

**USYSA**  
**U12 8v8**  
**Modified Rules**  
**Recommendations**

**This document is an Excerpt  
from  
The US Youth Soccer Small Sided Games Manual**

**It is provided for your information and guidance for the Fall  
2006 transition**

**For ECYSA specific registration and roster rules, please refer  
to the 2006 ECYSA Operational Rules Addendum to Section  
1.A.9**

**For more information please go to [www.usyouthsoccer.org](http://www.usyouthsoccer.org)**

# **U12 Modified Rules**

## **US Youth Soccer Official Under 12 Playing Recommendations**

US Youth Soccer recommended modifications to the FIFA Laws of the Game.

FIFA Laws of the Game can be found at [www.ussoccer.com/referees](http://www.ussoccer.com/referees).

**Please note the U12 addendum and appendix.**

### **Law 1 – The Field of Play**

**Dimensions:** The field of play must be rectangular. The length of the touchline must be greater than the length of the goal line.

**Length:** minimum 70 yards maximum 80 yards

**Width:** minimum 45 yards maximum 55 yards

**Field Markings:** Distinctive lines not more than (5) inches wide. The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line. The center mark is indicated at the midpoint of the halfway line. A circle with a radius of eight (8) yards is marked around it.

**The Goal area:** Conform to FIFA.

**The Penalty Area:** A penalty area is defined at each end of the field as follows: Two lines are drawn at right angles to the goal line, fourteen (14) yards from the inside of each goalpost. These lines extend into the field of play for a distance of fourteen (14) yards and are joined by a line drawn parallel with the goal line. The area bounded by these lines and the goal line is the penalty area. Within each penalty area a penalty mark is made ten (10) yards from the midpoint between the goalposts and equidistant to them. An arc of a circle with a radius of eight (8) yards from each penalty mark is drawn outside the penalty area.

**Flag posts:** Conform to FIFA.

**The Corner Arc:** Conform to FIFA.

**Goals:** Conform to FIFA with exception that the maximum distance between the posts is eighteen (18) feet and the maximum distance from the lower edge of the crossbar to the ground is six (6) feet.

**Law 2 – The Ball:** Size four (4).

**Law 3 – The Number of Players:** A match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than eight players, one of whom is the goalkeeper. A match may not start if either team consists of fewer than seven players.

Substitutions: At any stoppage and unlimited.

**Law 4 – The Players Equipment:** Conform to FIFA. Non-uniform clothing is allowed based on weather conditions, but uniforms must still distinguish teams.

**Law 5 – The Referee:** Registered referee.

Revised May 27, 2005

*US Youth Soccer 51*

**Law 6 – The Assistant Referee:** Use U.S.S.F. registered referees or club linesmen/women.

**Law 7 – The Duration of the Match:** Conform to FIFA with the exception of the match being divided into two (2) halves of thirty (30) minutes each. There shall be a half-time interval of five (5) minutes.

**Law 8 – The Start and Restart of Play:** Conform to FIFA with the exception that opponents of the team taking the kick-off are at least eight (8) yards from the ball until it is in play.

**Law 9 – The Ball In and Out of Play:** Conform to FIFA.

**Law 10 – The Method of Scoring:** Conform to FIFA.

**Law 11 – Offside:** Conform to FIFA.

**Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct:** Conform to FIFA with the exception that an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team at the center spot on the halfway line if a goalkeeper punts or drop-kicks the ball in the air from his/her penalty area into the opponents penalty area.

**Law 13 – Free Kicks:** Conform to FIFA with the exception that opponents are at least eight (8) yards from the ball.

**Law 14 – The Penalty Kick:** Conform to FIFA with the exceptions that the penalty mark is at ten yards and that players other than the kicker and defending goalkeeper are at least eight (8) yards from the penalty mark.

**Law 15 – The Throw-In:** Conform to FIFA.

**Law 16 – The Goal Kick:** Conform to FIFA.

**Law 17 – The Corner Kick:** Conform to FIFA with the exception that opponents remain at least eight (8) yards away from the ball until it is in play.

