



2024 EMSA U11/Alberta Soccer 8 vs 8 Mini Soccer

A handbook and guide for EMSA Mini Referees



Please Note that there are some Differences between ASA and EMSA Rules. Pay special attention to the Retreat line rules.

Alberta Soccer Laws of the 8v8 Modified Game

Game Format	Team Size	Game Duration	Ball Size	Field Size Min/Max Width	Field Size Min/max Length	Goal Size Min (H) Max (W)
8 vs 8	Max 16 *EMSA Modification	2 X 35 min *EMSA Modification	4	42 to 55 meters	60 to 75 meters	Height 6ft Width 18ft

* The Canadian Soccer Association highly recommends no 11-a-side soccer be played before U13

* Field size permits the utilization and adaptability of workable sizes

* If necessary team size can be district determined

Conversion Numbers:

42 Meters = 45 Yards
 55 Meters = 60 Yards
 60 Meters = 65 Yards
 75 Meters = 82 Yards
 18.28 Meters = 20 Yards
 7.31 Meters = 8 Yards

Law 1: Field of Play

Whenever possible the ideal field size will be 75 meters (82 yds.) length X 55 meters (60 yds) width.

For practical reasons this may not always be possible and games could be played, for example across the width of a regular soccer pitch. However the internal markings should remain the same.

If the existing field is 109 meters in length, the width of the 8 a-side field is from the center line of the large field to the edge of the penalty area and the length of the field is simply from touchline to touchline.

If the length of the large field is less than 109 meters, then the sideline will need to be extended accordingly beyond the penalty area – toward the full field goal.

The ideal goal size is 1.8 meters / 6 feet (H) x 5.4 meters / 18 feet (w), however; the size of goals could be standard portable goals from manufacturers which tend to be approximately 3.6 meters (12 ft) wide X 1.9 meters (6.5 ft) high.

Goal nets should be used, provided that they are properly supported, and do not interfere with the goalkeeper.

Portable goals may be used, but must be securely anchored to the ground.

The goal area and penalty area are one and the same, and will be referred to as the penalty Area.

Field Markings:

Fields should be marked by distinctive lines not more than fifteen (15) centimeters wide.

The field is divided into two halves by the halfway line, which joins the midpoints of the touchlines. A centre mark is marked at the midpoint of the halfway line.

A circle with a radius of 5m (6 yards) may be marked around the center mark; however this marking is not mandatory.

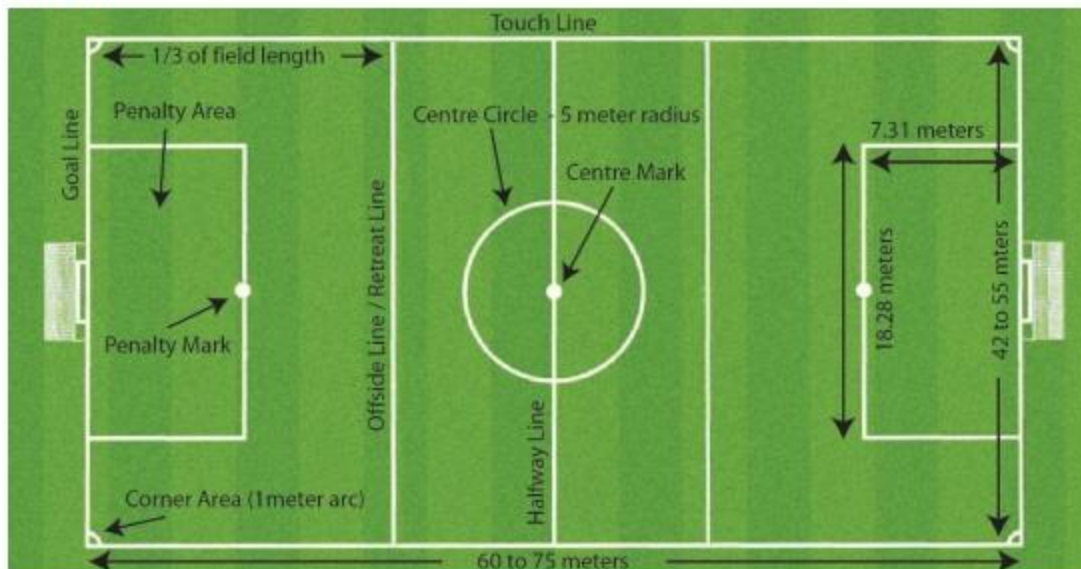
An offside line parallel to the halfway line should be marked from touch line to touch line at the attacking third mark.

