

GREEN HORNETS – CLUB 3rd/4th Grade SOCCER RULES/GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are to assist coaches in directing play at the 3rd/4th grade level.

SAFETY: The games and practices must be played with no risk to player safety.

1. Field Conditions: Conditions of the field should be assessed by the coaches and if the field is deemed dangerous due to standing water, uneven field with large dangerous divets, etc. the game/practice should not be played on the field.
2. Weather Conditions: Coaches should heed the “Thunder/Lightning/30” rule. If any thunder is audible or lightning visible from the field, play is suspended for 30 minutes from the LAST Thunder sound/lightning sighting. Rain/Snow conditions can be assessed independently of lightning/thunder and play can continue if the precipitation is not deemed excessive or detrimental to player safety and field conditions.
3. Hydration: Please ensure players have adequate water and stay hydrated during a game. Look for the signs of heat induced conditions such as dehydration, heat stroke or heat exhaustion.
4. Player Concussions and Injuries: Any player injuries should be treated promptly and play should be stopped to attend to any injured player. Coaches should instruct other players off the field of play or to “take a knee” while the injury is assessed and the player is taken off the field. Play should resume only after the player is clear of the field. A player suspected of a head injury should be assessed by concussion protocols, erring on the side of caution and not allowing a player to return the field if the protocols are not met.

PLAYER UNIFORM/EQUIPMENT:

1. Uniforms: Players must refrain from altering their uniforms in any way that poses a danger to themselves, or other players. All players should be wearing the uniform issued for their team and be coordinated.
2. Shin guards: must be worn and be covered completely by a sock.
3. Footwear: Shoes must be appropriate for the game of soccer. Toe cleats, as well as baseball and lacrosse cleats, are also strictly prohibited.
4. Head Gear: Hair control devices must not be hard, such as a clip, pin, or bead. Hats of any kind are not permitted, except for religious purposes. Additional equipment designed to protect the individual is acceptable as long as it poses no danger.
5. Jewelry: FIFA and US Soccer give very clear guidance on jewelry: All items of jewelry (necklaces, rings, bracelets, earrings, leather bands, rubber bands etc.) are strictly forbidden and must be removed. Using tape to cover jewelry is not acceptable, except for medical bracelets.
6. Braces: If a player has braces for his teeth, he must wear a mouthguard covering and protecting the braces.
7. Cast/Splints: Players can play with a cast or splint provided it is a soft cast or hard cast that is wrapped in a soft cover. Approval from both coaches is required to ensure both teams feel the cast will not jeopardize safety.

PREGAME

1. Coach Coordination: Before each game, coaches from both teams should meet to discuss the rules and their understanding of the rules. Discussions on rules enforcement, communications with the game officials (refs), handling injuries, in-game disruptions and in-game substitutions are helpful and can help avoid conflicts during the game.
2. Bench Area: A bench area should be established for each team where players not on the field should sit. It is highly recommended that there be a coach/parent to sit with the players during the game.
3. Spectators: The team should sit separately from spectators, parents should be asked to sit on the opposite side of the field from the teams. When players are sitting out, they should be sitting with the team and not with parents across the field.

RULES OF THE GAME

1. Field Dimensions: 3rd/4th grade fields will be 60 yards long by 40 yards wide to accommodate the 7-versus-7 game and are appropriate for the movement capabilities of 8-10 year old children. These adjusted dimensions provide more practical space allowing players to be successful.
2. Ball: 3rd/4th grade teams will play with a size 4 game ball.
3. Goals: Goals will be 6'x18'. All Goals should be checked for sandbags to prevent players from tipping the goals over should they run into them. Do not allow children to hang on the goals.
4. Players:
 - a. Formation: 7v7 with 6 field players and one designated goalkeeper. The goal keeper should wear a shirt/pinny of a different color to distinguish themselves from the other players. A game may not start if either team consists of fewer than six players.
 - b. Goalkeepers: As always, keepers can only touch the ball with their hands inside the penalty area. If a keeper has the ball in his hands, the opposing team should retreat out of the penalty area to allow the keeper room to distribute the ball. Keepers are allowed to throw or roll or even punt if they so choose.
 - c. Each player SHALL play a minimum of 50% of the total playing time.
 - d. Substitutions: Players substitutions should be signaled to the officials and wait for the officials signal to sub in players. Details of the substitution should be discussed with the player BEFORE the substitution occurs to speed up the process. Substitutions for injury or behavior should follow the same procedure, informing the ref. Game stoppages for injury should be called by the official, but if a serious injury goes unnoticed the coach should intervene immediate to ensure player safety. Ultimately, the goal is to ensure even playing time for all players and to keep the game moving and not to eat up the rolling clock.

