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# THE OFFICIAL RULES OF INDOOR SOCCER

Amateur and Youth Edition

*Abridged: For Players and Spectators*



*published by the United States Indoor Soccer Association*

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(for Referees, Coaches and League Managers)

## Introduction

The purpose of this abridged edition of *The Official Rules* is simply to help players and spectators become familiar enough with the rules of indoor soccer to play or enjoy the game. For those needing or interested in gaining a technical understanding, the unabridged *Official Rules* are available via the online link above (the “Publications” page at [www.usindoor.com](http://www.usindoor.com)). Referees are, indeed, strongly urged to obtain the unabridged *Official Rules* and to become certified by USIndoor, which offers the only national badge at amateur and youth levels. (Click “Referees” at the USIndoor Website.)

*The Official Rules*, now in its fourth printing (third edition for amateurs and youth), are compiled by a national committee of indoor soccer leaders and referees. Among other things, the *Rules*’ intent is to promote the adoption of standards for indoor soccer, which will further promote its identity, growth and, above all, fun for those of all skill levels and ages.

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## **Rule 1 - The Field Of Play**

See Official Field Diagram (page 9) and the unabridged edition for standard dimensions for the field, goals and markings.

## **Rule 2 - The Ball**

The ball is size 3 or 4 indoor for U12 and below and size 5 for all others.

## **Rule 3 - The Players**

**Number:** For U12 and below, the administrative authority shall set the minimum and maximum number of players permitted on the field at the same time. The minimum and maximum standards are no fewer than 5 or more than 7, including a goalkeeper. For above U12, no fewer than 4 or more than 6, including a goalkeeper, are allowed. During an Overtime Period, neither team shall play with more than the minimum provided. In coed, the ratio of males to females shall be set by the administrative authority.

**Substitutions:** Each team may substitute players freely; provided that, during play, players must substitute off the field of play or within the Touch Line in the area of their Team Bench.

## **Rule 4 - The Players' Equipment**

Players wear their team's uniform, consisting of the same colors, shin guards, and indoor footwear. Jewelry and other accessories are prohibited. The Goalkeeper wears jersey colors distinguished from all other field players and from the Referees.

## **Rule 5 - The Referee**

The decisions of the Referee regarding facts connected with play and interpretations of the Rules are final.

## Rule 6 - The Duration of the Game

A regulation game consists of two Halves, with duration according to “house rules” and the following:

- (a) *Overtime Period and Tiebreaker*: If, in a tournament or playoff, the game is tied at the end of regulation, a 5-minute "sudden- death" Overtime Period follows. If still tied, a Tiebreaker takes place, as described in Rule 12.
- (b) *Running Clock*: Except in the case of an unusual delay, determined by the Referee, the Game Clock counts down continuously through each Half or Overtime Period.

## Rule 7 - The Start and Restart of Play

A **Kickoff** from the Center Mark starts play at the beginning of each Half and after every goal. A player who starts play may not again play the ball until it touches another player.

The Home Team takes the Kickoff for the First Half Kickoff and any Overtime Period, and the Visiting Team takes the Kickoff for the Second Half. The Referee designates the teams’ defensive ends, according to “house rules.”

Restarts take place by either a Kickoff, Free Kick, Goalkeeper Distribution, or Dropped Ball. Other than for Kickoffs or as provided below, Restarts occur within three feet (3') from the spot of the ball at the moment of stoppage.

A team receives a **Free Kick** after stoppages other than when a Dropped Ball or Goalkeeper Distribution is required. Before the team takes the Free Kick, the ball must be stationary. All opposing players are at least 15 feet from the spot of the Free Kick (or, if within 15 feet of the opponent's Goal, along the Goal Line). The spot of the Free Kick is that provided above, except:

- (a) *Within Own Penalty Arch*: from any spot therein.
  - (b) *Within Opponent's Penalty Arch*: at the Free Kick Mark ("Top of the Arch").
  - (c) *Delayed Penalty*: (i) according to the ensuing stoppage, as normally administered, or (ii) in case the defending team obtains possession of the ball during play, at the spot of the original offense. (See unabridged Rules where the original offense would have resulted in a Shootout.)
  - (d) *Kick-In*: from the point on the Touch Line nearest where the ball crossed over the Perimeter Wall.
  - (e) *Three-Line Violation*: from the offending team's Restart Mark.
  - (f) *Superstructure Violation*: from the Restart Mark nearer to where the ball was last played.
- (See unabridged Rules for additional exceptions.)

If neither team has clear possession of the ball at a stoppage, the Referee restarts play with a **Dropped Ball**. A Dropped Ball caused while the ball is inside a Penalty Arch takes place at the Free Kick Mark.

Play restarts with a **Goalkeeper Distribution** (or punt in U12 divisions and younger) anywhere within the Penalty Arch after an attacking player has last touched the ball before crossing an end perimeter wall.