An arc with a radius of 1m may be marked at the Corner Area – however this marking is not mandatory.

The Penalty Area is defined at each end of the field as follows:

Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line, 7.31 meters (8 yards) and are joined by a 18.28 meter (20 yard) line drawn parallel with a goal line.

The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is the penalty area. On the edge of each penalty area a **penalty mark** is made 7.31 meters (8 yards) from the midpoint between the goalposts.

**Law 2: The Ball**

The size 4 ball shall be spherical and constructed of material which is not dangerous to the players. The ball may not be replaced without the referee's permission.

If the ball becomes defective, it should be replaced, and play will restart with a dropped ball from where the ball was located when it became defective.

Law 3: Number of Players

The game shall be played by two teams, each consisting of 8 players, one of whom shall be a goalkeeper. Teams must dress a minimum of 6 players and a maximum of *16 (EMSA Modification).

Substitution Procedure

- To replace a player with a substitute, the following must be observed: the referee must be informed before any substitution is made
- the player being substituted receives the referee's permission to leave the field of play, unless already off the field
- the player being replaced is not obliged to leave at the halfway line
- EMSA Modification* Unlimited substitutions (number of players) at any stoppage of play, at the discretion of the referee. Note: Please remember this is considered Mini-Soccer so we should allow teams to substitute the entire line up if they wish.

The substitute only enters:

- during a stoppage in play
- at the halfway line
- after the player being replaced has left
- after receiving a signal from the referee

Extra persons on the field of play

The coach and other officials named on the team list (with the exception of players or substitutes) are team officials. Anyone not named on the team list as a player, substitute or team official is an outside agent.

If a team official, substitute, substituted or sent off player or outside agent enters the field of play the referee must:

- only stop play if there is interference with play
- have the person removed when play stops
- take appropriate disciplinary action

If play is stopped and the interference was by:

- a team official, substitute, substituted or sent off player, play restarts with a direct free kick or penalty kick
- an outside agent, play restarts with a dropped ball. If a ball is going into the goal and the interference does not prevent a defending player playing the ball, the goal is awarded if the ball enters the goal (even if contact was made with the ball) unless the ball enters the opponents' goal.

Goal scored with an extra person on the field of play

If, after a goal is scored, the referee realises, before play restarts, an extra person was on the field of play when the goal was scored:

- the referee must disallow the goal if the extra person was:
 - > a player, substitute, substituted player, sent off player or team official of the team that scored the goal
 - > an outside agent who interfered with play unless a goal results as outlined above in 'extra persons on the field of play'

Play is restarted with a goal kick, corner kick or dropped ball.

- the referee must allow the goal if the extra person was:
 - > a player, substitute, substituted player, sent off player or team official of

the team that conceded the goal
> an outside agent who did not interfere with play

In all cases, the referee must have the extra person removed from the field of play.

If, after a goal is scored and play has restarted, the referee realises an extra person was on the field of play when the goal was scored, the goal cannot be disallowed. If the extra person is still on the field the referee must:

- stop play
- have the extra person removed
- restart with a dropped ball or free kick as appropriate

The referee must report the incident to the appropriate authorities.

Law 4: Player's Equipment

Equipment shall consist of shirt, shorts, socks, shin-guards and footwear.

All jerseys must have sleeves. The players may not roll the sleeves up or tie them at the shoulder level. A player who removes his/her jersey to celebrate a goal will receive a caution for unsporting behavior.

