

Soccer Rule Book



**“Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it.”
Proverbs 22:6**

INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW

The Catholic Youth League Board of Directors has chosen to implement what are known as “Small-Sided” games. Small-sided games are games played on smaller fields and with fewer players. Games of 3 vs. 3, 4 vs. 4, and 6 vs. 6 are examples of small-sided game numbers.

Here are some of the reasons that we believe that our young soccer players should play small-sided games:

1. Because we want our young soccer players to touch the soccer ball more often and become **more skillful** with it! (Individual technical development)
2. Because we want our young soccer players to make **more, less-complicated decisions** during the game! (Tactical development)
3. Because we want our young soccer players to be more physically **efficient** in the field space in which they are playing! (Reduced field size)
4. Because we want our young soccer players to have more individual teaching time with the coach! Fewer players on the field and fewer players on the team will guarantee this! (Need to feel worthy and need to feel important).
5. Because we want our young soccer players to have **more involved playing time** in the game! (More opportunity to solve problems that only the game presents)
6. Because we want our young soccer players to have **more opportunities to play on both sides of the ball!** (More exposure to attacking and defending situations)
7. Because we want our young soccer players to have **more opportunities to score goals and make saves!** (Pure excitement)

The “Small-Sided” environment is a **developmentally appropriate environment** for our young soccer players. It’s a **FUN** environment that focuses on the **young soccer player**.

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

GENERAL LEAGUE RULES

This rulebook is to be used by all teams playing soccer in the Catholic Youth League. A more comprehensive set of soccer rules can be found at www.drblank.com/slaws.htm. Rules specifically stated here take precedence for CYL play.

The purpose of the league is to provide education-based athletic activities for Catholic school children in grades K through 5. The objective is to promote fun, teamwork, self-esteem and parish community spirit through family participation.

- All teams are co-ed.
- There are no try-outs and children play on teams with classmates from their schools.
- Each child plays a minimum of half the game and is welcome regardless of gender, skills, or ability
- Officials will explain all rule infractions to players.
- In the spirit of CYL, teams are not permitted to run up scores. Rotating player positions, requiring additional passing, and adjusting playing time to accommodate uneven competition is required.

THE FIELD

Teams will occupy the same area of the field sidelines for the entire game and not cross the mid-field area into the other team's area.

Spectators will occupy the opposite side from the team benches. At no time can spectators or coaches be behind the goal area or end lines.

The field and goal size will be determined by the logistics and layout of the available facilities.

THE BALL

Grades K, 1 & 2 will use a size #3 soccer ball. Grades 3, 4 & 5 will use a size #4 soccer ball. The teams playing are responsible for providing a game ball

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

K through 2nd grade will play with 4 players, and no goalie will be used ("4 vs. 4"). Good defense is encouraged, but no player should play an equivalent role of goalie, even if hands are not used (i.e. no pure "goal guarding" allowed). To ensure maximum playing time for all, teams should consist of no more than 8 players.

3rd through 5th grade will play with 6 players, including a goalie ("6 vs. 6"). To ensure maximum playing time for all, teams should consist of no more than 12 players. Sharing players to maximize playing time and even competitiveness is encouraged if one team has significantly more players present than the other. Exceptions to roster sizes must be approved by the League.

PLAYING TIME/SUBSTITUTIONS

Substitutions may only be made at the end of each quarter to ensure a measurable and equitable period of playing time for each player. All players **MUST** play a minimum of two complete quarters, except in the following circumstances:

1. In cases of extreme exhaustion, injury or other medical condition that restrict play. A player who is bleeding must be removed from the game and can not re-enter until they are sufficiently bandaged. A substitute may be used while the injured player is being attended.
2. In cases of disruptive behavior, dangerous play, or poor sportsmanship (Yellow Card).
3. In cases of removal by the referee (Red Card).
4. In cases where the player has arrived after the second quarter of play was complete.
5. In cases where a team is scheduled to play a doubleheader, the team playing the doubleheader will be allowed to substitute players during their second game only. Substitutions can occur at the 5 minute mark of each quarter of the second game or as indicated by numbers 1-4 above.

Coaches that fail to follow the playing time rules are in violation of the CYL Code of Conduct and may be subject to disciplinary action.

EQUIPMENT

For all practices and games, players must wear shin guards and molded soccer shoes or turf shoes. Baseball shoes/cleats are not permitted. No exceptions will be permitted.

The league provided shirts, shorts, and soccer socks should be worn for all games. All shirts must be tucked in and not altered (i.e. no names or numbers, cut-off sleeves, etc.). Goalies will wear a different color shirt or soccer bib from what the other players are wearing.

