

Exceptions or Clarifications to IFAB 2026-27 Laws of the Game for the BIYS 4/5/6 Division

Full rules may be viewed or downloaded at no charge from <https://theifab.com/>. Exceptions to the IFAB rules are underlined.

Law 01 – The Field of Play

- Field dimensions are modified by the attached field diagram
- Teams occupy the same touchline
- Coaching or team technical areas are not marked, and coaches are allowed to walk the entire touchline – coaches are not allowed to coach from the goal lines or be on the field
- Spectators may watch the game from the touchlines as long as they do not interfere with the movement of athletes or coaches – spectators may watch the game from the goal lines outside the width of the goal area

Law 02 – The Ball

- A size 5 soccer ball is used, inflated to manufacturer's recommendations

Law 03 – The Players

- If one team is shorthanded due to player absence or any injury, both teams shall play with the same number of players on the field (i.e. 10 v 10, 9 v 9, 8 v 8, or 7 v 7)
- If both coaches agree, the teams can play with uneven numbers
- Substitutions may be made at any stop in play (throw-in, goal kick, corner kick, etc) with the consent of the head referee
- The substituting team does not need to have possession of the ball to make a substitution
- Unlimited return substitutions are allowed with the frequency of substitutions determined by the head referee
- Each player shall play at least one half of each game when present – BIYS is a developmental league and coaches should attempt to give all players roughly the same playing time
- No more than one half of each player's time on the field shall be spent as defender or goalkeeper, unless that is the player's preference

Law 04 – The Players' Equipment

- Each player shall wear a team t-shirt – long sleeved shirts or jackets may be worn underneath the team t-shirt
- Each player shall wear shin guards, which are designed to be worn underneath soccer socks – if a player does not have soccer socks, shin guards may be worn exposed
- Each player shall wear soft shoes (tennis shoes, cross trainers, soccer cleats, etc.) – boots are not allowed – if cleats are worn, they must be non-metal soccer cleats – baseball, softball, and football cleats are NOT considered soccer cleats due to the presence of a center toe cleat
- The goalkeeper shall wear a pinny with a color contrasting his teammates and/or goalkeeper gloves

Law 05 – The Referee

- The referees are adult volunteers or junior and senior high school students – please keep that in mind if you feel the need to discuss an officiating decision – using a time-out or halftime break to quietly discuss an issue with the referees is the preferred method of addressing in-game rules issues – all officials and the opposing head coach shall be present at the discussion
- Yellow and red cards are not used by the head referee (see Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct)

Law 06 – The Other Match Officials

- Two assistant referees are used

Law 07 – The Duration of the Match

- Two 30 minutes halves with a five minute halftime interval

- Each team may have one time out per game – teams do not get an extra time out during end of the season tournament overtime periods
- The team calling time out must have possession of the ball, and the ball must be out of play
- Time outs shall be for two minutes, and the head referee shall stop the game clock
- In the event a game must be suspended because of conditions which make it impossible to continue play, the head referee shall declare it an official game if one complete half or more of the game has been played – if less than one-half of the game has been played, the game shall be restarted from the point of suspension of play

Law 08 – The Start and Restart of Play

- A goal cannot be scored directly from a kick-off by the kicking team until the ball touches a second player on the kicking team – the ball must roll one entire revolution before the second touch by the kicking team
- A kick-off does not have to travel forward – the kicker is allowed to step into the opponents' half of the field to kick the ball backward to a teammate
- When possession cannot be determined at a stop in play, a drop ball is dropped by the referee to the team that last had possession at the spot where they last possessed the ball – the lone exception is when the attacking team last possessed the ball inside the defending team's penalty area – for this exception, the ball is dropped to the defending team's goalkeeper at the spot where the ball was last possessed by the attacking team

Law 09 – The Ball in and out of Play

- The ball is out of play when it has completely crossed a boundary line, whether on the ground or in the air – a player may play a ball that is in bounds while the player's body is out of bounds

Law 10 – Determining the Outcome of a Match

- A goal shall not be counted if a goalkeeper accidentally carries the ball over the line while trying to get the ball into play again – the ball must be in the goalkeeper's possession, and they must be standing
- If a game is tied at the end of two halves during the regular season, the game shall end as a tie
- During the end of the season tournament, if a game is tied at the end of two halves, up to two five minute overtime periods with a two minute intermission shall be played – the overtime periods are sudden victory (golden goal)
- During the end of the season tournament, if the game is still tied at the end of the overtime periods, the game shall be decided by penalty kicks

