



# ***SYSA SPRING SOCCER RULES OF COMPETITION***

Updated 2023

## **Introduction and Summary**

SYSA's Spring Soccer League uses a unique set of rules and guidelines that are a combination of official SYSA, USSF, US Youth Soccer, and Washington Youth Soccer guidelines. We also have to consider the requirements dictated by field and goal logistics on Seattle and Shoreline playfields in the spring.

The goals of SYSA Spring Soccer should be paramount no matter what the rules are for any age group:

**“create a fun, low-pressure soccer experience that allows for lots of touches on the ball and the freedom to play creatively in a safe environment”**

Beyond the U6-U9 age groups, Spring Soccer is played on smaller sized fields with fewer players on the field. U11 and older games are played on full size fields split in half, with the games running across the width of the field.

SYSA tries to conform to the USSF small-sided rules and guidelines whenever possible, and to the standard FIFA Laws Of The Game (LOTG) at the older ages. The following chart summarizes the exceptions to the FIFA LOTG and to any small sided guidelines used by neighborhood clubs during the fall season. If a rule is not listed here as an exception, coaches should assume that accepted LOTG apply.

## **Officiating**

Spring Soccer relies on the coaches of the participating teams to referee the games. The recommendation is that a coach from each team should referee one-half of the game. We ask that a designated 2-3 additional parents step up as team officials (which requires them to be RMA cleared). If a parent or sibling with referee a up to date certification volunteers to referee, and each coach agrees to that solution, then that is also an acceptable way to have the game refereed.

**Anyone officiating a game must be RMA cleared!**

Keep in mind that these games are meant to be recreational and fun. Judgment calls by a referee are not crucial to the spirit of Spring Soccer games. Keeping the kids safe and having fun is more important than determining which team touched the ball last before going out

**SYSA Spring Soccer  
Rules of Competition Chart**

	<b>U6</b>	<b>U7</b>	<b>U8</b>	<b>U9</b>	<b>U10</b>	<b>U11</b>	<b>U12 +</b>
Number of Players on the Field	4	4	5	7	7	8	8
Max Number of Players on Roster	9	9	10	12	12	16	16
Min Number of Players for Game	3	3	3	5	5	6	6
Game Time Periods (Minutes) (a)	2 x 25	2 x 25	2 x 25	2 x 25	2 x 25	2 x 25	2 x 25
Time Between Periods (Minutes)	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Ball Size	3	3	3	4	4	4	5 (U12 is 4)
Field Width (yds) (b)	15-25	15-25	15-25	35-45	35-45	45-55	45-55
Field Length (yds) (b)	25-35	25-35	30-40	55-65	55-65	70-80	70-80
Build Out Line (f)	N/A	N/A	Mid Line	Mid Line	Mid Line	Mid Line	N/A
Goalkeeper Punts & Goal Kicks	N/A	N/A	No	No	No	No	Yes
Goal Area (yds)	none	none	none	5x16	5x16	6x18	6x18
Penalty Area (yds)	none	none	none	10x30	10x30	14x40	18x40
Goal Size (feet) (c)	4 x 6	4 x 6	4 x 6	6x12 to 6.5x18.5	6x12 to 6.5x18.5	6.5x18 to 7x21	6.5x18 to 8x24
Slide Tackling	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Heading	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Goalkeeper	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Offside Rule (d)	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Penalty Kick Distance (yds)	No	No	No	7	7	8	8
Direct Free Kicks	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Free Kick Defender Distance (yds)	3	3	3	5	5	7	7
Retake on Throw-In or Kick-Off	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Throw-In Defender Distance (yds)	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Goal Scored From Goal Kick	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

(a) All Spring Soccer games run 50 minutes (2x25), with 5 minute halftimes, and end 5 minutes before the hour.

(b) Sizes are USSF recommended dimensions. Adjustments to fit physical constraints or permanent markings is acceptable.

(c) SYSA tries to follow recommended sizes, but field and equipment constraints need to be considered.

