

# 2026 EMSA U8/U9 7 vs 7 Mini Soccer A Handbook and guide for EMSA Mini Referees



## Law 1- Field of Play

### Dimensions

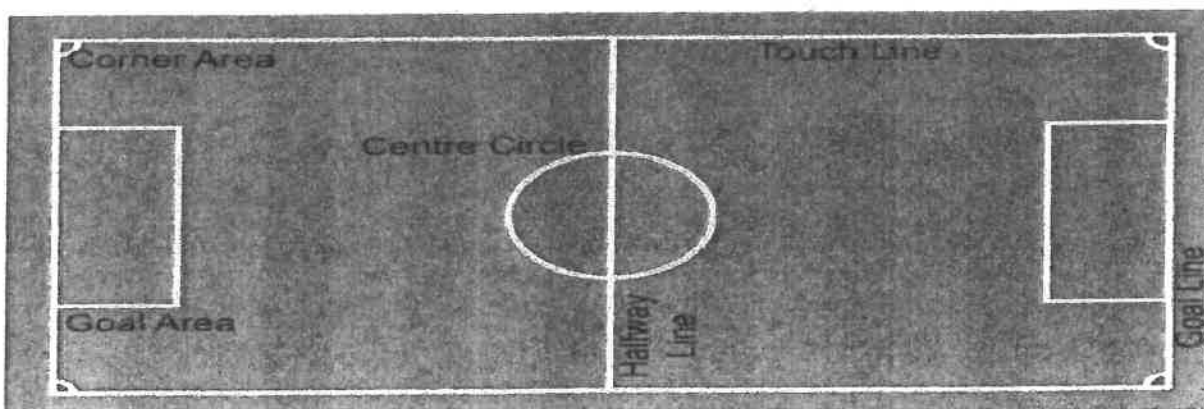
The field of play shall be rectangular, and marked with lines.

The playing area should be 30-35 meters wide x 55-60m long. Games may be played on Mini field or may be played on a regular field with the similar dimensions and Goals

### Markings

Distinctive lines and markings are required:

- The two longer boundary lines are called touchlines, the two shorter boundary lines are called goal lines.
- The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line, which joins the mid-points of the two touchlines. This line is also used as the Retreat Line for some restarts (see Law 8)
- A center mark is marked by the mid-point of the halfway line. A circle with a radius of 6 meters is marked around it.
- A corner arc should be indicated at the four corners of the field.
- A goal area should be indicated by either a semi-circle (8 meter radius), or a rectangle 8 meters x 20 meters.
- A flag post, at least 1.5 meters high, with a non-pointed top and a flag must be placed at each corner.



- The goal should be 6 feet high 16 feet across\*\* Note-goal sizes may vary, but they must be the same for both teams.
- Nets may be on the goals and the ground behind the goal, provided that they are properly supported and do not interfere with the goalkeeper.
- Goals must be anchored securely to the ground. Portable goals may only be used if they meet this requirement.

## Law 2-The Ball

- The ball will be, spherical, and in suitable condition (not dangerous or damaged)
  - U8 Club Size 3
  - U9 size 4
  - The ball should not be overinflated or too hard. Home team Provides the ball

## Law 3-The Number of Player's

- Each team will consist of 7 players, one, of whom must be a goalkeeper.
- Substitutions may be made at any stoppage, with the referee's permission, and shall be unlimited.
- The minimum number of players is 5 for a game, to start or continue.

## Law 4-The Players' Equipment

- Players shall not wear anything that is dangerous to themselves or other players.

The players equipment shall consist of:

- Jersey with sleeves (or pinnies) Numbers are not required at this level.
  - Shorts.
  - Socks.
  - Shin guards
  - Appropriate footwear. Cleats, turf or running shoes.
- Jewelry is not permitted and cannot be taped. Medic Alert bracelets are allowed provided that they are fastened securely so as not to be dangerous to any other player. The referee should be aware of any player that is wearing one in case of emergency.

