

SOCCKER RULES

A soccer team consists of eleven players, divided among the following positions:

- GOALIE - the person who defends the goal against scoring attempts. The goalie is the only player who is allowed to touch the ball with his/her hands. This is only allowed, however, when the goalie is within the penalty area.
- DEFENDERS (4) - field players whose task is to help defend the goal. They are frequently referred to as wings, the stoppers, and the sweepers.
- MIDFIELDERS (3) - players who provide a link between the offense and the defense. They are frequently called on to assist both the defenders and the forwards and must be able to play either role with equal skill. Midfielders are often referred to as halfbacks
- FORWARDS (3) - the scorers on the team. Often referred to as strikers or wings, they position themselves so as to gain the advantage over the defense and score on the goal.

The game of soccer consists of two halves and is begun with a kickoff in the center of the field. Every player must be in his/her own half of the field and the first kick must be directed forward and move at least one full revolution before it can be touched by another player. Kickoffs occur at the start of each half and after each goal. A goal may not be scored from a kickoff.

After the kickoff, play continues until the ball goes out-of-bounds, a penalty occurs, or a goal is scored. A goal is worth one point and counts only when the entire ball passes over the goal line and into the goal. A goal will not count if an offensive player is offsidess. Offsidess occurs when an offensive player is closer to the opponent's goal line than the ball unless: the player is in his/her own half of the field; two defensive players are between the offensive player and the goal line; the ball was last played by the other team. A player cannot be offsidess on a corner kick, throw-in, or a goal kick. Players are allowed to move into an offside position to receive a pass if they move after the ball has been kicked.

If, during play, the ball passes out-of-bounds on the sidelines, it is awarded to the team opposite the one that last touched it. The team awarded possession will then restart play with a throw-in. A throw-in is properly executed by keeping both feet on the ground while releasing the ball with both hands overhead (another player must touch the ball before the thrower can touch the ball again).

If the ball passes out-of-bounds at the endlines, the game is restarted with either a goal kick or a corner kick depending on which team last touched the ball. If the offense last touched it, then a goal kick is awarded. If the defense last touched the ball, the game is restarted with a corner kick.

A direct free kick (kick shot directly at the goal) is awarded when a major foul occurs. Major fouls include handling the ball, kicking, striking, tripping, holding, pushing, charging, jumping at an opponent and unsportsmanlike conduct.

An indirect free kick (in which the kick must be touched by another player before a goal must be scored) is awarded when a minor foul occurs. Minor fouls include dangerous play, obstruction, the goalkeeper taking too many steps (three steps are allowed), and offside.

A penalty kick occurs when the defensive team commits a major foul in the penalty area. The offensive team member takes a kick from the penalty spot (about 12 yards in front of the goal) and the goalkeeper is the only player allowed to try to stop the kick.