All players **MUST** wear shin guards of suitable material. The shin guards should be covered completely by the socks.

Running shoes or multi stud soccer shoes may be worn.

Goalkeepers must wear colours that are distinguishable from those of other players and those of the referee. Goalkeepers may wear gloves and tracksuit-type pants.

Additional Guidance on Jewelry and Non-Compulsory Equipment

No item of jewelry of any sort will be allowed on the field of play, even if it is 'taped'. I.E. covered.

Game officials must set an example by removing all personal jewellery before entering the field of play (watches are allowed for game officials).

The rule of thumb should be 'if it can be seen, it's a problem'.

Earrings: no earrings of any kind are acceptable. The practice of taping is no longer acceptable.

Facial Rings: any kind of jewellery around the eyes, nose or any other part of the face must be removed.

Bracelets: all bracelets (including metal, rope, fabric ...) must be removed.

Medic Alert Bracelets: may be worn but must be covered or padded in order to be safe for all players.

Necklaces: all necklaces must be removed.

Body Piercing: any body piercing not visible to the referee is not of concern. Should the piercing become visible the referee will ensure it is removed.

Watches: players are not allowed to wear any kind of watches.

Beaded Hair: if a player is wearing hair beads the hair must be tied in a bun or covered by a hair net. Loose beaded hair is not permitted.

Rings: must be removed.

Hats: no hats are allowed on the field of play. Goalkeepers may request to wear a soft brimmed hat as an eyeshade. The referee must ensure that it is not dangerous.

Bandanas: no bandanas are allowed.

Sweatbands: no sweatbands are allowed.

Head Protectors: only those permitted by FIFA are allowed.

Spectacles: are allowed if they are sports spectacles and / or regular glasses and are safe for the players themselves and for other players.

Pro Wrap: Single strand of Pro Wrap is permitted with no metal hair clips or bobby pins.

Orthopedic Supports: FIFA Circular 863 states that the vast majority of commercially manufactured supports are safe to use. These items pose less of a hazard than players accidentally banging heads, for instance.

The major concern is not the 'hardness' of the equipment alone, rather it should be whether any part of it could cut or wound another player.

Any support must be safe for all players, and adequately padded if necessary.

Casts: Players wearing a hard cast are NOT permitted to play, even if it is padded.

Players wearing a soft cast may be permitted to play if the cast does not present a danger to him/herself or any other player. The soft cast must not contain any hard material.

The referee (or a Supervisor of Officials if one has been appointed to the match or competition) will make the final decision as to the acceptability of any soft cast.

Law 5: Referees

As per the FIFA Laws of the Game.

Law 6: Assistant Referees

As per the FIFA Laws of the Game.

except when the Retreat Line Rule under Rule 8 is in effect the referee must indicate both visually and verbally a count of 5 seconds

Law 7: Duration of the Game

The game shall be divided into two equal halves. Each half shall be 35 minutes in length *EMSA modification. The length of halftime will be a minimum of 5 minutes and for a maximum of 10 minutes. The referee or competition Laws will determine the length of the half time break.

Law 8: Start & Restart of Play

Kick off

A kick-off starts both halves of a match, both halves of extra time and restarts play after a goal has been scored.

- the team that wins the toss of a coin decides which goal it will attack in the first half
- their opponents take the kick-off
- the team that wins the toss takes the kick-off to start the second half
- for the second half, the teams change ends and attack the opposite goals
- after a team scores a goal, the kick-off is taken by their opponents

For every kick-off:

- all players with the exception of the player taking the kick must be in their own half of the field of play
- the opponents of the team taking the kick-off must be at least 5 m (6 yds) from the ball until it is in play
- the ball must be stationary on the centre mark
- the referee gives a signal
- the ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves in any direction
- a goal may be scored directly against the opponents from the kick-off

Dropped Ball

For any stoppage not mentioned in these Laws, the referee shall restart the game by dropping the ball at the place where it was when play stopped, unless play was stopped in the penalty area. In this case, the ball shall be dropped on that part of the penalty area line which runs parallel to the goal line, at the point nearest to where the ball was when play stopped. The ball is in play when it touches the ground.

