

Small-Sided Soccer Game Monitor Guide (U6, U7, and U8)

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Small-Sided Soccer and Game Monitors

The Alameda Soccer Club's Under 6 (U6), Under 7 (U7), and Under 8 (U8) age group divisions use formats generally referred to as "Small-Sided Soccer". The U6 division plays in a "3v3" format; the U7 and U8 divisions in a "5v5" format. These formats involve fewer players on the field than in past years, resulting in more touches on the ball, better soccer learning, and more fun.

All Small-Sided formats use *Game Monitors* as on-the-field facilitators/referees. Game Monitors are typically the parents or soccer-experienced older siblings of the kids playing rather than the licensed referees used for older age groups. This helps achieve our goal of de-emphasizing competition and promoting fun.

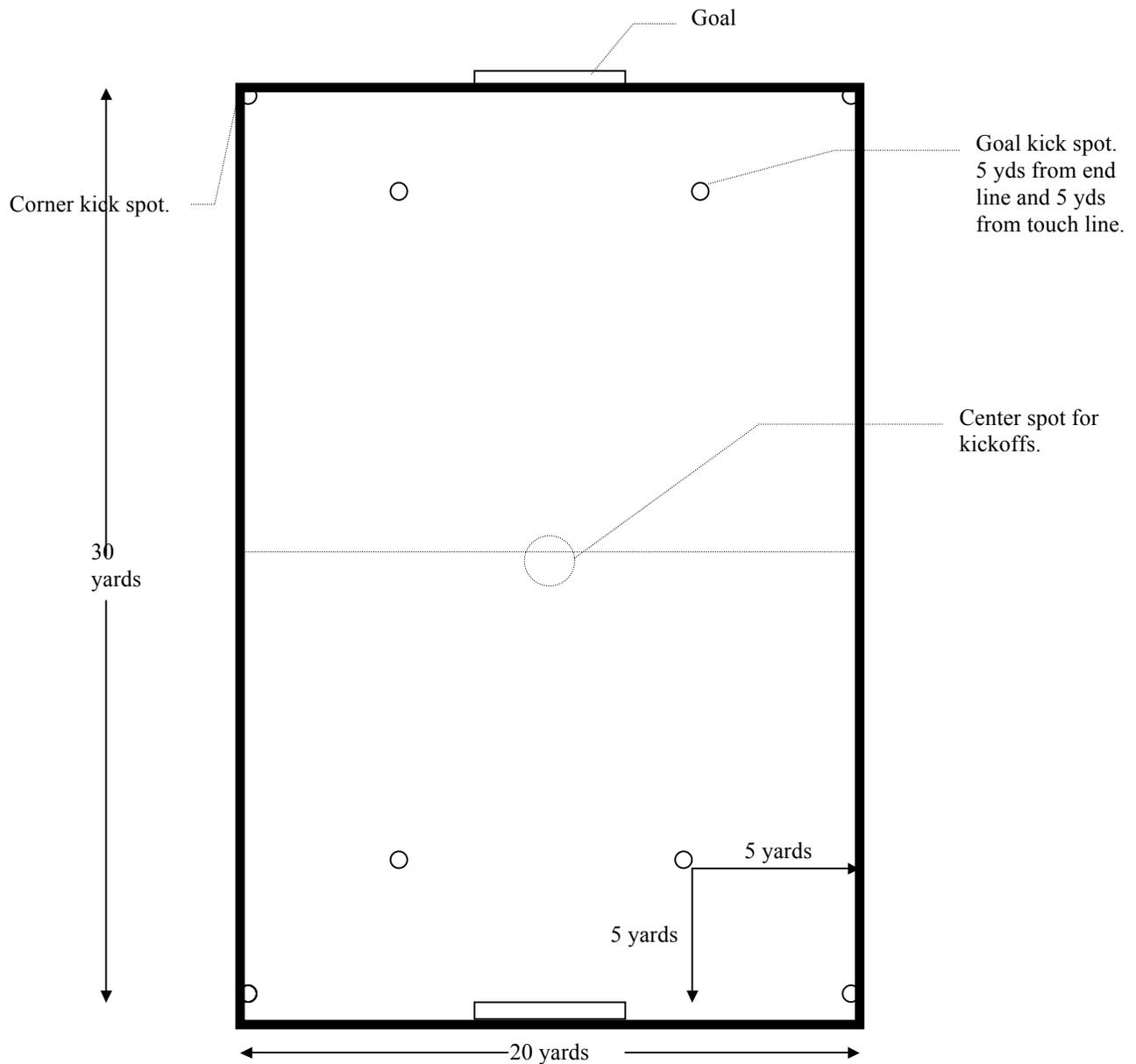
Game Monitors play an important role in making Small-Sided Soccer work. The most important job of Game Monitors is to keep the game moving quickly. The vast majority of a Game Monitor's actions are re-starting the game after the ball has gone out of play or after a goal.