Law 11 – Offside

- It is not an offense to be in an offside position, unless the player (1) touches the ball, (2) attempts to play the ball, (3) obstructs an opponent, (4) challenges an opponent, or (5) gains an advantage from a deflection or save
- A player is in an offside position when (1) any part of the head, body, or feet is in the opponents' half of the field and (2) any part of the head, body, or feet is nearer to the opponents' goal line than both the ball and the second-to-last opponent – both (1) and (2) must be true to be in an offside position
- A player shall not be penalized for being in an offside position if the ball is received directly from a throw-in, a goal kick, or a corner kick

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

- If any player charges the goalkeeper in possession of the ball, the head referee shall caution the offending player (see below for caution procedure) – possession or control of the ball includes when the goalkeeper has the ball trapped by either or both hands
- Slide tackles are not allowed – a player shall not slide to steal the ball from an opponent – players at this age are not skilled enough to understand the risk of injuring an opponent
- The referee shall stop play to discourage heading on balls played from a high speed and/or long distance pass (usually from a goalkeeper punt) – a drop ball will be used to restart play – players at this age do not have fully developed neck muscles

- The referee may allow play to continue when a foul occurs and the non-offending team will benefit from the advantage – if the advantage does not materialize, the referee may whistle the delayed foul.
- The referee must consider the following when calling a foul for handling the ball – (1) handling the ball involves a deliberate act of a player using the hand or arm to contact the ball, (2) the movement of the hand towards the ball matters (not the ball towards the hand), (3) the distance between the opponent and the ball, and (4) the position of the hand does not necessarily mean that there is an offense
- There are three instances when the goalkeeper is not allowed to handle the ball inside the penalty area – (1) once they have released the ball into play until it touches another player, (2) when a teammate deliberately passes the ball with their foot to the goalkeeper, and (3) directly from a throw-in from a teammate
- A player is responsible for the position of their body throughout the process of striking the ball with their feet, knees, head, etc. – a careless, reckless, or excessively forceful challenge can result in a foul, even if the player reaches the ball first
- A caution shall be issued to any player, coach, or parent guilty of misconduct as determined by the head referee
- Because yellow and red cards are not used, both head coaches and the cautioned player shall be verbally notified of the caution for misconduct
- A cautioned player shall leave the field and may be replaced if a substitute is available – the cautioned player may not re-enter the game until the next legal substitution opportunity
- If a player receives a second caution in the same game, they shall be ejected from the game and the team will play the remainder of the game without replacing the disqualified player (play shorthanded)
- If a coach or parent receives a second caution in the same game, they shall leave the vicinity of the playing area immediately and are prohibited from any contact, direct or indirect, with the team during the remainder of the game – failure to comply shall result in a forfeit by the team associated with the coach or parent

Law 13 – Free Kicks

- On a direct free kick, a goal may be scored without touching anyone else but the kicker
- On an indirect free kick, a goal may only be scored after the ball touches another player of either team

Law 14 – The Penalty Kick

- A penalty kick shall be awarded when a direct kick foul occurs within the offending team's penalty area
- The goalkeeper at the time of the penalty infraction cannot be replaced, except in case of injury