A goal may not be scored directly from a dropped ball.

Retreat Line

The **Retreat Line** will come into effect in the following 3 situations:

- a goal kick
- a free kick to the defending team within their own penalty area (goal area in U9 outdoor games)
- the goalkeeper makes a save and has possession of the ball in their hands

At these 3 restarts the opposing team is required to move beyond the Retreat Line, which is the following:

- On U11 games, the offside line

On a goal kick or free kick the ball is in play when the first of the following occurs:

- The ball touches another player from the team taking the restart, apart from the player taking the goal kick or free kick
- The ball stops and has left the penalty area/goal area (U9 outdoor games) from a goal kick or free kick
- The ball crosses the Retreat Line
- The ball goes out of play

On a goalkeeper save the ball is in play when the first of the following occurs:

- The goalkeeper, after making a save, kicks or throws the ball beyond the Retreat Line
- The goalkeeper, after making a save, releases the ball and it touches another player from the same team
- The goalkeeper, after making a save, puts the ball on the ground and more than 5 seconds has passed after putting the ball down on the ground
- The goalkeeper, after making a save, puts the ball on the ground and dribbles the ball beyond the penalty area
- The ball goes out of play

If an opposing player comes in from the Retreat Line AND interferes with play, the game will be stopped, and the restart will be a free kick to the opposing team from where the player crossed the Retreat Line. For any infraction by the team taking the goal kick, free kick or a goalkeeper save when the Retreat Line Rule is in effect, the restart will be a free kick at the centre of the closest Retreat Line.



Law 9: Ball in and out of Play

The ball is out of play:

- When the whole of the ball has crossed the goal-line or touch line, whether on the ground or in the air.
- When the game has been stopped by the referee.

The ball is in play at all other times.

Law 10: Method of Scoring

A goal is scored when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, between the goalposts and under the crossbar, provided that no offence or infringement of the Laws of the Game has been committed by the team scoring the goal.

If a referee signals a goal before the ball has passed wholly over the goal line, play is restarted with a dropped ball.

Law 11: Offside

Alberta Soccer would like to emphasize that the program is designed as a progressive step from the Mini Soccer program. We consider it still to be development and learning, therefore requiring some variation from the full IFAB Laws; i.e. the offside line at the attacking 3rd of the field encourages players to spread out.

The offside rule is in effect in the attacking 3rd of the field. This line may be marked as a dotted line, and solid line or single cones or flags on the touch line. Coaches from both teams should bring cones to mark this line in the event that the attacking 3rd line is not clearly marked on the field.

Offside Position:

It is not an offence in itself to be in an offside position.

A player is in an offside position if:

- He or she is nearer to their opponents' goal line than both the ball and the second-last opponent

A player is not in an offside position if:

- He or she is not in the attacking third of the field of play
- He or she is level with the second-last opponent or
- He or she is level with the last two opponents

Offence:

A player in an offside position is only penalized if, at the moment the ball touches or is played by one of his team, he is, in the opinion of the referee, involved in active play by:

- Interfering with play or
- Interfering with an opponent or
- Gaining an advantage by being in that position

No Offence:

There is no offside offence if a player receives the ball directly from:

- A goal kick
- A throw-in
- A corner kick
- the player in an offside position receives the ball from an opponent who has deliberately played the ball

Infringements and Sanctions:

In the event of an offside offence, the referee awards an indirect free kick to the opposing team to be taken from the place where the offside offence occurred.

Law 12: Fouls and Misconduct

Fouls and misconduct are penalized as per the FIFA Laws of the Game:

A direct free kick is awarded if a player commits any of the following offences against an opponent in a manner considered by the referee to be careless, reckless or using excessive force:

- Charges
- Jumps at
- Kicks or attempts to kick
- Pushes
- Strikes or attempts to strike (including head-butt)
- Tackles or challenges
- Trips or attempts to trip
- Impedes with contact

A direct free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following offenses:

- Handles the ball deliberately (except for the goalkeeper within their own penalty area)
- Holds an opponent
- Impedes an opponent with contact
- Spits at an opponent

A direct free kick is taken from the place where the offence occurred.