### Shin guards

- Must be completely covered by the socks.
- Must provide a reasonable degree of protection.

### Colours

- The two teams must wear, colours that distinguish them from each other and also the referee.
- Each goalkeeper must wear colours which are distinguishable from all outfield players and the referee. Pinnie's / bibs are recommended to save jersey switching.
- Other forms of clothing (sweatpants, sweatshirt is allowed based on weather conditions, but the uniforms must still distinguish teams.
- A player who is asked to leave the field of play because of defective or dangerous equipment may not re-enter the field of play until the referee is satisfied that the equipment is permissible. The equipment may only be inspected during a stoppage in play
- Any hair apparel must be of soft fabric, no plastic or metal items are to be worn.
- Sports hijabs / head scarves are permitted.
- Referees have the final say on the safety of equipment.

## Law 5-The Referee

### The authority of the referee:

Each game is assigned a referee who has full authority to enforce the Rules of **Mini-Soccer**. The decisions of the referee regarding facts connected with play, including whether a goal is scored and the result of the game, is final as well as keeping time. Coaches or a technical team member are able to also facilitate the game. It is recommended that the coaches agree on who will officiate the game.

### Powers and duties:

#### The referee

- Enforces the Rules of **Mini Soccer**.
- Ensures that the ball meets the required specs Law 2.
- Ensures that the players equipment meets the requirements of Law 4.
- Acts as a time keeper and keeps a record of the game
- Stops, suspends or terminates the game at his/her discretion
- Stops, suspends or terminates the game, because, of outside interference of any kind (lightning, etc.)
- Stops the game if a player is injured, and ensures that the player is attended to.
- Ensures that any player that is bleeding from a wound leaves the field of play. The player may only return once the referee is satisfied that the bleeding has stopped.
- Ensures no unauthorized persons enter the field of play
- Indicates the restart of the game after it has been stopped.
- Takes action against team officials who fail to conduct themselves in a responsible manner and, at his/her discretion, expel them from the field of play and its immediate surroundings.

## Law 6 - Assistant Referees-there are no assistant referees in U8 or U9 Soccer

## Law 7- Duration of Game

### Periods of Play

- The game lasts for two equal periods of 30 minutes (EMSA. Modification), unless mutually agreed between the referee and the two participating teams, or as stated in competition rules.

### Half Time

- Players are entitled to a halftime interval of 5 minutes (may be adjusted if running late)
- There is no allowance in either period for extra or added time.
- \*EMSA Modifications unlimited substitutions (number of players) at any stoppage of play at the discretion of the referee.  
Complete Line changes are allowed as well as GK change

## Law 8- The start and restart of play

### Definition of a kick off

A kick-off will be taken from the centre of the field for:

- Start of the game
- Start second half (if applicable)
- After a goal has been scored
- Players of the opposing team must be five (5) meters away.
- A goal may not be scored directly from any kick-off.
- A ball crossing over the touchline may be taken as a pass-in or dribble-in.
- Kick-off may be taken as a pass-in or dribble-in.

### Procedure:

*Before the kickoff at the start of the game*

- The home team picks side to start and the away team gets ball at the start of the game. Second half the away team gets the ball.

### Kickoff:

- After a team scores a goal, the kick-off is taken by the other team at half
- All players must be in their own half of the field and 5 meters away.
- The opponents of the team taking the kickoff must be 5 meters away from the ball until it is in play.
- The ball must be stationary on the center mark.
- The referee gives a signal to start.
- The ball is in play when it is touched by a player who can either pass or dribble

### Definition of dropped ball

- A drop ball is a method of restarting play when, while the ball is in play, the referee is required to stop play temporarily for any reason not mentioned elsewhere in the Rules of Mini Soccer. Some examples of this are an injury or interference by an outside agent or the ball hits the referee and disrupts play.