Law 15 – The Throw-in

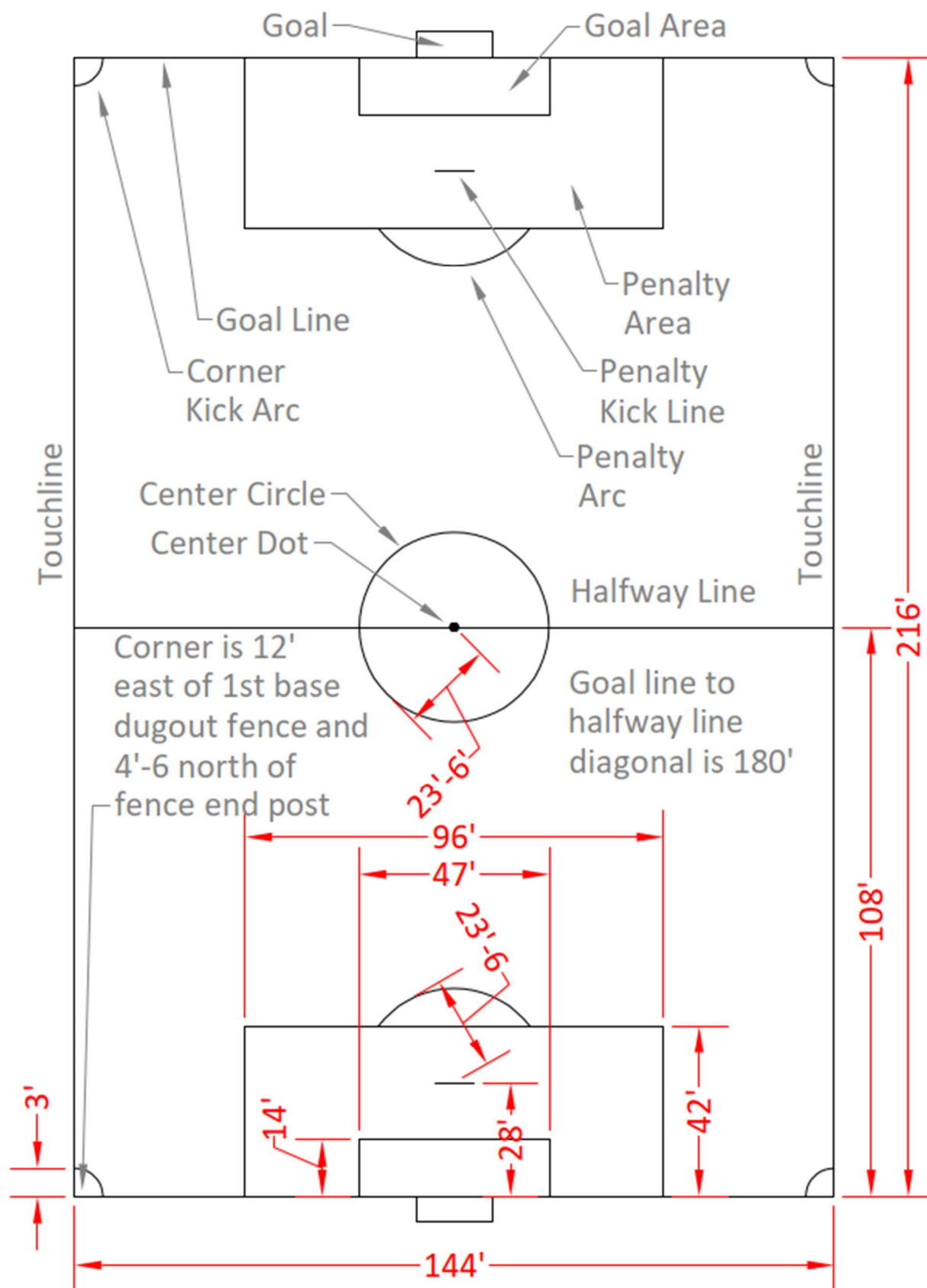
- A throw-in is awarded when the ball last touched a member of the opposing team before the entire ball passed beyond the touchline either in the air or on the ground

Law 16 – The Goal Kick

- A goal kick is awarded to the defending team when the entire ball crosses the goal line, excluding that portion between the goal posts and under the crossbar, either in the air or on the ground, having last been touched or played by the attacking team
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves
- Opponents must be outside the penalty area until the ball is in play

Law 17 – The Corner Kick

- A corner kick is awarded to the attacking team when the entire ball passes over the goal line, excluding that portion between the goal posts and under the crossbar, either in the air or on the ground, having last been touched or played by the defending team



Additional Rules Unique to Bellevue Iowa Youth Soccer (BIYS)

Section 1 – Coaches Responsibility to the Players

- a. Coaches are responsible for knowing the basic laws of the game of soccer and reading the exceptions to those rules unique to BIYS. They should ask for clarification from the league coordinator (or from other more experienced coaches) when questions arise. More experienced head coaches should truthfully answer questions asked by other less experienced coaches. The goal of the BIYS is to advance the knowledge of soccer among all its coaches, players, and parents.
- b. Coaches shall make certain that their players are eligible to play and have the minimum required equipment (team shirt, shin guards, and proper footwear).
- c. Coaches shall monitor each player's playing time, ensuring that the minimum playing time (at least one half of the game) is achieved for each player on the roster. More importantly, they shall attempt to give all players roughly the same playing time.
- d. Coaches shall ensure that no more than one half of each player's time on the field is spent as defender or goalkeeper, unless that is the player's preference.
- e. Coaches shall maintain discipline on part of their team members, assistant coaches, and spectators. Set a good example for players, assistant coaches, and spectators through your own actions. Do not tolerate actions which promote bad sportsmanship skills. Do not use abusive language.
- f. Head coaches shall use restraint when discussing rule decisions with the referees. Using a time-out or halftime break to quietly discuss an issue with the referees is the preferred method of addressing in-game rules issues. All officials and the opposing head coach shall be present at the discussion. Assistant coaches, players, and spectators shall not dispute or argue calls made by the referees. The referees have full authority over the game in which they are officiating, and there is not an appeals process in BIYS. The referees have the authority to issue a team caution to any head coach, assistant coach, spectator, or player not currently in the game.
- g. Head coaches, assistant coaches, and spectators shall not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol at games, at practices, or around the teams.