Players may not wear watches or jewelry or other non-soccer uniform items except for Medic Alert Labels that must be worn inside the jersey and taped to the body. The referee will be the sole judge as to what is unacceptable.

Hair control devices are allowed if made of soft material and not worn for adornment.

COACHES' RESPONSIBILITIES

Coaches have complete and total responsibility for their team and fans. Coaches who are unable to control their fans and players will be penalized with a yellow card for the first infraction and a red card for the second infraction. The third infraction will cause the game to cease. **Any coach or spectator receiving a Red Card will be deemed to be in violation of the League's Code of Conduct and will be subject to disciplinary action and MUST LEAVE the facility immediately.**

The team must stay in its designated team area. A coach or player who goes into the other team's areas can be penalized. The coach is allowed to have 2 representatives/assistant coaches in their team's bench area during the game.

Coaches shall never be on the field of play unless to officiate the game.

The coaches, through their actions, are responsible for teaching the children how to deal with winning and losing a game. This includes how to deal with bad calls, difficult parents and other coaches. The league will remove a coach from his duties for inappropriate behavior that includes but is not limited to.

- Disagreeing with an official.
- A negative discussion of the game with the other coaches.
- A negative discussion of the game with parents.
- Inappropriately ending a game by not congratulating the other team or inappropriate behavior when congratulating the other team.

Concerns regarding players, parents or officiating must be handled via the phone on the following Monday by contacting their school's CYL director.

REFEREE

For K through 2nd grade teams, each team is responsible for providing a referee for the game in the event the league does not. Particularly in the younger grades, the referee is allowed to instruct and encourage both teams appropriately. All referee decisions as well as any instructions and encouragement provided are expected to be equally beneficial to both teams (i.e. it's not legal to help only your own team).

Professional referees will be provided for 3rd, 4th and 5th grade teams.

REFEREE RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the referee's responsibility to be in control at all times. The children are there to have fun and learn the game of soccer. For all infractions the referee will explain what was done incorrectly, using a positive teaching approach. This means a portion of field time will be spent in positive coaching by the officials and correction of infractions of the rules.

The most common problem is excessive physical contact between two players, e.g. pushing and shoving. The referees must first tell the violators that this is not acceptable. If a problem continues, then the offending player must sit out while the player's own coach discusses the needed adjustments. It is the referee's responsibility to be in control of the game and flow of play. Coaches have authority only over their own players. The referee can stop the game at any time to give aid to an injured player.

END OF GAME PROCEDURE

All players and coaches must shake hands at the conclusion of every game. Failure to demonstrate sportsmanship may result in disciplinary action.

METHOD OF SCORING

A goal is scored when the whole ball has passed over the outside edge of the goal line, between the goal post and under the cross-bar.

Teams cannot score on a throw-in or kick-off. Any infraction of the rules known to the referee and called prior to or during a goal will negate the goal.

No running total or team score is to be recorded during regular season games. Overtime is only played during tournament games.

“RUNNING UP” SCORES

The purpose of the league is to provide our children a place to learn about sports, have fun, engage in fair play, and respect the dignity of the other team. When a team has a 5-goal advantage, the referee will call for the leading team to make changes significant enough to even competition. This is consistent with promoting a positive game environment for both teams. For example, the leading coach can re-arrange players so less skilled offensive players will be attacking or require his team to pass the ball 5 times before they shoot. Coaches are expected to be creative while encouraging fair play.

CANCELLATION & BAD WEATHER

Games will be cancelled via the game day hotline (407-641-9768), the on-site CYL director or the professional official, if used. Any visible or audible sign of lightning or thunder will result in cancellation of play.

Teams are expected to attend all scheduled games regardless of conflicts and number of players. It is better to show with less than a full complement of players than to not show at all. Conflicts must be reported to the school's director not less than one full week prior to play.

SPECIFIC RULES OF PLAY (Grades K – 2)

Game Duration: The match shall be divided into four (4) equal 10 minute quarters. There shall be a 2 minute break between quarters one and two and another 2 minute break between quarters three and four. Should the heat index on game day reach 85 degrees or higher, a 30 second water break will be permitted midway through each quarter, and breaks between quarters will be reduced to 1 minute. There shall be a halftime intermission of 5 minutes. The horn will sound ten minutes prior to the start of the next game, signifying the end of the game, regardless of the amount of time remaining on the clock. The clock will run continuously and is not to be stopped for any reason (i.e. no penalty time). It is imperative the games begin and end on time.