### Procedure

- The referee drops the ball at the place where the ball was located when play was stopped in given to the team who had possession at the time. Unless play was stopped inside the penalty area, in which case the referee drops the ball to the keeper regardless of who had possession.

## **Retreat Line** (Retreat line rule is negated if the goalie or player plays quickly)

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
- 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 U8/U9 games a line that is **one third** of the way down from the goal line. If there is no line, cones off the field can be used.

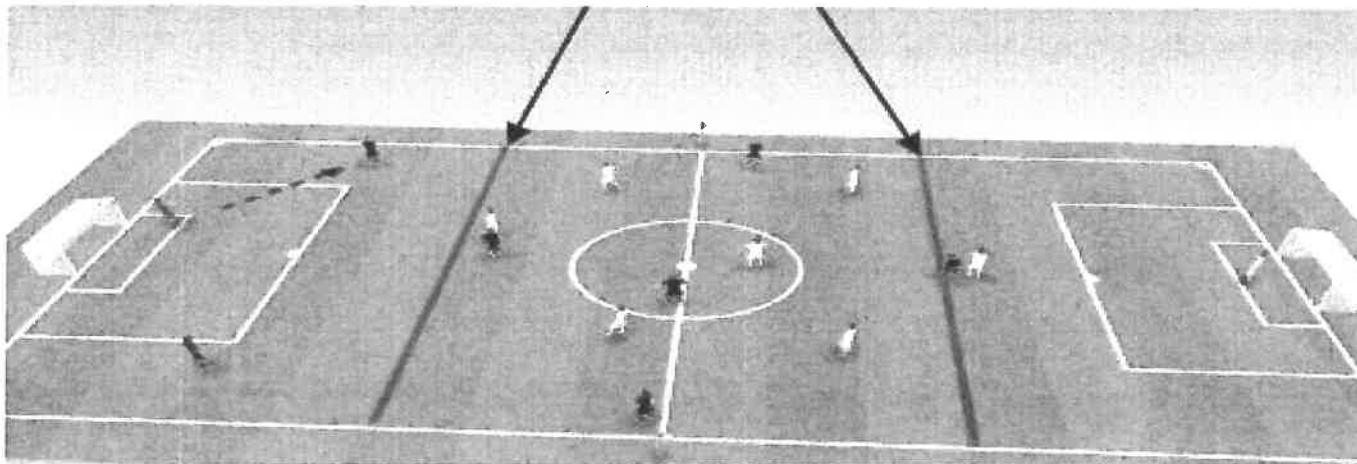
On a goal kick or free kick the ball is in play when the first of the following occurs:

- The ball touches another player from the team taking the restart, apart from the player taking the goalkick or free kick
- The ball stops and has left the penalty area from a goal kick or free kick
- The ball crosses the Retreat Line
- The ball goes out of play
- The player (including the goalkeeper) begins to dribble the ball

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
- Begins to dribble the ball
- The goalkeeper, after making a save, puts the ball on the ground
- 8 seconds have passed- which will result in a corner kick/dribble in to the non-offending team
- 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 non-offending 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 corner kick/dribble (e.g. waited longer than 8 seconds to move the ball)



## Law 9- Ball In and out of play

### Ball not in play

The ball is not in-play when:

- It has wholly crossed the goal line or touch line whether on the ground or in the air
- Play has been stopped by the referee
- Ball hits the referee and alters the game. The drop ball will be given to the team who last had possession.

### Ball in play

The ball is in play at other times, including when:

- it rebounds off the goal post, crossbar, corner flag post and remains in the field of play
- It touches a match official but does not change direction or possession.

## Law 10-The Method of Scoring

- A goal is scored when the whole of the ball has crossed over the goal line between the goal posts and under the crossbar, provided that no infringement of the Rules of Mini Soccer has been previously committed by the team scoring the goal.
- When goal posts are not available and cones are used instead, a goal is scored when, in the opinion of the referee, the whole of the ball crosses over the goal line between or above the cones, below two 1(2), meters.

