



# Law 3 (8 & 9)



U.S. Soccer Federation Referee Program  
Grade 9 Referee Course  
Small Sided and Recreational Youth Training



# Checking in Players

**Most teams in competitive youth games will present the referee with rosters.**



**Additionally, most players at this level will have a pass issued by the league or state association.**





# Checking in Players

**The general rule is that a player can't play without a pass, but this must be verified by the local rules of competition.**



**Also, according to the local rules of competition, referees should check the player passes against the team roster to verify identity and eligibility.**



# Number of Players

**The maximum number of players a team can have is eleven (11) and the minimum number is seven (7) players per team**

**One player on each team must be the goalkeeper and each team **must have a goalkeeper at all times.****

**A game can not begin if a team has fewer than 7 players and a game cannot continue if a team drops below seven (7) players.**



# Number of Players

**Exceptions should be made when players temporarily leave the field for instances of quick treatment of an injury, correcting blood on the uniform, or to correct illegal equipment.**

**If a game cannot continue due to a team having fewer than seven (7) players, the referee must terminate the match and report this to the local competition authorities.**



# Players

**The number of players allowed during small-sided and recreation youth games will depend on the local rules of competition.**



**If goalkeepers are used, they must wear a different color jersey from the rest of their teammates.**



# U.S. Soccer Player Development Initiative

## Number of Players:

**6-U: 4v4; No GK**

**7-U: 4v4; No GK**

**8-U: 4v4; No GK**

**9-U: 7v7; w/ GK**

**10-U: 7v7; w/ GK**

**11-U: 9v9; w/ GK**

**12-U: 9v9; w/ GK**

**The USSoccer Player Development Initiative recommends that small-sided youth games use this chart for guidance on the number of players depending on the age of the game.**

**7v7 – 7 max., 5 min.**

**9v9 – 9 max., 6 min.**



# Late Arrivals

**Late arriving players may play in the game and they should report to the AR with their player pass for inspection.**



**Once the player's equipment is inspected and deemed safe for play, they may enter the field during play, but only if they have been received permission from the referee.**





# Substitution

**The local rules of competition will outline how many and when substitutions are allowed, so officials will need to know these rules**

**Small-sided and recreational youth games will often allow unlimited substitution.**

**Officials need to make sure that they understand when and how substitutions will be handled in the game.**





# Procedure

**The local rules of competition may dictate which stoppages of play permit substitutions.**



**The procedure to replace a player with a substitute begins with a stoppage of play.**

**Substitutes will typically report to the AR on the team-side touch line.**



# Procedure

**Officials must be aware of the procedure that is needed for a substitution to be made.**

- **First, the referee is informed of the substitution.**
- **Referee then confirms that the change can be made.**
- **Next, the player being substituted leaves the field.**





# Procedure

- The player being replaced usually leaves at the halfway line, but they may leave the field from anywhere.
- Once this player has left the field, the substitute may enter the field at the half way line.
- The substitution procedure is over when the substitute enters the field with the referee's permission, thus becoming a player.
- Substitutes may take a restart, provided they have first stepped onto the field.







# Procedure



**The player leaving can leave the field anywhere, but it's a good idea to have them leave at the halfway line as well.**



# Responsibility

**It is the referee's responsibility to control the substitution process and ensure that an equal number of players leave and enter the field.**



**Officials should make a habit of counting the number of players after all substitutions are completed to ensure that each team has the correct number of players on the field.**



# Responsibility



**Referees should not restart the game until the substitution process has been done properly and the players are ready for play to resume.**



# Goalkeepers

- **Any player may change with the goalkeeper**
  - **During a stoppage ... and**
  - **With the referee's permission**
- **Changing without referee's permission**
  - **Both players cautioned at next stoppage**
- **Substituting the goalkeeper**
  - **Standard player substitution procedure**





# Goalkeepers

**Any player may change places with the goalkeeper, provided that the referee is informed before the change is made and that the change is made during a stoppage of play.**

**In competitive youth games with unlimited substitutions, a new goalkeeper in place at the start of the second half is considered to be appropriate notification.**



# Goalkeepers

**If the change is made without the referee's permission, then the referee should caution both players at the next stoppage of play.**

**Regardless, after any change has been made the player wearing the goalkeeper's jersey is considered to be the goalkeeper of record.**

**Note that when a change is made without the referee's permission and cautions are issued, the change of player and goalkeeper is still upheld.**



# Goalkeepers

**If a team is substituting a goalkeeper, rather than changing with a player on the field, referees should follow the standard substitution procedure, as determined by the local rules of competition.**



# Leaving the Field

**There are times during the normal course of play when a player may need to leave the field, such as for an injury or to repair equipment.**



**Technically, this requires the referee's permission, however, common sense should be applied, since players may sometimes leave without thinking to ask for permission.**





