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Law 7 - Duration of the Match



**U.S. Soccer Federation Referee Program
Entry Level Referee Course
Competitive Youth Training
Small Sided and Recreational Youth Training**



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Periods of Play

Games at the competitive youth level consist of two equal halves of play.



The local rules of competition specify the length of each half depending on the age of players, typically ranging from 25 to 45 minutes.

The use of extra periods of play is rare and is usually limited to tournament settings.



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Periods of Play

Typically, the length of halves for competitive youth games is:

- **U17 thru U19 – 45 min.**
- **U15 & U16 – 40 min.**
- **U13 & U14 – 35 min.**
- **U11 & U12 – 30 min.**
- **U9 & U10 – 25 min.**



The local rules of competition may vary and specify otherwise.



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Halftime

Players are entitled to a half-time interval.



This interval should not exceed 15 minutes and the exact time allowed will be determined by the local rules of competition.

The length of the half-time interval may only be altered with the consent of the referee following agreement between both teams.



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Game Length

The referee is solely responsible for keeping time for the game.



Games are usually divided into two halves, but some small-sided and recreational youth games are played using four quarters.



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Game Length

The length of the game and the amount of time allowed for halftime will always depend on the local rules of competition.



It's important that all members of the referee team be aware of these local rules prior to the start of the game.



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Keeping Time

The referee begins keeping time after the ball is kicked into play to start each half or period of play.

Time does not start with the whistle, i.e. it does not start until the ball is kicked.



The game is continual - which means that a referee never stops time on their watch until all the time in each period has been played.



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Keeping Time

Again, the amount of time allowed for a game will depend on the local rules of competition.



In addition to the game time specified by the local rules of competition, the referee has the power and the duty to allow for **added time** at the end of each half or period of play.



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Allowances

At the discretion of the referee, allowance for time lost can be made for:

- **Substitutions,**
- **Assessment of injury to players,**
- **Removal of injured players from the field for treatment,**
- **Time wasting and**
- **Any other cause deemed appropriate by the referee.**





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Allowances



Law 7 permits the referee and competitions to provide short breaks for drinks (in hot / humid weather) or other medical reasons. Time must be added to account for the time allotted for such permitted breaks.



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Added Time

Allowance for time lost is often referred to as added time.



Once this time has been decided, the referee should do their best to communicate the time to be added to the coach of each team.

This can also be accomplished by informing the AR to inform the coaches.



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Allowances



The referee can add as much time as deemed necessary and all allowances of additional time must be in whole minutes, no fractions of a minute.



Added Time

Once the amount of added time is decided, the game must be continued for a minimum of that length of time.



For example, if the referee decides there will be three minutes of added time, the game cannot end until at least the entire three minutes have been played.



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Added Time



For the small-sided and recreational youth level games added time is often not required, but some common reasons for a referee to allow for added time include the assessment and removal of injured players or blatant time wasting.



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Extended Time



If a penalty kick has to be taken or retaken, the period is extended until the penalty kick is completed.



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Severe Weather

Severe weather is an issue that can impact games at any time.



Since safety is the referee's primary concern, they must be prepared to suspend a game due to severe weather.



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Severe Weather

Referees should be aware of what is expected of them by the local rules of competition and what resources are available to them in making decisions regarding severe weather conditions.





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Weather

Player safety is the primary concern for the referee. The game should be stopped if the weather conditions make the game unsafe for play.



This includes not only lightning, but also heavy rains, snow or icy conditions, high heat index, lack of light or anything that makes play unsafe.



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Lightning

While there are multiple examples of severe weather, lightning is among the most common reasons that a game will need to be suspended.



Referees are always urged to error on the side of caution and safety.

Lightning

If any of the 3 things below happens, the referee should **immediately** suspend the game

- 1) If thunder is heard
- 2) If lightning is seen
- 3) If a thunderstorm is seen coming ... or if your hair stands on end.





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Lightning

The referee must keep play suspended until at least 30 minutes have passed without any signs of lightning or thunder, starting from the last time they were seen or heard.





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Review Question

36. Who is responsible for keeping the time of the game?

- A. Referee
- B. Volunteer timekeeper
- C. Official competition timekeeper
- D. Any of the above



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Review Question

37. The game is continual, which means the referee _____ stops time of their watch until all the time in each half or period of play has been completed.

- A. never
- B. constantly
- C. only during an injury



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Review Question

38. Must the referee stop play immediately, if the weather conditions make the game unsafe?

A. Yes

B. No



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Review Question

39. The referee's decision to allow for added time should be based which of the following?

- A. Substitutions, injuries and time wasting
- B. Normal stoppages for throw-ins, goal kicks and corner kicks
- C. Suggestions from one or both coaches
- D. Whether or not the game started on time



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Review Question

40. Allowance for time lost means which of the following?

- A. If 3-minutes were added to the end of the first half, 3-minutes must also be added to the end of the second half
- B. The amount of time added to each period of play is up to the referee