## Law 11- Offside-there are no offsides in 7v7 Mini Soccer

## Law 12- Fouls and Misconduct

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

- An indirect free kick is awarded, and the player is educated as to what foul occurred.
- Players of the opposing team must be five (5) meters away for play to be restarted.
- Restarts from fouls can be taken as a dribble-in or pass-in once the ball has been stopped and returned to the spot of the infraction. A goal cannot be scored from a dribble in and must touch another player before a goal can be scored.

Referees should not issue cautions or red cards to players in Mini soccer. If a player is playing rough, the referee should request that the coach substitute the player, and the coach should advise the player to play in a fair manner. Any player who strikes or is unable to control themselves will sit for the remainder of the game.

### Goalkeepers:

Goalkeepers are allowed to handle the ball inside their own goal area.

- Goalkeepers have Five 8 seconds to release the ball – from their hands.

- Goalkeepers may not touch the ball with their hands

if:

- It has been deliberately kicked to them by a team mate.
- They have released the ball from their hands and it has not been touched by an opponent and

they pick it up again.

- For any of these three offences by the GoalKeeper a corner kick will be awarded to the non-offending team.

## **Law 13-Free Kick**

All free kicks can be taken as a dribble-in or pass-in once the ball has been stopped and returned to the spot of the infraction.

All free kicks/Dribble in's are Indirect.

Opponents must be five (5) yards from the ball until the ball is touched and put into play. This included kicks for penal fouls, a corner kick, or kick-offs.

If a player takes too long to play the free kick/Dribble the free kick will be given to the non-offending team. If it is within the penalty area it will be a Corner Kick/Dribble in to the non-offending team.

### **Free Kicks taken from inside a team's own Goal Area:**

- All opponents must be beyond the Retreat line (See Law 8-The Start & Restart of Play, Retreat line).

## **Law 14-Penalty Kick**

There are no penalty kicks in Mini soccer during games. An indirect kick or dribble in will be taken from where the foul occurred.

Competition rules may allow for penalty kicks to be taken to decide the result of a game, if required.

## **Law 15 Dribble in and Pass-In**

- Restarts from when the ball fully crosses the touchlines or any free kick will be taken as a dribble-in or pass-in from where the ball exited the field of play. Goals cannot be scored directly from a dribble in or pass in.

## **Law 16- Goal Kick**

- A goal kick is awarded when the ball fully crosses the goal line and was last touched by a member of the attacking team.
- Goal kicks can be taken as a dribble-in or pass-in.
- A goal may not be scored directly from a goal kick or Dribble-in.
- Players of the opposing team must be a minimum of six (6) meters from the ball.

## **Law 17- Corner Kick**

- A corner kick will be awarded to the attacking team, when the whole of the ball crosses the goal line, in the air or on the ground, when last touched by a player on the defending team.
- A corner kick will also be awarded if the goal Keeper does not release the ball from their hands after 8 seconds.

- A dribble in or a kick in can be used for a corner kick.

A goal cannot be scored directly from a Kick in or Dribble in. The ball must touch another player.

#### Team Official Misconduct - EMSA Modification

Team Officials can receive yellow and red cards as per regular game and discipline rules.

#### Advice to Referees

The game at this age is developmental, and referees are requested to offer simple explanations to players regarding why calls were made, if it is not obvious. This does not give players (or coaches) the right to question the referee's calls, but is designed to help the players learn the rules.

If coaches or parents question the referee's calls, the referee should politely but firmly state that this will not be permitted. If the questioning continues, the person should be asked to leave. If the person refuses to leave, the game should be terminated, and the referee should inform the referee assignor or coordinator as soon as possible, reporting the appropriate individuals.

If the referee has any questions or concerns, regarding rules or any aspect of their games, they should contact their referee assignor or coordinator.