A penalty kick is awarded if any of the above ten offences is committed by a player inside his own penalty area, irrespective of the position of the ball, provided it is in play.

An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a goalkeeper commits any of the following offenses:

- controls the ball with the hands for more than Five(5) Seconds before releasing it
- touches the ball with the hands after:
 - > releasing it and before it has touched another player
 - > it has been deliberately kicked to the goalkeeper by a team-mate
 - > receiving it directly from a throw-in taken by a team-mate

An indirect free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if, in the opinion of the referees, a player:

- Plays in a dangerous manner
- Impedes the progress of an opponent (without any contact being made)
- Prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from the hands
- Puts the ball in play through a direct, indirect, goal or corner kick, and kicks the ball again before it has been touched by another player
- Commits any other infringement not previously mentioned in Law 12, for which play is stopped to caution or dismiss a player

An indirect free kick is taken from the place where the offence occurred

Disciplinary Sanctions:

The yellow card is used to communicate that a player or substitute has been cautioned.

The red card is used to communicate that a player or substitute has been sent off. Any player receiving a red card may not play for the remainder of the game. The offending player may be substituted by another eligible player; both teams continue to play 8 vs 8.

Only a player, substitute or substituted player may be shown the red or yellow card. The referee has the authority to take disciplinary sanctions from the moment he enters the field of play until he leaves the field of play after the final whistle.

A player who commits a cautionable or sending-off offence, either on or off the field of play, whether directed towards an opponent, a team-mate, the referee, an assistant referee or any other person, is disciplined according to the nature of the offence committed.

A player is cautioned if guilty of:

- unsporting behaviour
- dissent by word or action
- persistent offences (no specific number or pattern of offences constitutes 'persistent').
- delaying the restart of play
- failing to respect the required distance when play is restarted with a corner kick, free kick or throw-in
- entering, re-entering or deliberately leaving the field of play without the referee's permission

A substitute or substituted player is cautioned if guilty of:

- unsporting behaviour
- dissent by word or action
- delaying the restart of play
- entering or re-entering the field of play without the referee's permission.

A player, substitute or substituted player who commits any of the following offences is sent off:

- denying the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by deliberately handling the ball (except a goalkeeper within their penalty area)
- denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity to an opponent moving towards the opponents' goal by an offence punishable by a free kick (unless as outlined below)
- serious foul play
- biting or spitting at someone
- violent conduct
- using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures
- receiving a second caution in the same match

Denying a goal or obvious goalscoring opportunity

Where a player denies the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by a deliberate handball offence the player is sent off wherever the offence occurs.

Where a player commits an offence against an opponent within their own penalty area which denies an opponent an obvious goal-scoring opportunity and the referee awards a penalty kick, the offending player is cautioned unless:

- The offence is holding, pulling or pushing - or
- The offending player does not attempt to play the ball or there is no possibility for the player making the challenge to play the ball - or
- The offence is one which is punishable by a red card wherever it occurs on the field of play (e.g. serious foul play, violent conduct etc.)

In all the above circumstances the player is sent off.

The following must be considered in the case of Denying an Obvious Goalscoring Opportunity:

- distance between the offence and the goal
- general direction of the play
- likelihood of keeping or gaining control of the ball
- location and number of defenders

A player, substitute or substituted player who has been sent off must leave the vicinity of the field of play and the technical area, providing that they are supervised by an adult.

Law 13: Free Kick

Direct and indirect free kicks are awarded to the opposing team of a player guilty of an offence. Free kicks are taken from where the offence occurred, with the following exceptions:

- indirect free kicks to the attacking team for an offence inside the opponents' penalty area are taken from the nearest point on the penalty area line which runs parallel to the goal line

The ball must be stationary, and is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves, except for a free kick to the defending team in their penalty area where the ball is in play when it is kicked directly out of the penalty area.