Substitutions should coincide with a dead ball including the following times:

- After a goal;
- When the other team subs;
- On your cornerkick;
- On your free kick;
- On your goal kick;
- On your throw in

5. Referees: Registered referees. All rule infringements shall be briefly explained to the offending player. A parent should NEVER address a referee. A coach should use it as a training opportunity and NEVER be negative with a referee. Any issues with refs contact Analisa. This is a game, not a scrimmage, so keep lessons brief and keep the play moving. Coaches should coach from the sidelines while sitting with the rest of the team. Please discourage parents "help" coaching from the sidelines, and avoid parents who sit behind the goal to instruct their child in goal.

Professional refs that get paid a lot of money make mistakes all the time and that is why so many professional leagues utilize taped reviews. If high paid professionals make mistakes, we should certainly be able to understand 13-14 year olds missing a couple of calls. **The refs are critical to our program as the players. Thank them for what they do!**

6. Game Time: There will be two (2) halves of twenty-five (25) minutes each. The half-time interval shall be five (5) minutes.
7. Kick Offs: Taken from center circle, offensive team must be kicked off from the center circle. The opposing team must remain outside the circle until ball is kicked. Goals can be scored on a kickoff. Kickoffs occur at the start of each half and after a goal is scored.
8. Ball out of Play: The ball will go out of play when it leaves the entire ball crosses the line. It may be put back into play in the following ways:
- a. Throw In: If the ball crosses the sidelines, the team who did not put the ball out will be given a throw in. Players will keep both feet planted, behind the white line and throw the ball overhead with both hands on the ball. Reinforce the first two weeks, but starting week 3 they turn the ball over.
 - b. Goal Kick: If the ball is kicked over the goal line by the offense, a goal kick is given to the defensive team. Kicks should be taken from the edge of the penalty area, the opposing team should retreat behind the midfield line to allow the team to take their kick.
 - c. Corner Kick: If the ball is kicked over the goal line by the defense, a corner kick is awarded to the offense from the corner closest to where the ball crossed the goal line. Only one attempt and should be considered a live ball, so if the corner taker kicks it out of bounds, it's a goal kick just like usual. Defending players must stand at least four yards away from the ball until it is in play.
9. Offside: Called for 3rd/4th grade the first two weeks, but no turnover will be assessed until week 3. If called during first two weeks should result in indirect kick by team that committed offside from the place of the pass.

10. Penalties/Infractions:

- a. Handball: Handball should be called for all deliberate handling of the ball. At this age they all understand this is prohibited.
 - b. Slide Tackling: Prohibited at this level, always call the penalty and give a free kick.
 - c. Dangerous Kicks: Please call them and let the player know why. Players must learn to always play in control. Kicks above the waist, or kicks that hit another player above the knee should qualify for a caution.
11. Free Kicks: The coaches will assess direct free kicks for all penalties, with the opponents six yards away from the ball. No penalty shots are incurred in the penalty area, the ball can be placed on the edge of the penalty area and a free kick given.
12. Scorekeeping: No official scores are kept in regular season games. Emphasis is to have fun and maximize participation and development. Coaches are responsible for controlling their teams and keeping games competitive by challenging more accomplished players and encouraging those who need development. Moving players in formation or changing positions is helpful in developing a player's overall game.