This Guide presents the rules and guidelines used in both the 3v3 (Under 6) and 5v5 (Under 7 and Under 8) formats. Issues requiring clarification or amendment to these rules should be referred to the Alameda Soccer Club's Small-Sided Soccer Coordinator.

The Field of Play – Under 6

Each coach is responsible for laying out an entire field on the assigned location. Two goals, sixteen small cones, and four flat cones are provided to each coach for this purpose. Use all the cones to clearly mark the field boundaries. The field is marked as follows:

- Dimensions of approximately 30 yards long by 20 yards wide.
- Goals at each end.
- Cones in each corner to mark the location for corner kicks.
- Flat cones to mark the four spots for goal kicks, each 5 yards out from the goal line and 5 yards from the touch (side) line.

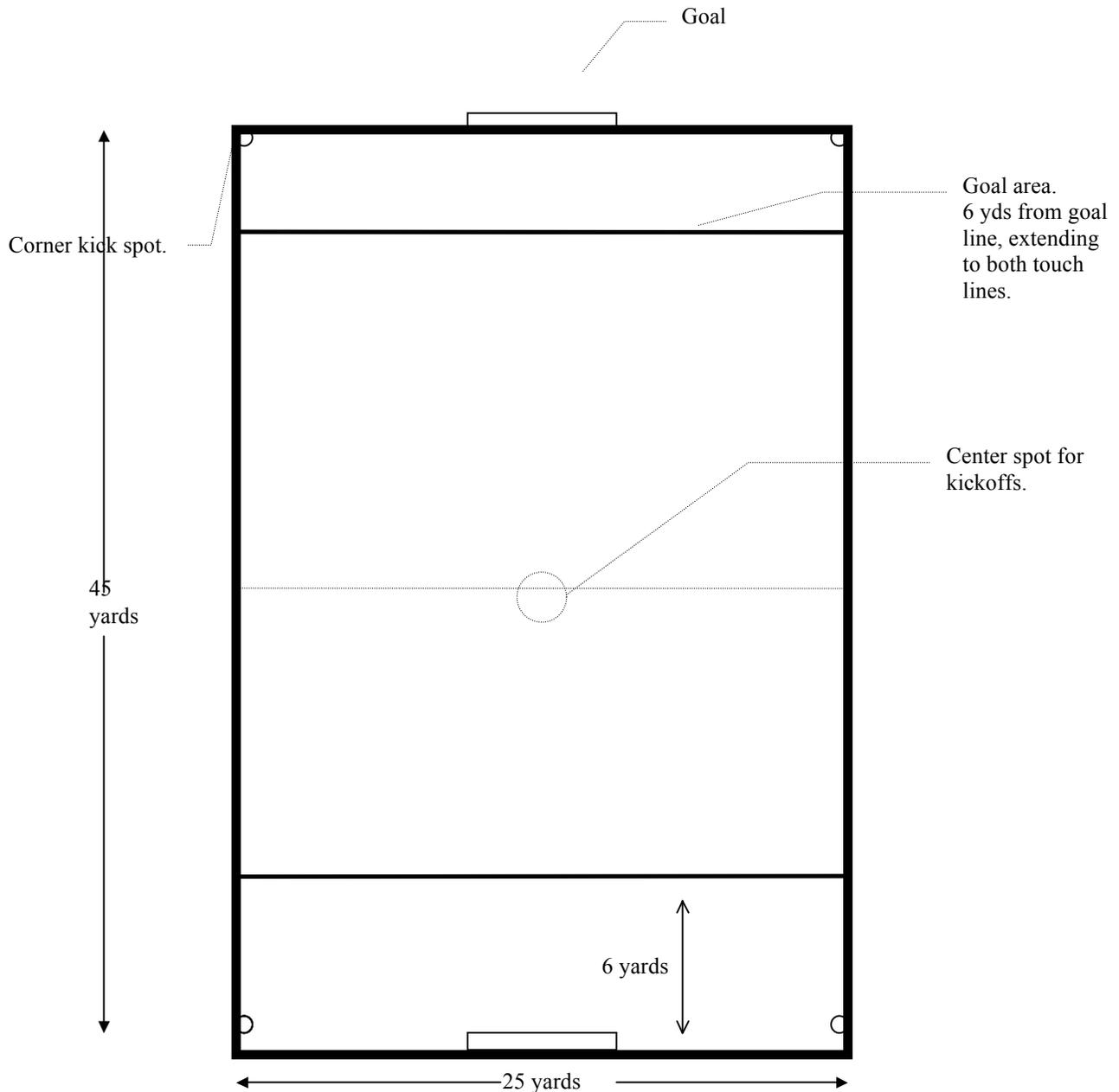


The Field of Play – Under 7 & Under 8

Fields will be lined by the Soccer Club prior to games as per the following diagram. Teams are responsible for setting up goals (with nets) and corner flags.

5v5 fields are marked as follows:

- Dimensions of 45 yards long by 25 yards wide.
- Goals approximately 5 feet high and 15 feet wide.
- A Goal Area 6 yards from the goal line and extending to both touch (side) lines.
- A Center Circle 5 yards in radius.



Small-Sided Soccer Rules

These rules are intended to simplify the game in a way that is readily intelligible to young children. In general, supervising adults should allow children to play freely with minimal interference. Use common sense to handle problematic situations not explicitly covered by the rules.

1. **The ball:** a standard #3 size soccer ball.
2. **[Under 6] Number of Players**