### **Rule 8 - The Ball In And Out Of Play**

A **Three-Line Violation** occurs when a player propels the ball in the air across the two Red Lines and the Halfway Line toward the opponent's Goal without touching the Perimeter Wall, another player or a Referee on the field of play.

A **Superstructure Violation** occurs when the ball contacts any part of the building above the field of play.

### **Rule 9 - The Method of Scoring**

A team scores a goal when the whole of the ball legally passes over the Goal Line. A goal may be scored directly from a Kickoff or Restart.

### **Rule 10 - Fouls and Other Violations**

A **Foul** occurs if a player:

- (a) Holds an opponent;
- (b) Handles the ball (except by the Goalkeeper within his Penalty Arch);
- (c) Plays in a dangerous manner (e.g., commits boarding or a slide tackle);
- (d) Impedes the progress of an opponent ("Obstruction"), or
- (f) Prevents the Goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his hands;

and when a player commits the following in a manner that the Referee considers careless, serious, reckless, or involving excessive force:

- (g) Kicks an opponent;
- (h) Trips an opponent;
- (i) Jumps at an opponent;
- (j) Charges an opponent;
- (k) Strikes or elbows an opponent; or
- (l) Pushes an opponent.

**Unsporting Behavior:** A Free Kick results for the following offenses:

- (a) Leverage: Using the body of a teammate or any part of the field to gain an advantage;
- (b) Encroachment: Entering the protected area of an opposing player taking a Free Kick (after initial Warning);
- (c) Dissent: (i) Referee Abuse; (ii) Breach of Penalty Area Decorum; (iii) Entering the Referee Crease without permission;
- (d) Other: Behavior which, in the Referee's discretion, does not warrant another category of penalty (*e.g.*, taunting, foul language.)

**Goalkeeper Violations:** The opposing team receives a Free Kick for the following violations by a Goalkeeper:

- (a) *Illegal Handling:* Bringing the ball from outside of the Penalty Arch to his hand within it, or receiving the ball again after a Goalkeeper Distribution without the ball's having first touched another player (*e.g.*, no drop-kicking or bouncing the ball);
- (b) *Pass Back:* Handling the ball, having been passed deliberately and directly to him by a teammate; except that he may handle a ball which a teammate passes to him by the head, chest, or knee and without "trickery" (the use of a wall or foot to flick the ball to a head, chest, or knee before making the pass);
- (c) *5-Seconds:* Controlling the ball with either his hand or foot inside of his Penalty Arch for over five (5) seconds.

**Team Violations:** The Referee issues a Team Penalty for the following violations by a team or unidentified person:

- (a) *Leaving Team Bench:* Players leave a Team Bench to join a fracas or confrontation with the opposition or a Game Official;
- (b) *Bench Dissent:* After an initial "Warning," one or more unidentifiable players verbally abuse the Referee.
- (c) *Other:* Unsporting Behavior, which, in the Referee's discretion, does not warrant another category of penalty (*e.g.*, too many players on the field.)

**Advantage Rule:** The Referee allows play to continue, notwithstanding the commission of an offense, when the team against which it has been committed will benefit from an existing offensive advantage.

**Flagrant Fouls:** A Shootout is awarded for the following Fouls committed by a defender in his or her defensive half of the field:

- (a) A Foul within the Penalty Arch or Goal for which he receives a Time Penalty;
- (b) A Foul from behind against an attacking player, having control of the ball and one or no defensive players between himself and the Goal; and
- (c) Any Foul where he or she is the last player on the team between the attacking

player with the ball and the Goal.

**Blue Card Offenses:** Unless otherwise provided below, the Referee issues a Blue Card for serious Fouls and Unsporting Behavior (by a player) and for:

- (a) Deliberate Handball or Handball by a Goalkeeper;
- (b) Goalkeeper Endangerment;
- (c) Boarding;
- (d) Any Foul by the Goalkeeper during a Shootout.

**Cautionable Offenses:** The Referee issues a Yellow Card for reckless Fouls and for:

- (a) Second Blue Card;
- (b) Unsporting Behavior by any non-player personnel;
- (c) Provoking Altercation: Making physical contact with an opponent (e.g., pushing or poking), short of fighting, or using the ball in so doing.

**Ejectionable Offenses:** A person receives a Red Card for Fouls, which the Referee considers violent or committed with excessive force, and for:

- (a) Third-Time Penalty;
- (b) Elbowing: Intentionally elbowing an opponent above the shoulder;
- (c) Vicious Slide Tackling: A tackle from the side or from behind directly into one or both legs of an opponent, seriously endangering him;
- (d) Fighting;
- (e) Leaving Team Bench or Penalty Area to engage in a fracas or confrontation with the opposition or a Game Official;
- (f) Extreme Unsporting Behavior: Committing particularly despicable behavior, including:
  - (i) Spitting at an opponent or any other person;
  - (ii) Persistent use of extremely abusive language or behavior toward a Game Official;
  - (iii) Bodily contact with a Game Official in dissent.

