



U12 Rules – 7v7

Revised Fall 2026

U12 is designed to be a fun but competitive division of youth soccer with a continued focus on learning and skill development. As SCSYSL is a recreational league that values learning, coaches must remember that players are still learning the game and that teams are made of players of all skill and experience levels. This isn't pro soccer, but games can still have a reasonable competitive spirit.

U12 and U14 are 7v7 formats that are intended to shift the focus more to the fundamentals of soccer compared to larger field and side play. Each player sees more action, gets more touches, and plays more gametime in the smaller format.

Although the field and roster sizes are smaller, the rules of U14 7v7 are mostly the same as the 9v9 style of play. Fouls **will** be called by a State Certified Referee.

As a coach, focus on improving player skill and fostering an atmosphere of teamwork.

As a parent, you will not be talking to the referee, which includes any banter. Parents should address their player's coach, who will in turn address the referee during half-time or stop the game at the next whistle for explanations on safety issues.

Law 1: Application of International Football Association Board (IFAB) Rules

- IFAB rules govern play unless otherwise specified below.

Law 2: Field of Play (in yards, adjusted to availability)

- Field: 65 yards x 45 yards
- Goals: 18.5 ft x 6.5 ft

Law 3: Duration of Game

- Games consist of two equal halves of 25 minutes, with a halftime of 5 minutes

Law 4: The Ball

- Size 4 Soccer Ball

Law 5: Number of Players

- 7v7: 6 players plus a goalkeeper per side in play

- If a team does not have enough players to field an entire team of 7, both teams should play down, or players should be borrowed from the larger team so that a competitive but fun game experience can still occur.
- **All players should have equal playing time**
 - Exceptions to the Law:
 1. A player arrives late
 2. A player becomes injured
 3. A player is not wearing proper soccer equipment (see Law 6)
- Substitutions are welcome only when a referee blows the whistle and the coach has asked for a chance to substitute players. A simple "Sub Ref?" will get the referee's attention and they will answer accordingly.
- For every four (4) goals a team is ahead, the opposing team may add an extra player; up to 2 players may be added.

Law 6: Player Equipment

Players must wear:

- Soccer cleats
 - o Tennis shoes may be substituted only in extenuating circumstances at the referee's discretion
- Shin guards
- Socks (completely covering shin guards)
- Shirt
- Shorts
- o **NO JEWELRY** (of any kind, unless medical alert taped to body)
- o **NO RIGID CASTS** allowed (soft casts permitted)
- o **NO HATS** (hoods must be tucked into the jerseys)

Law 7: Referees

- One certified official shall be assigned to each game
- Only **ONE** whistle to be used during game play

Law 8: Assistant Referee

- Not assigned; may be a parent or spectator
- May only signify to the certified referee that the ball has gone out of play
- May NOT use a whistle or other instrument that makes noise, See Law 5
- Is only utilized in a situation where the referee decides it is needed

Law 9: Offsides

- Enforced according to IFAB rules.

Law 10: Heading

- **There is no heading the ball allowed in U12.**
- Any ball that contacts a player's head, whether intended as a header attempt or accidental, shall be declared a dead ball with an indirect free kick awarded to the opposing team. Referee's discretion applies.

Law 11: Cautions and Expulsions

- A coach or player may receive a caution/expulsion.
- **Cautions** (yellow card):
Any player who receives a caution shall be removed from the field and substituted for the remainder of the half. If a team does not have a substitute, that team shall play short for the remainder of the half.
- **Expulsion** (red card):
Any player receiving a red card must leave the field and may not be replaced. The carded player shall also be suspended minimum of one (1) game. Any suspension greater than one game shall be determined by the SCSYSL Board of Directors.

Any coach receiving a red card must leave the field area and not communicate with the team for the rest of the game. The coach will also serve a minimum one (1) game suspension. Any suspension greater than one game shall be determined by the SCSYSL Board of Directors.

Coaches are responsible for managing their teams' parent behavior and may receive further discipline from the league if found to be encouraging or supporting parent misconduct.

Law 12: Team & Spectator Location

The home team and away team will occupy opposite sides of the field. Home spectators should sit with their team and away spectators should sit with their team. Opposing teams are not permitted to sit on the same side of the field.

The home team will always occupy the east or north side of the field. Away teams should always occupy the west or south end of the field. Teams will always occupy the side of the field that contains the touch lines.

Coaches and parents are not permitted to walk beyond the build out line. A goal coach or parent is **NOT** permitted between goal line and the build out line or near the goalkeeper and goal.