 - a. Maximum of three players on the field at one time (3 vs. 3).
 - b. There are no goalkeepers. All players are “field players.” Positioning players in a solely defensive position (e.g. stationed in front of the goal) is not permitted.
 - c. Substitutions allowed at **any time** during the games (i.e. “on the fly” without a stoppage of play).
 - d. All children who are present should have equal playing time.

[Under 7 & Under 8] Number of Players

- a. Maximum of five players on the field at one time (5 vs. 5).
 - b. One of the five players is the goalkeeper. The goalkeeper must wear a jersey which is distinctive from both teams. If no player on a team wears a distinctive goalkeeper jersey, then no player on that team may use his or her hands.
 - c. Substitutions are allowed at **any stoppage of play**, with the permission of the Game Monitor.
 - d. All children who are present should have equal playing time.
3. **Officiating**
 - a. Knowledgeable parents, older siblings, coaches, assistant coaches or referees assigned by the Club may serve as Game Monitors.
 - b. **[Under 6]** Each team provides a Game Monitor for each game. The two Game Monitors share responsibility and must be the only non-players on the field.
[Under 7 & Under 8] The Home team provides the Game Monitor for the first 20 minute game with the Visiting team providing the Game Monitor for the second game. Coaches may agree to a different arrangement. If the Club assigns a referee, s/he will work both games.
 - c. Game Monitors briefly explain rule infractions to offending player.
 - d. Game Monitors intervene as little as possible, allowing games to flow.
 - e. **[Under 6]** No whistles shall be used.