# Leaving the Field

**In all cases, players must receive the referee's permission when re-entering the field.**



**If play is going on, the player must enter from a touch line.**

**If there is a stoppage, the player may return from anywhere.**



# Leaving the Field

**When a player who requires the referee's permission to re-enter the field-of-play, but re-enters without permission, the referee must:**

- **Stop play;**
- **Caution the player for entering without permission;**
- **Restart with a DFK from spot of any interference;**
- **Restart with an IFK from position of the ball, if there was no interference.**



# Infringements

**If a team official, substitute, substituted player, or sent-off player enters the field-of-play without the referee's permission, and interferes with play, the referee will stop the game.**

**Play is restarted with a direct free kick (DFK) or penalty kick (PK) for the opposing team from the position of the ball at the time of the stoppage.**

**If the ball was already out of play, then play is restarted accordingly.**



# Infringements

If the outside interference **attempt** to stop a goal is **unsuccessful** (i.e. the ball enters the **goal**) and the interference does not prevent a defending player from playing the ball, the referee may award the goal (even if contact was made with the ball), unless the ball enters the opponent's goal.

If the outside interference **attempt** to stop the goal is **successful**, the referee **can not** award the goal, because the ball never entered the goal itself.



# Too Many Players

**When multiple substitutions are being made, it is very important that referees follow the substitution procedures and not allow substitutes to enter the field prematurely.**



**Following the proper procedure allows officials to reduce the risk that the game would restart with too many players.**





# Too Many Players

**If the referee realizes that there are too many players during play, the game should be stopped right away.**



**The referee should then caution and remove the extra player.**

**The game would be restarted with an direct free kick (DFK) for the opposing team.**



# Too Many Players

**If the referee realizes that there are too many players during a stoppage of play, they should caution and then remove the extra player.**



**The game is then restarted with the appropriate restart that led to the stoppage of play.**



# Too Many Players

If a team with too many players scores a goal, the referee must disallow the goal, caution and then remove the extra player.



Play is then restarted with a DFK from the position of the extra player.

If the referee does not realize that a goal was scored by a team with too many players until after the subsequent kick-off, the goal will stand.



# Too Many Players

**If a team with too many players is scored against by a team without extra players, the referee must allow the goal.**



**The referee must also caution the extra player and have them leave the field.**

**The restart would be a kick-off since the goal was awarded.**



# Too Many Players

**If a ball is going into the goal and the interference does not prevent a defending player from playing the ball, the goal is awarded (even if contact was made with the ball) unless the ball enters the opponents goal.**

**This reinforces the importance of following proper substitution procedures and that referees and ARs should always count the number of players before allowing play to resume.**





# Sent-Off Players

**If a rostered player is sent-off before the game, the player can be replaced by someone else on the team roster, and the team still starts with eleven (11) players.**

**Note that this does not count as a substitution, but unless otherwise indicated by the local rules of competition, designating a replacement substitute is not permitted.**



# Sent Off Players

**If a player is sent-off during the game, they may not be replaced and the team must play with one fewer player.**

**If a player is sent-off after the game, the referee should still show the red card, if the player is still on field. The referee must then include this information in their game report.**



# Outside Agents

**Anyone not named on the roster as a player, substitute, or team official is considered an “outside agent.”.**



# Outside Agents

**At the competitive youth level, outside agents are typically little siblings who run out on to the field or family dogs.**

**If they do not interfere and are quickly removed, there is no need to stop the game.**

**If the game must be stopped to have the outside agent removed, the game would be restarted with a dropped ball.**



# Management

- **Communication before the game**
  - **Referee and ARs**

**When multiple substitutions are being made by one or both teams, it is important that the referee team has discussed how they will communicate that all substitutions have been successfully completed and play can be restarted.**





# Management

- **Don't be influenced or pressured**
  - **Players**
  - **Coaches**
  - **Spectators**

**There may also be pressure in competitive youth games for the referee to speed up the restart of play at a substitution time by allowing steps in the substitution procedure to be ignored or combined.**



# Management

- **Always follow the correct procedure**

**Referees should resist this pressure and recognize that deviations from the proper substitution procedure can produce problems if there is misconduct by players or substitutes.**



# REVIEW QUESTIONS



# Review Question

**10. What should the referee do before restarting play after each substitution?**

- A. Signal with their hand that the substitution process has ended
- B. Count to make the sure the correct number of players are on the field





# Review Question

**11. Can the checking of player passes and the players' equipment be skipped if the game is running behind schedule?**

- A. No, it's important to check and inspect all players even if the game is running late
- B. Yes, this process can be skipped so long as both coaches agree





# Review Question

**12. Can the referee allow a team to play without a goalkeeper?**

- A. Yes, a team is allowed to play without a goalkeeper if they so choose
- B. No, each team must have a goalkeeper



# Review Question

**13. A 9-U (7v7) game cannot continue if a team drops below six (6) players.**

- A. True
- B. False