



There is a general consensus among the technical coaching staff of national soccer associations around the world that small-sided soccer is best suited for teaching soccer to young children. Ottawa Soccer Club uses a small-sided format in which the number of players, field sizes and rules related to offsides, substitutions, heading, etc. all mature along with the player. OSC offers a recreational soccer experience, which should be fun and engaging for all players in all divisions.

OSC U8 Game Format

1. **Number of Players:** 5 v. 5 with goalie.
2. **Referee:** 1 center referee. Referees will be encouraged to take advantage of teachable moments related to the rules of the game by briefly explaining fouls, demonstrating throw-ins, etc.
3. **Duration of the Match:** 11-minute quarters. Teams switch sides at half. Coaches may agree not to change sides. If coaches cannot agree on whether to switch sides, the general rule that sides will be switched will apply.
4. **Substitutions:** Unlimited substitutions can be made on the fly during the game or at any stoppage of play.
5. **Ball Out of Play:** The ball is in play until it completely crosses over a touchline (sideline) or goal line (end line).
 - a. *Sideline Out of Play* – If the ball crosses the sideline, the team that did not touch it last will throw in the ball. The thrower will use both hands to deliver the ball from behind and over the head in one continuous motion while keeping both feet on the ground.
 - b. *Corner Kick* – Taken when a defender last touches the ball before it crosses the end line. The offense will kick the ball from the corner. The opposing players are to be at least 4 yards from the corner arc until it is kicked.
 - c. *Goal Kick* – Taken when the offense last touches the ball before it crosses the end line. The defense will kick the ball from the goal box.
6. **Free Kicks:** Indirect free kicks will be rewarded for direct free kick offenses. No penalty kicks. The opposing players are to be at least 4 yards from the ball until it is kicked. Kick offs, corner kicks and goal kicks remain direct kicks.
7. **Heading:** No heading allowed.
8. **Offside:** No offside rule.
9. **Slide Tackling:** No slide tackling.
10. **The Build Out Line (BOL):** Coaches will lead their teams in the correct application of the BOL. This player development initiative affects...
 - a. *Goal kicks* – Opposing players must move behind the build out line during a goal kick and remain there until the ball has been kicked and clearly moves.
 - b. *Goalkeeper possession* – When the goalkeeper has possession of the ball in hand, opposing players must move beyond the BOL. Once the keeper releases possession with their hands, the opposing team may cross the BOL and resume normal play.
 - i. The goalkeeper may pass, throw or roll the ball into play.
 - ii. They may not punt or drop kick the ball.
 - In either of these situations, the kicker or goalkeeper may choose to play the ball out prior to the other team moving behind the BOL. In doing so, they accept the consequences of resuming normal play at that point.
11. **Scores:** The winning coach is responsible for recording the score in the league app, unless an OSC team is playing a non-OSC team, in which case the coach of the OSC team will record the score in the league app. At the U8 level, winning should be de-emphasized and sportsmanship should be emphasized.
12. **Gear:** All players should wear soccer cleats with shin guards under socks. During cold weather a player can wear stocking caps, gloves and clothes under the uniform. No necklaces, ear rings or jewelry of any kind should be worn for safety reasons.

- 13. Post-game:** Teams line-up to tell the opposing players “good game” and thank the referee. Throw all trash in the nearest garbage container. If your team is the last to play on the field, ensure benches and corner flags are placed in or near the OSC trailer.
- 14. 3 Goal Rule:** To help keep games competitive and fun for all players, OSC limits goal scoring in certain situations for the U15 division and below. The "3 Goal Rule" applies in two parts: 1) each player is limited to a maximum of 3 goals per game, and 2) while a team is up by 3 or more goals, any player from that team who has scored is ineligible to score again. If a goal is scored by a player who falls under the 3 Goal Rule, the result is a goal kick for the opposing team.
- 15. Short Team Rule:** In cases where teams find themselves short players, coaches have three options...
- If a team has at least the minimum number of players required, play on. The opposing coach may choose to play the same number of players, but this is not a requirement.
 - If coaches agree, share players. The opposing coach may choose to share specific players at his/her discretion, but this is not a requirement. Every player on the mixed team will wear a pinnie to distinguish it from the other team.
 - Forfeit.

Coaches may not...

- bring up or down players from other divisions.
- use players in the same division who are rostered on other teams (other than the opposing team in case #2 above).
- use players from outside the league.

The minimum players required to start/continue a match are 4 players per team.