Until the ball is in play, all opponents must remain:

- 5 meters (6 yards from the ball)
- Outside the Retreat Line until the ball has left the penalty area for all free kicks inside the opponents' penalty area.

Indirect free kick signal

The referee indicates an indirect free kick by raising the arm above the head; this signal is maintained until the kick has been taken and the ball touches another player or goes out of play.

An indirect free kick must be retaken if the referee fails to signal that the kick is indirect and the ball is kicked directly into the goal.

- if a direct free kick is kicked directly into the opponents' goal, a goal is awarded
- if an indirect free kick is kicked directly into the opponents' goal, a goal kick is awarded
- if a direct or indirect free kick is kicked directly into the team's own goal, a corner kick is awarded

Law 14: Penalty Kick

A penalty kick shall be taken from the penalty mark. All players, with the exception of the defending goalkeeper and the player taking the kick, shall be outside the penalty area but within the field of play, and not less than 6 yards from the ball (and behind the ball) until it has been kicked.

The goalkeeper remains on his/her goal line, facing the kicker, between the goalposts until the ball has been kicked.

The player taking the penalty kick must not touch the ball a second time until it has been played or touched by another player.

Play shall be extended at half-time, or at full-time to allow a penalty kick to be taken. In the event that time is extended, play shall end when the kick is complete.

For offences and sanctions at penalty kicks, please refer to the FIFA Laws of the Game.

Law 15: Throw in

A throw-in is awarded to the opponents of the player who last touched the ball when the whole of the ball passes over the touchline, on the ground or in the air.

Players taking a throw in shall stand facing the field of play and have part of both feet on the ground, on or behind the touch line. The thrower shall use both hands to throw the ball from behind and over their head. The ball shall be in play immediately after it enters the field of play.

Players taking a throw in must not touch the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player.

The normal throw-in rule will apply. If not properly taken, one re-throw will be given. If still not properly taken, the game will be restarted by a throw in from the opposing team.

Law 16: Goal Kick

- When the whole of the ball has crossed the goal line, either on the ground or in the air, excluding that portion between the goalposts having last been played or touched by a member of the attacking team, a goal kick shall be awarded to the defending team. The ball shall be kicked into play from the nearest point on the penalty area line which runs parallel to the goal line. The ball is in play when it is kicked directly out of the penalty area

At the taking of a goal kick, **all opponents shall be outside the Retreat Line until the ball has left the penalty area.**

The player taking the goal kick must not play or touch the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player.

A goal may be scored direct from a goal kick, but only against the opposing team.

Law 17: Corner Kick

When the whole of the ball has crossed the goal line, either on the ground or in the air, excluding that portion between the goal posts, having last been played or touched by a member of the defending team, a corner kick shall be awarded to the attacking team.

The corner kick shall be taken within the corner area nearest to where the ball crossed the goal line. All opponents shall be not less than 6 yards from the ball until it has been kicked.

The player taking the corner-kick must not play or touch the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player.

A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick, but only against the opposing team.

FAIR PLAY FOR PLAYERS, COACHES & PARENTS

Coaches, managers, team officials and parents shall not criticize game officials at any time and should encourage the same attitude and good sportsmanship amongst all players and supporters. The game official shall endeavor to conduct the game in a proper manner at all times.

Coaches shall coach from their technical area. If not marked, a technical area is defined as extending one (1) yard on either side of the designated seating area and forward up to one (1) yard from the touch line. Coaches, players, and parents may not position themselves behind the goal.

***EMSA League Amendment:**

Discipline: Red and yellow cards will be issued to the players. The team will not play short due to an ejection. The player ejected is to remain with their team in the technical area. All cards will be marked on the game sheet and referees are required to submit a report for any ejections. There will be no further suspension of the player for additional games. However, if a pattern of cards or ejections is formed the player may be called in for a meeting with the EMSA Discipline Director.

Team Official Discipline: Yellow and Red cards can be issued to team officials as per regular rules and discipline procedures.