Start of Game: 5 minutes prior to game time, the horn will sound a short, double-blast, and both teams will meet at center field to form two lines facing each other. The referee will evaluate each player's equipment. Players with unsatisfactory equipment must correct the infraction or they will not be allowed to play. Both teams and coaches will remain at mid-field to participate in the league pre-game prayer.

The referee will have the team captains face each other. The visiting team captain will call the coin toss. The team winning the coin toss will elect to take possession of the ball or not. The other team will decide which goal to defend. Teams will alternate possession at the start of each quarter, and will switch the goals defended at the end of each half.

Start/Restart of Play: The referee will confirm that each team has the correct number of players on the field and will signal the start of the kick-off with a single whistle. The game begins with a legal kick-off. Play after a goal is scored also resumes with a kick-off.

The game will start with the player taking a place kick. The ball will be stationary at center field. All defensive players must be a minimum of 4 yards from the ball until it is in play.

Prior to the kick-off, every player will be in their own half of the field and the opposing team will be outside of the center circle. A legal start or re-start of play occurs when the ball is kicked forward one complete revolution. The player starting the game with a kick-off cannot kick the ball again until another player comes in contact with the ball. A goal cannot be scored on a kick-off.

Ball In and Out of Play: The ball is out of play when it completely goes over the end line or side line either in the air or on the ground and the referee signals by a whistle to stop play.

The lines on the field belong to the areas of which they are boundaries. The side lines and end lines are part of the field of play. The lines creating the penalty and goal areas are part of those areas.

Offside: There shall be no offside penalties in this division.

Drop Ball: A drop ball will be used to restart the game when it can not be determined who last touched the ball before the ball last went out of bounds or when play has stopped by the official for other than an infraction (such as an injury).

The ball will be put back in play from a spot nearest to where play was stopped but no closer than four yards from the side or end line. Opposing players will face each other, the referee will push the ball between the players and each player will not touch the ball until it hits the ground.

Fouls and Misconduct: When a player commits a foul a direct free kick shall be taken from that point where the offense occurred. This means a goal can be scored directly from the kick without any one else touching the ball. The following offenses are considered fouls:

- A player kicks or attempts to kick an opponent.
- A player trips or attempts to trip an opponent.
- A player jumps at an opponent.
- A player charges an opponent.
- A player strikes or attempts to strike an opponent.
- A player pushes an opponent.
- A player tackles an opponent to gain possession of the ball, making contact with the opponent before touching the ball.
- A player holds an opponent.
- A player handles the ball deliberately. It is not handling of the ball when the player is trying to protect him/her self or has incidental contact with the ball.
- A player plays in a dangerous manner.
- A player impedes the progress of an opponent.
- A player commits any other offense, not previously mentioned for which play is stopped to caution or dismiss a player.

Slide Tackles: **No slide tackles are permitted in CYL soccer in any grade.** Players should be encouraged to stay on their feet as much as possible. Repeated slide tackles by the same team will result in a red card for the coach of that team.

Yellow Card Procedure: A yellow caution card will be issued in the event of a serious violation of soccer or league rules. A player receiving a yellow card will be removed from the game for at least 3 minutes. A replacement is allowed. In the event of a yellow card, a direct free kick will be awarded to the other team at the spot of the infraction.

Red Card Procedure: A red card will be issued in the event of a dire violation of soccer or league rules, including repeating offenses previously subject to a yellow card. A player receiving a red card will be removed from the game for the balance of the day. A replacement will **not** be allowed. In the event of a red card, a direct free kick will be awarded to the other team at the spot of the infraction. **Any player, coach or spectator receiving a Red Card will be deemed in violation of the League's Code of Conduct and will be subject to disciplinary action. Coaches or spectators receiving a red card MUST LEAVE the facility immediately.**

Free Kicks: All kicks are direct kicks and opponents must be at least 4 yards from the ball when it is put in play. Except the kick-offs to start and re-start play, all other kicks in CYL will be deemed “direct”, meaning the ball does not have to touch another player before scoring.

The following rules apply to all free kicks:

- A. The ball must be placed at the point of infraction.
- B. The ball must be stationary.
- C. The ball is in play when it moves a distance equal to its circumference.
- D. Opposing players must be a minimum of 4 yards away.
- E. If a player asks for opponents to move back, the kicker must wait for a whistle to begin.
- F. If a player delays the kick, he will be cautioned.
- G. The player taking the kick must not touch the ball again until another player touches it.
- H. A free kick will be retaken by the defense in their own goal box when the ball is kicked and it does not leave the goal box before someone else touches it.
- I. When a free kick is awarded for a yellow or red card the kick will be started by the referees whistle.
- J. Players can not score against their own team during a free kick. If the free kick that does not touch any other player results in an own goal, the other team will receive a corner kick.

