side. Players at this age are very egocentric. They sometimes view the ball on the field as a “toy” and want to keep it to themselves. Encourage your players to pass and explain to them why ball movement is important. At first, they are going to want to just kick the ball. Some players may have a hard time understanding that soccer is a foot sport.

Listed below and following pages you will find a basic outline of drills and training concepts. Always remember that if a drill is not working move to another drill or concept. Mix games into your practices for the players. This will keep your practices fun.

DRIBBLING & TURNING

Techniques

- Dribbling with inside of foot (R and L)
- Dribbling with outside of foot (R and L)
- Show simple footwork
- Disguise dribble
- Running with the ball for speed
- Turning with inside of foot (right and left)
- Protect the ball

Principles

- Close control in close space
- Keep head up to see the ball and the developing play

SHOOTING

Techniques

- Lace kick with both feet (R & L)
- Allow the ball to come under the body (allows for a lower shot)
- One-touch shooting

Principles

- Accuracy before power

PASSING & SUPPORT

Techniques

- Lace kick for power (R and L foot)
- Push pass (inside of foot) for short passing on the ground (R and L foot)
- Wall passes using both feet
- Use outside of both feet

Principles

- Discourage kicking with the toes

CONTROLLING (“TRAPPING”)

Techniques

- Limp foot to absorb the energy from the ball. Ball will stop at their feet.
- Juggling
- Inside of foot (R & L)
- Outside of foot (R & L)

Principles

- Use relaxed stance, knees slightly bent
- Cushion control is the key
- Keep ball close

DEFENDING

Techniques

- Staying goal side of the ball, and opponent
- Challenging
- Tackling
- Clearing

Principles

- Decrease space and time (for the opponent)

POSITIONS & SYSTEMS OF PLAY

Techniques

- Attackers (forwards, wings)
- Defenders (fullbacks)

Principles

- All positions have both offensive and defensive responsibilities.

SKILL GAMES

Dribbling

1. **Beehive** - Provide a 10 yd. x 10 yd. grid (or approximately 1 sq. yd. per player). Each player has a ball. Players dribble inside the grid randomly using correct techniques and practicing avoiding other players. Players should practice inside and outside foot dribbling, stopping, changing direction, and maintaining control while in the beehive.
2. **King of the Ring** - Provide a 10 yd. x 10 yd. grid where each player has a ball. One player or the coach is "it" without a ball. Players start to dribble in the grid while trying to avoid having their ball kicked out of the grid by the player who is "it". Players can reenter the grid after

retrieving their ball and completing some type of small skill penalty activity, like juggling the ball twice on their feet or knees or dribbling around a nearby tree before returning to the grid.

3. **Red Light - Green Light** - Just like the traditional game except the players dribble their balls forward and must learn to control and stop their balls on the "red light" command. Line all the players up and have the coach be the traffic cop. Send out of control players back to the starting line.
4. **Attack and Protect** - Provide a 10 yd. x 10 yd. grid. Each player has a ball. Players dribble around in the grid trying to kick another player's ball out of the grid while at the same time protecting their own ball. Provide the players with a skill "condition" that they must complete before they may reenter the grid.
5. **Spiderman** - Provide a 15 yd. x 15 yd. grid. Each player should have a ball. The coach starts as the first spider. The players dribble around the grid while trying to avoid the tag of the spider. When a player is tagged by the coach, they join hands and go after new prey. Each successive tagged player makes the web of the spider grow bigger, but, alas, less organized. Young players will request this game constantly.

Passing

1. **Keep Away Circle** - Players pair up and stand across from each other around a circle of cones. One player or the coach stands inside the circle and tries to intercept passes made between the players. Passes completed between partners count as goals. Change the player inside the circle after a pass is intercepted or after a short time interval.
2. **Cone Game** - Players pair up and stand across from each other around a circle. Set up 6 or 8 cones in the middle of the circle as targets. Partners try and knock over the cones in the middle with accurate passes.
3. **Triangle Pass** - Set up a three player triangle. Each group has one ball. Players pass to each other around the triangle shape. Make sure they reverse the direction of their passes from time to time. After a certain level of proficiency is reached, add a defender to the center of the triangle who will try to intercept the ball.
4. **Four Corner Pass** - Set up a 10 yd. x 10 yd. grid with cones at each of the four corners. Four players work with one ball, one player on each side of the grid. A fifth player defends inside the grid. Players may only run between the cones on their side of the grid as they attempt to pass the ball across the grid. Change the middle player often to keep the play crisp and fast.
5. **Star Wars** - This competitive game is very exciting for younger players! Set up a 10 yd. x 20 yd. grid. Have all the players line up at one end prepared to run to the other end. The coach or a player stands just outside the grid at midway with several balls at the ready. On command the players attempt to run to the endline while evading balls kicked at them by the coach. All shots should be kept below waist level. Players hit by the balls become new additional shooters until only one runner is left.

Shooting Drills

1. **Marbles** - Players are organized into pairs, each with a ball. Standing with his back to the field of play, the first player throws his ball over his head. The second player then kicks his ball from the starting point and tries to hit the ball that was thrown. Play alternates by kicks until one ball is hit. The players then reserve and start again. Coaches should emphasize instep kicks for length and side of the foot kicks for accuracy. Make it a condition that every other game is left foot only!

2. **Four Goal Game** - Set up four cone goals about two yards wide in each corner of a 20 yd. x 30 yd. grid, Divide players into two equal teams. Players may score at any of the four goals. This game encourages teamwork and results in lots of shooting.
3. **Shoot Between Cones** - Set up a cone row with cones spaced 3 to 5 yards apart. Pair up players and position one player on each side of the cone row facing the cones and each other. Players should start close to the row of cones first, striking the ball between the cones. The partner receives the ball and strikes it back between the cones. Move players farther away from the cones as their technique and accuracy improve.
4. **Go For Goal** - Players form two lines on either side of the coach who is standing about 18 to 20 yards from a goal of any size. The coach serves the ball toward the goal while one player from each line races to win the ball and shoot. As skills progress, add a goalkeeper. The coach should encourage correct shooting technique and a good first touch on the ball.
5. **Dribble Cones and Shoot** - Set up two cone lines for a dribble weave about 30 yards long with a 2 yard goal at the end. Divide players into two lines or teams. Players must dribble through the cones and score at the goal at the end before the next player in line starts.

Other Games

1. **The Numbers Games** - Young players will play this game for hours! Set up a 10 yd. x 20 yd. grid with goals at each end. Divide players into two teams and place each team on one of the end lines. Number the players 1 - 6 (or use colors for very young players). The coach stands at the halflines and serves a ball into the grid while calling a number. Players who are called sprint off their end line to win the ball, play 1 v 1, and try to score. Players standing on the end line may keep the ball in play but may not protect the goal. The coach could try 2 or 3 numbers. Ball should be served on the ground.
2. **4V4 Pass and Strike** - Set up a 10 yd. x 15 yd. grid with two opposing goals. Divide players into two teams. Players must pass the ball to each team member or make 4 complete passes before they can shoot on goal. If the ball is taken by the opponent the team must start over in its pass count.
3. **Crab Soccer** - Set up a 10 yd. x 15 yd. grid with goals at each end. Divide the players into two teams. Players must walk on their hands and feet simultaneously while trying to pass the ball to teammates and scoring. This game really encourages teamwork because of the difficulty in movement by the players.

Additional Resource:

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