4. **[Under 6] Duration of the Game**

- a. Games between two squads are 10 minutes each. The clock shall not be stopped for any reason.
- b. 5 minute break between games.

[Under 7 & Under 8] Duration of the Game

- a. At the scheduled Saturday game time, the teams play two (2) consecutive 20 minute games, for a total of 40 minutes of soccer. The clock shall not be stopped for any reason, except those listed below.
- b. At the end of 10 minutes of play, a one minute “goalkeeper change timeout” is called. See Rule 9, below.
- c. 5 minute break between games.
- d. Teams switch ends between games.

5. **Start and Restart of Play**

- a. At the beginning of the game, the Game Monitor tosses a coin to determine which team kicks off. The other team chooses its half of the field.
- b. **[Under 6]** On all “free kicks” (e.g. kick-offs, kick-ins, corner kicks, goal kicks, and indirect kicks), defending players must be at least three (3) yards from the ball. This is referred to below as the Free Kick Distance.
[Under 7 & Under 8] On all “free kicks” (e.g. kick-offs, corner kicks, goal kicks, and indirect kicks), defending players must be at least five (5) yards from the ball. This is referred to below as the Free Kick Distance.
- c. The ball is kicked off from the exact center of the field. All players must be in their own half of the field. Defending players must be at the Free Kick Distance (see 5b) from the ball when it is kicked. On a kick-off the ball must travel forwards.
- d. Play is considered to stop when the ball crosses **completely** over the goal line or touch (side) line. If any part of the ball is on the field, then the ball is still in play.

- e. *[Under 6]* If the ball is out of play over the touch line, the team that last touched the ball loses possession. The other team puts the ball back into play with a **kick-in** (not a throw-in), which is classified as an indirect kick (i.e. a goal cannot be scored directly off a kick-in – it must first touch another player). The ball is placed on the touch line where it went out. The opposing team must be at least 3 yards from the ball when it is kicked in.

[Under 7 & Under 8] If the ball is out of play over the touch line, the team that last touched the ball loses possession. The other team puts the ball back into play with a **throw-in** (not a kick-in, as in Under 6). Any player may take the throw-in. Attributes of a legal throw-in are:

- Both feet on or behind the touch line,
 - Both hands on the ball with equal pressure,
 - Ball thrown from behind and over the head,
 - When the ball is released, **both** of the thrower's feet must be in contact with the ground.
- f. If the ball is out of play over the goal line, the team that last touched the ball loses possession.
- i. If the attacking team gains possession, it puts the ball into play with a corner kick. Opponents must be at least the Free Kick Distance (see 5b) away when the ball is kicked.
 - ii. If the defending team gains possession, it puts the ball into play with a goal kick. For *Under 6*, this kick may be taken from either goal-kick spot. For *Under 7 & Under 8*, this kick may be taken from anywhere within the 6 yard Goal Area, including the Goal Area line. Opponents must be at least the Free Kick Distance (see 5b) away when the ball is kicked.
- g. When the ball is out of play because a goal was scored, the team that defended re-starts the game with a kick-off from the center of the field (see 5c).
- h. If the Game Monitor halts play due to injury, dog on the field, or other event not covered by these rules, the game is restarted via a Drop Ball.
- i. The player who performs the free kick or throw-in may not touch the ball again until it has been touched by another player.
- j. If a restart is performed incorrectly, the Game Monitor will halt play, explain the error, and allow the player to retake the throw or kick.

6. Method of Scoring

- a. When the attacking team kicks the ball completely across the goal line and between the goal posts, it scores a goal.
- b. No official score is kept.