(d) The offside rule will not be enforced for U6-U9. However, players "cherry picking" or standing in front of the opponent's goal will be called offside.

(e) No player aged 11 and younger should be heading the ball. This is a USSF and US Youth Soccer restriction.

(f) For the purposes of competition, the ball is in play once it leaves the goalkeeper's possession.

## **Uniforms**

Just as in fall soccer, all players must be safely attired with shin guards covered by socks. Jersey numbers are recommended but not required, though teams should have jerseys that match and are significantly different from the opposing team. Rules about wearing jewelry or other non-essential items apply as they do in the FIFA Laws of the Game.

Under no circumstances may jewelry of any sort be worn in SYSA competitions. Jewelry includes, but is not limited to, watches, rings, bracelets, chains, necklaces, earrings (including posts), hair barrettes, and other similar objects.

## **The Build Out Line for U8 through U11 Teams**

The U8 through U11 age groups will use the Build Out Line (BOL) rules. The BOL is used to promote playing the ball out of the back in an unpressured setting to learn how to “build out” the attack.

When the goalkeeper possesses the ball, either from the run of play or from the ball going out the back line (when last touched by the attacking team), the opposing team should move behind the BOL. Once the opposing team is behind the BOL, the goalkeeper can pass or throw/roll the ball to a teammate. After the ball is put into play by the goalkeeper, the opposing team can cross the BOL and play resumes as normal.

At U8 through U11, goalkeepers are not allowed to punt the ball. They can either throw, roll, or place the ball on the ground and pass it to a teammate.

For simplicity, the mid field line is used as the BOL in Spring Soccer games.

## **Game Length**

All Spring Soccer games at all ages are 50 minutes long, with a 5-minute halftime. All games must start promptly on the hour.

**All games MUST END at 5 minutes before the hour.**

## **Rescheduling or Missing Games**

Each team will be scheduled for 8 Spring Soccer games. Teams should do all they can to ensure that their team will be available to play their games. It is extremely difficult to reschedule games. When a team knows they will not be able to attend a game, they **MUST CONTACT** the opposing coach, and the SYSA game scheduler. Contact the SYSA game scheduler at [jessica.beckton@sysa.org](mailto:jessica.beckton@sysa.org) well ahead of any game the coach knows will be missed. Contact information for each team can be found by clicking that team's name in the schedule

Players can often be shared between teams if one team needs more players. Contacting the opposing coach before the game can often help in working out a plan to share players so that the game can be played. In addition, players can also be borrowed from another Spring Soccer team (as long as they are appropriately registered in SYSA for the Spring Soccer season).

## **Lopsided Games & “Mercy” Rules**

SYSA makes every effort to have balanced leagues, with competition that is comparable. In Spring Soccer, team strength can be hard to predict. If a game becomes unbalanced and the score lopsided, we strongly encourage both coaches to work out a solution to make the game enjoyable and fun for the players.

**3 Goal Rule - Teams losing by 3 goals may add a player to the field and a 2<sup>nd</sup> additional player if losing by 6.**

Other strategies for balancing the play in a lopsided game include: changing or removing the goalkeeper; moving players to different positions or even exchanging players with the other team; having a pass limit before shooting (e.g. 15 completed passes before scoring); having a distance limit before shooting (e.g., only shooting from outside the penalty area).

## **Select Player Rule**

Select players can join and play on existing Recreational teams. SYSA considers the definition of select players to include not only those who play on SYSA Seattle United Regional teams, but also on US Club Soccer teams as well, including Seattle Celtic, Emerald City and ANY program that uses selection for forming the teams. Because it is hard for SYSA to know if players are on these US Club teams, we ask our coaches to use the honor system, and report to SYSA's registrars any players on their teams from these non SYSA programs. (Refer to Rules of Competition).

Specific guidelines for select players on rosters during Spring Soccer only:

- a) Teams are advised to limit their use of rostered select players to just 3.
- b) No Team may roster a Seattle United Premier (That is a player on a Copa, Tango, Samba, Nova team) or ECNL level team player.