## U12 ADDENDUM

### MODIFIED RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GAME FOR U12

**Law 1** The Field of Play dimensions are smaller to accommodate the eight-versus-eight game and are appropriate for the movement capabilities of ten- and eleven-year-old children. These adjusted dimensions provide more practical space allowing players to be successful.

Field Markings: per FIFA with the exception of the center circle, penalty area, penalty mark and penalty arc.

Goals: the goal, 6 x 18 feet, is the same for the U10 and U12 age groups. By using the same size goal for both age groups clubs will have to buy fewer goals.

**Law 2** The Ball: must be a size four. The smaller ball is lighter and more easily kicked, received, headed, dribbled, caught, thrown and passed.

**Law 3** The Number of Players: The eight-a-side game includes the goalkeeper. The smaller number of field players will provide the opportunity for the children to further develop their physical and technical abilities. These are valuable traits for all soccer players to develop. With fewer players on the field each child has an increased number of contacts with the ball and has more actual playing time. Additionally the players will be required to make more decisions and experience repeating game situations frequently. The work rate and involvement of players will be more consistent. While learning both offense and defense, players will become well rounded and will understand more readily the roles and importance of teammates. The smaller field dimensions and number of players on the field of play will require more concentration on transition, which a vitally important tactical concept for the players to learn. The minimum number of players to begin a match for preteen players in SSG should be one (1) less than the number required on the field. That is for U12 the minimum will be seven (7) and for U10 the minimum will be five (5). There should not be a minimum for U8 and U6 and clubs, administrators, coaches and referees should be encouraged to allow players from the team with sufficient numbers to 'loan' a player or two to the team that is short players and then PLAY.

**Law 6** The Assistant Referees: per FIFA. Use registered referees or club linesmen/women.

**Law 7** The Duration of the Match: per FIFA with the exception of the halves being 30 minutes each.

**Law 8** The Start and Restart of Play: per FIFA. The distance the defending players must be away from the ball until it is kicked is the same as the radius of the center circle.

**Law 10** Goal Scored: shall conform to FIFA and the sections concerning Winning Team and Competition Rules shall conform to US Youth Soccer guidelines.

**Law 12** The rule on the goalkeeper's distribution still allows for the ball to be punted the entire length of the field; it just can not go directly into the opponents' penalty area.

**Law 13** Free Kicks: per FIFA. The distance the defending players must be away from the ball until it is kicked is the same as the radius of the center circle.

**Law 14** Conform to FIFA with the exceptions that the penalty mark is ten yards from the center of the goal line and that players other than the kicker and defending goalkeeper are at least eight yards from the penalty mark. The distance of eight yards conforms to the radius of the center circle. The distance of ten yards from the center of the goalmouth for the penalty mark fits within the reduced dimensions of the penalty area and is a reasonable distance for the kick.

**Law 17** The Corner Kick: per FIFA. The distance the defending players must be away from the ball until it is kicked is the same as the radius of the center circle.

Roster Size: The recommended minimum roster size is eleven and the maximum recommended roster size is thirteen.

Playing Time: refer to the Effective Playing Time chart.

#### **ADVANTAGES OF PLAYING SMALL SIDED GAMES**

More time with the coach

Energetic workouts due to playing both offense and defense

More efficient use of field space

Matches can be played simultaneously across a full size field

Children are physically more efficient in smaller space

Children are actively involved for a longer period of time

It takes less time to score a goal or advance to goal

Greater success rate for the players

#### **US Youth Soccer Recommendations**

Opposing coaches, players and parents should shake hands after each match.

Parent/coaches, non-participating players and spectators should be there to enjoy and encourage the activity of the youngsters.

Spectator and team benches should be on opposite sides of the field.

No alcoholic beverages or tobacco products will be consumed or allowed near the playing area.

Coaches of U12 teams should attend the U10/U12 Youth Module coaching course and the Grade 9 referee course.

# Suggested Set-up for 8v8 Fields