Penalty Kicks: There are no penalty shots in this division. Fouls (hand balls, illegal contact, etc.) will result in a direct free kick at a point where the foul occurred, or 4 yards from the goal, whichever is furthest.

Throw-In: A throw in occurs in order to restart play after an out-of-bounds. The team that did not last touch the ball prior to it going out-of-bounds throws the ball into play. An improperly performed throw-in can be retaken once. The following rules apply:

- A. The thrower must face the field of play.
- B. Part of each foot must be on the side line or outside the line.
- C. Both feet must be on the ground when the ball is released. A player can “drag” a foot.
- D. You must use both hands and throw the ball from behind and over the head.
- E. The ball is in play upon crossing the entire side line.
- F. The thrower cannot play the ball until it touches another player.
- G. A goal can not be scored by a throw in.

Goal Kick: A Goal Kick is taken when the whole of the ball passes over the goal-line excluding that point between the goal post, either in the air or on the ground, having last been played by the attacking team.

The ball shall be put back into play by placing it anywhere on the end line, on the side of the field where the ball went over the end line. The player kicking the ball cannot re-kick the ball until another player touches it (re-kick for violation). All opposing players must be a minimum of four yards from the ball.

Corner Kick: A corner kick will be awarded when the whole of the ball passes over the goal-line, excluding that portion between the goal-posts, either in the air or on the ground, having last been played by one of the defending team's players. A corner kick is a direct free kick.

- A. The whole of the ball shall be placed in the quarter circle nearest the corner where the ball went out of bounds.
- B. The corner marker must not be moved or removed.
- C. A goal may be scored from a corner kick.
- D. All opposing players must be four yards from the ball.
- E. When the ball is kicked and travels its circumference then another player must touch the ball before the kicker can re-touch the ball.

SPECIFIC RULES OF PLAY (Grades 3 – 5)

Grades 3-5 will use rules identical to those specified for grades K-2, except where noted below.

Game Duration: Identical to K-2 rule with the exception that there shall be a 1 minute break between quarters one and two and another 1 minute break between quarters three and four; ALL quarters will be timed by the referee.

Start/Restart of Play: Identical to K-2 rule with the exception that all players shall be a minimum of 8 yards from the ball until it is put in play.

Offside: There shall be no offside penalties for 3rd grade teams. In games involving 4th and 5th grade teams, a player will be declared offside if they place/station themselves in a position behind the defense prior to the ball being played ("cherry picking"). The referee will provide a warning to the player and provide instructions as to proper positioning prior to calling a penalty.

If a player is declared offside, the referee will award the other team a direct free kick which shall be taken by a player of the opposing team from the place where the infringement occurred, unless the offense is committed by a player in the goal area, in which case the free kick shall be taken from a point anywhere within that half of the goal area in which the offense occurred.

Slide Tackles: **No slide tackles are permitted in CYL soccer in any grade.** Players should be encouraged to stay on their feet as much as possible. Repeated slide tackles by the same team will result in a red card for the coach of that team.

Free Kicks: Identical to K-2 rule, with the exception that all players shall be a minimum of 8 yards from the ball until it is put in play.

Penalty Kicks: A penalty kick is awarded for any fouls that occur within the penalty box. The referee will be responsible for placing players and explaining rules regarding penalty kicks.

Throw-In: Identical to K-2 rule, with the exception that an improper thrown-in may not be re-taken. An improper throw-in will result in the other team receiving the ball for a throw-in from the same spot.

Goal Kick: A Goal Kick is taken when the whole of the ball passes over the goal-line excluding that point between the goal post, either in the air or on the ground, having last been played by the attacking team.

The ball shall be put back into play by placing the ball anywhere on the goal box, on the side of the field where the ball went over the end line. The player kicking the ball cannot re-kick the ball until another player touches the ball. All opposing players must be a minimum of eight yards from the ball.

Corner Kick: Identical to K-2 rule, with the exception that all players shall be a minimum of 8 yards from the ball until it is put in play.

Fouls and Misconduct: Identical to the K-2 rule, with the following additions.

- A player handles the ball deliberately (except for the goalkeeper). It is not handling of the ball when the player is trying to protect him/her self or has incidental contact with the ball.
- A player prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his hand.