7. Fouls and Misconduct

- a. Fouls are as follows:
 - i. TRIPPING
 - ii. VIOLENT PLAY (striking, kicking, pushing, abusive language)
 - iii. HAND BALL (player uses hands or arms in a deliberate attempt to control the ball; includes a goalkeeper handling the ball outside of the goal area)
 - iv. POOR SPORTSMANSHIP (including disruptive behavior, failure to retreat at least the Free Kick Distance from a free kick, excessive gloating after a goal, etc.)
 - v. SLIDE TACKLING (ASC does not permit slide tackling at this age level).
 - vi. GOALKEEPER CONTACT [*Under 7 & Under 8*] (Any avoidable contact between an attacking player and the goalkeeper is a foul against the attacking player).
- b. If a foul is committed, the Game Monitor or Coach will briefly explain the infraction to the responsible player.
- c. A foul results in an indirect free kick for the team against which it was committed. A goal may not be scored on an indirect free kick until the ball has been touched by another player of either team. Opponents must be at least the Free Kick Distance (see 5b) from the ball when a free kick is taken. If the foul occurred within the Free Kick Distance (3 or 5 yards) of the offending player's goal, the indirect free kick is taken from that distance (3 yards for Under 6; 5 yards for Under 7 & Under 8) from the goal.

8. One-Sided Games

- a. If one team draws ahead by three goals or more, the team's coach should use methods to reduce his/her team's scoring. This may include resting his/her most effective players and/or instructing certain players to remain in the defensive half.
- b. If one team draws ahead by four goals, they will play with one less player on the field (i.e. two (2) players for Under 6; four (4) players for Under 7 & Under 8). When the goal differential is reduced to three or less, the team may again use their full complement of field players.
- c. If one team draws ahead by five or more goals, they will play with two less players on the field (i.e. one (1) player for Under 6; three (3) players for Under 7 & Under 8). When the goal differential is reduced to four, the team may add a player, playing only one man down.
- d. [*Under 7 & Under 8*] This process continues until the team that leads by six or more goals is reduced to two (2) players.

9. [Under 7 & Under 8] Goalkeepers

- a. The goalkeeper may handle the ball only when it is within the marked 6 yard line (the “Goal Area”).
- b. The goalkeeper may throw, punt, kick or dribble a ball after it has been picked up.
- c. A player may play as goalkeeper for no more than 10 minutes total in the 40 minutes of soccer played each Saturday. Each team **must** employ at least 4 different goalkeepers each week.
- d. A brief (1 minute) “goalkeeper change timeout” will be called in the middle of each 20 minute game for the sole purpose of changing goalkeepers. Play should be stopped at the 10 minute mark of each game for this purpose. A sideline timekeeper should be used to call the timeout.

Game Monitor Guidelines

- **Enforce the Sidelines**
It's tempting to let play continue even though the ball has gone over the touch line or end line. Our experience is that this will quickly get out of control, with play continuing far afield or even on the next field. Instead, you should strictly enforce the field's boundaries. Kids will quickly learn to stop play when the ball goes over the touch line or end line.
- **Throw-Ins [*Under 7 & Under 8*]**
Try to encourage the player throwing in the ball to do so quickly. While it's tempting to ignore violations of the throw-in rule, kids will only learn the proper technique if we require it of them. In particular, whistle throws in which the back foot is off the ground at the instant of ball release and also insist that the throw come all the way over the head with both hands on the ball. When you do whistle a bad throw, quickly explain the error and allow the same player as many re-throws as it takes.
- **Quick kick-ins [*Under 6*]**
Try to get the ball back in play quickly. Encourage the player kicking in the ball to do so quickly. One reason why kick-ins can take a long time is that all three players will want to take the kick-in. As you team's representative on the field, you get to pick who takes it. Talk with your coach about how to pick the kicker (e.g. strict rotation, whoever's closest, etc.).
- **Positive Encouragement**
Try to encourage the players on the field (both on your team and the other) with lots of positive comments. It'll be hard to resist a little on-field coaching, and that's okay. But be sure to keep the comments positive.
- **One-Sided Games**
One team pulls ahead by three or more goals, then notify the coach of the team that is ahead that she or he must take action according to Rule 8, above.
- **Timekeeping and Substitutions**
Get a parent on the sideline to keep track of the time and handle substitutions.
- **Have Fun!**
If the kids are having fun, then you're doing a great job! Maybe you should consider taking the Referee Class and becoming a licensed referee!