



PIKE SOCCER U8 GAME GUIDELINES (UPDATED 9/2021)

Venue - Games will be played at the Pike County Soccer Complex on Saturdays unless it is scheduled for a weekday evening, which may occur from time to time. Any potential game reschedules should be coordinated with the Field Scheduler and the Referee Assignor.

Number of Players – Pike Soccer U8 teams play with 5 players - 4 FIELD PLAYERS AND A GOALKEEPER.

Pre-Game - Encourage your teams to arrive 20 minutes before game time to allow time to warm up, get loose and other pre-game activities. Try simple dribbling exercises or passing to get their feet loose. {Once you have an idea who has shown up, you can plan your lineup}

Referee: Pike Soccer will provide a referee to oversee the game. Chances are, they will be a high schooler, so please be patient. Also, please remind your parents of the same thing. Parental conduct on the sidelines is the number one reason for losing referees (second is coaches conduct).

Whistles - One blast to start/restart of stopped play. Two blasts for halftime and three blasts for full time (end of the game).

Check In - About 5-7 minutes before kickoff, the referee will check your team in and inspect the player's equipment (a numbered jersey tucked in, shorts or pants, socks that cover the shinguards, shinguards and soccer cleats). The referee will check their cleats to make sure they are not baseball cleats. The referee will also check for jewelry and earrings, which should be removed and given to the parents. In cases of cold weather, sweaters, and skull caps are allowed. The jersey should still be visible.

Before Kickoff:

- The referee will call captains to determine who will kickoff and which way the team will face during the first half.
- The referee will also request two Size 3 game balls to be kept at the half line.
- {How do you pick captains? – alphabetically, volunteers, you can choose however you want – remember they all want to be captains.}
- **Give simple directions** for the first 5 to go out on the field – let's work on spacing, passing, dribbling, etc.
- A team cheer is a good way of getting the team ready for the start of the game.

Technical Area – The side of the field where the players and coaches are located is known as the technical area {coaches' area} and is for players and coaches only. Generally, the coach is not allowed to cross the half line while instructing the players, although this will occur.

Player's Area – Substitutes need to stay in the bench area during the game period. As usually happens, players will need to go to the bathroom, go get something from their mom, etc. and want to leave the area, which distracts you from coaching. A good idea for U8 is to recruit a parent or spouse to act as a bench manager to assist with monitoring substitutions, to keep the substitutes somewhat focused on the game so you can coach.

Parents Area - The other side of the field is the Parents area. PARENTS NEED TO STAY THERE ONCE THE GAME IS UNDERWAY. Parents are DISCOURAGED from sitting behind the benches on the player's side. Certainly, if a player is injured, leaves their water on with their parents, etc., parents may come to the bench area around the perimeter of the field, but they should not be hanging around your side of the field unless you have recruited them to be your assistant or bench manager.

Length of Game: {UPDATED FOR FALL 2021} Two (2) 25 minute halves with a 5-7 minute half. Clock starts at kickoff and runs continuously until the end of the half. The referee may add time in each half for injury or other stoppages in play.

Start and Restart of the game: A kick-off is the way a soccer game is started or restarted:

- at the start of a game.
- after a goal has been scored.
- at the start of half.

{NOTE -In U8, the teams WILL SWITCH sides at the start of the second half.}

During a kickoff the defending team needs to be out of the center circle.

Game Basics:

- As you are aware, the object of the game is to advance the ball towards your opponent's goal and attempt to shoot a ball into the goal, keeping the ball inbounds if at all possible.
- If your team doesn't have the ball, you want to get the ball.
- No heading at the U8 level.
- Players may not handle the ball during play on the field unless it is to place the ball for a goal kick, kickoff, free kick, or throw ins.
- There is no offside in U8 soccer. That concept is introduced at the U10 level.
- **Coaches are discouraged from keeping a defensive player standing right in front of their goal keeper. A player in the rear of the formation/shape should be encouraged to step up to a dribbler and try to win the ball through a "tackle."**

Scoring: The referee will note goals scored on their game sheet. You can request to see the score if you want. Most of the kids will keep up. However, the club does not keep scores or post standings for U8.

Substitutions: Unlimited so that every child plays at least a half (if they want to). The coach can substitute in certain circumstances when there is a stoppage in play. Kick-offs, goal kicks and your teams throw-ins.

Players must be substituted from the midfield line and the referee must acknowledge and permit substitutions.

Ball over the touch line/sideline: The ball will be thrown in to the field of play. If the Thunder and the Lightning are playing and the ball was kicked over the side line by a Thunder player, then the Lightning will have the throw in. A goal may not be scored by the person passing the ball in, unless it touched another player before going onto the goal. The player must place keep both feet on the ground behind the line, before throwing the ball in. The ball must enter the field. **Encourage the players on the field to spread out and move. If you use your formation to expand from, there should be plenty of space to get the ball into play.**

{Note – the player throwing the ball in, cannot play it in to themselves. It must touch another player first}

{Note – the referee may allow a redo if the throw-in is not properly done.}

Ball over the end line/goal line and Attacking team touched it last (Goal Kick): Defending team takes a goal kick from the edge of the goal box. {Note – the player taking the goal kick cannot pass it to themselves. It must touch another player first}. The ball must leave the goal box to be in play.

Defending team on goal kicks must drop behind the half-line. Two things need to be focused on here.

- 1. The Offensive team is working on playing out of the back. We should not look to kick it to the other side of the field.**
- 2. The Defensive team is working on stepping as a team to defend. Pressure the ball w/ support.**

Ball over the end line/goal line and Defending team touched it last (Corner): The attacking team takes a corner kick from the corner closest to where the ball crossed the end line. The kick must enter the field of play.

Handling/other fouls: Handling (handballs) and other fouls will be called at the discretion of the referee and will be considered Indirect kicks (i.e., the ball must touch another player before it can go into the goal). Dropped balls may be used when there is an unexpected stoppage in play.

Sportsmanship – At the end of the second half (Full time), both teams should line up on the touch line/sideline by the benches OR on the Half Line and approach each other and slap hands and say “good game” or some other appropriate words to encourage good sportsmanship. The players should also thank the referee.

(NOTE COVID HAS MODIFIED THIS ASPECT OF THE GAME, PLAYERS SHOULD NOT SLAP HANDS OR GIVE THE REF A FIST BUMP)

After Game Activities – After the game is completed, the team should clear their drinks, snack wrappers, empty bottles, balls and other gear from the benches and make way for the next team. Any lost items should be taken to the concession stand.

(NOTE COVID HAS MODIFIED THIS ASPECT OF THE GAME, COACHES SHOULD MAKE SURE THAT EVERY PLAYER SANITIZES THEIR HANDS AND LEAVES THE FIELD PROMPTLY.)