## **Rule 11 - Time Penalties**

The following penalties apply to offenses for which a Card is issued (subject to further action by the Administrative Authority):

- (a) Blue Card: 2-minute Time Penalty in the Penalty Area;
- (b) Yellow Card (for a player's second Blue Card): 2-minute Time Penalty for the Blue Card and a warning of the subsequent possibility of an ejection;
- (c) "Administrative" Red Card (for a player's third Blue Card): 2-minute Time Penalty and ejection.

- (d) “Straight” Red Card (for a player’s third Blue Card): 5-minute Time Penalty and ejection.

Players are designated by their teams to serve Time Penalties of their team, their Goalkeeper, non-player personnel, and of teammates who receive Red Cards. Otherwise, the person who commits a carded offense serves the penalty. Players serving Time Penalties serve their Time Penalties, seated, until their expiration and the Referee permits their release.

**Short-Handed Play:** For each Time Penalty being served by a player, his or her team plays with one fewer field player until its expiration; provided that, a team may not have fewer than the minimum required, regardless of the number serving Time Penalties. Should a player receive a Time Penalty, while two or more teammates are already in the Penalty Area, his or her team continues to play with the minimum while he or she joins his teammates in the Area.

**Exceptions:** Under the following circumstances, Time Penalties either expire prior to their completed countdown, or have the beginning of their countdowns delayed:

- (a) *Powerplay Goal:* If a team is scored upon having fewer players on the field of play, due to one or more players serving Time Penalties, a player from the team is released from the Penalty Area into the field of play, unless otherwise prohibited, and the player's Penalty or Penalties are wiped out. If the team has two players in the Penalty Area, only the player whose Time Penalty or Penalties are recorded earlier is affected.
- (b) *Multiple Penalties:* If two teammates are serving Time Penalties when another teammate is penalized, his Time Penalty does not begin to count down until at least one of the teammates’ Time Penalties has expired and his or her Time Penalty is next to begin.
- (c) *Simultaneous Ejections:* When two simultaneous Red Cards carrying the same Time Penalties are assessed to opposing players, their Time Penalties are not served.
- (d) *Maximum Time Penalty:* No player may receive more than 5 minutes for penalties arising at the same time on the Game Clock, irrespective of the number or nature of accumulated offenses or the fact that one or more teammates may be designated to serve such time.
- (e) *End of Game:* All Time Penalties carry over between periods and expire at the end of the game.

**Delayed Penalty:** In instances where the Referee would issue a Blue Card, but for the Advantage Rule, the referee acknowledges the offense by holding the Card above his head until the earlier to occur of the following:

- (a) *Opponent's Possession:* The team of the offending player gains control of the ball;
- (b) *Stoppage:* The Referee stops play for any reason.

Once play is stopped, the offense is recorded and assessed, as customary. In the event of a powerplay goal, the Time Penalty is not served and the provisions above regarding early release

from the Penalty Area remain applicable.

## **Rule 12 - Shootouts and Penalty Kicks**

**Shootout:** For a Shootout:

- (a) Any player may take the Shootout;
- (b) All players serving Time Penalties are seated in their appropriate Penalty Area. All players of the attacking team stand on or behind the Halfway Line and outside of the Center Circle. Players of the defending team stand behind the Halfway Line and inside of the Center Circle;
- (c) The ball is placed at the Restart Mark nearer the attacking Goal;
- (d) The Goalkeeper has at least one foot on his Goal Line and may not move off of it until after the Referee whistles the Shootout to begin;
- (e) Once the Referee whistles the Shootout to begin, the ball is "in play" and the player taking the Shootout plays the ball.

**Penalty Kick:** A Penalty Kick proceeds the same as a Shootout except:

- (a) The ball is placed at the Free-Kick Mark;
- (b) The Goalkeeper has both feet on his Goal Line until the ball is in play; and
- (c) The player taking the Penalty Kick may not touch the ball again until after it touches another player.

**Tiebreaker:** A Tiebreaker proceeds by Shootouts, except that:

- (a) The Referee designates the Goal at which both teams shoot and the team which shoots first (according to administrative policy);
- (b) All players, other than the player taking the shot and the defending Goalkeeper, remain within their Team Bench areas;
- (c) Both teams have up to 3 shots, with players from each team kicking alternately;
- (d) If, at any time, a team obtains a 2-goal advantage, the Tiebreaker ceases and the winner is declared;
- (e) If, after both teams have taken 3 shots, neither has an advantage, the Tiebreaker continues, alternating one player at a time, until both teams have taken an equal number of shots and one team has scored when the other has not;
- (f) The player has 5 seconds to score after the Referee's whistle.

# Official Field Diagram