Section 2 – Headers

- a. For the K/1 and 2/3 divisions, we do not allow intentional headers. This is based on current recommendations from US Youth Soccer. K/1 and 2/3 coaches will not practice or encourage headers. Generally K-3 kids do not use their heads to strike the ball much anyway.
- b. At the 4/5/6 level, coaches may practice short distance and low velocity headers with their team, and we will allow intentional short distance and low velocity headers in games. Youth athletes naturally start to want to head the ball at the 4/5/6 level, and for those that are going to do it anyway, it is best to practice it first. We will discourage players from using their heads when receiving or stealing long distance, higher velocity passes (i.e. long goal kicks or goalie punts). The size 5 ball is adult size, but their neck muscles are not.
- c. Parents – Headers are not a mandatory practice or game activity at the youth soccer level. If you do not want your youth athlete doing headers, it is up to you to let your coach know. Your child will not be penalized for opting out. Headers are an important part of the high school, college, and professional game, but there is time to learn this skill later. Please understand that the coach can only control who practices headers. During a game, the coach will have very little control, and it is up to the parent to enforce it with their child.

Section 3 – Contagious Illness Safety

- a. Fall soccer is an outdoor activity, but there will be times when athletes, coaches, referees, volunteers, and spectators will be in close contact with others. In order to keep everyone as safe as possible, we are asking participants to monitor their health or their youth athlete's health. If you or your youth athlete has multiple symptoms of any contagious illness, please stay home until you are better.

Section 4 – Control of Bleeding

- a. If a player begins bleeding during a game, he/she shall be removed from the game until the wound can be completely cleaned and bandaged. If a player is unable to control the bleeding, the player will not be allowed to finish the game.
- b. If blood is on a player's clothing, he/she shall replace the clothing before reentering the game. If necessary, the player may be excused from wearing a team shirt. There are white t-shirts available in the game equipment box that may be worn to replace a team shirt with blood on it.
- c. BIYS provides first aid equipment in each game equipment box.

Section 5 – Symptoms of Concussion

- a. A concussion is a traumatic brain injury that interferes with normal brain function. An athlete does not have to lose consciousness to have suffered a concussion.
- b. Common signs and symptoms of concussion include:
 - i. Appears dazed or stunned;
 - ii. Is confused about assignment or position;
 - iii. Forgets an instruction;
 - iv. Is unsure of game, score, or opponent;
 - v. Moves clumsily, balance problems, or dizziness;
 - vi. Answers questions slowly;
 - vii. Loses consciousness (even briefly);
 - viii. Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes;
 - ix. Can't recall events prior to or after hit or fall;
 - x. Headaches or "pressure" in head;
 - xi. Nausea or vomiting;
 - xii. Double or blurry vision;
 - xiii. Sensitivity to light or noise;
 - xiv. Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy;
 - xv. Concentration or memory problems;
 - xvi. Does not "feel right" or is "feeling down."
- c. No player shall return to play or practice on the same day of a concussion.
- d. Any athlete suspected of having a concussion should be evaluated by an appropriate health-care professional that day and cleared by that health-care professional before returning to play.

Section 6 – Deciding a Tie Game by Penalty Kicks – End of the Season Tournament Only

- a. When a game must be decided by penalty kicks, both head coaches, both referees, and the four team captains (two from each team – same players used at the beginning of the game) shall assemble at the halfway line to review the procedure as outlined below:
 - i. A coin toss shall be held, with the team winning the coin toss given the choice of kicking first or second.
 - ii. The head referee shall choose the goal at which all of the penalty kicks shall be taken.
 - iii. Each coach shall select any five players, including the goalkeeper, on or off the field (except those who may have been disqualified) to take the kicks. The five kickers from each team shall stand in the order they will kick in the center circle. If the goalkeeper is chosen as one of the kickers, only four kickers from that team will stand in the center circle.
 - iv. Teams shall alternate kickers.
 - v. Following five kicks for each team, the team scoring on the greatest number of kicks shall be declared the winner.
 - vi. Add one goal to the winning team score and credit the team with a victory.
- b. If the score remains tied after each team has had five kicks:
 - i. Each coach shall pick five different players than the first five who already have kicked to take the kicks in a sudden-victory situation. After the first five kicks, if one team scores and the other team does not

score, the game is ended without more kicks being taken. The newly chosen five kickers from each team shall stand in the order they will kick in the center circle. If the goalkeeper is chosen as one of the kickers, only four kickers from that team will stand in the center circle.

- ii. If a team has fewer than ten available players to take penalty kicks, the opposing coach only has to use the same number of players before allowing kickers take a second kick.
- iii. If the score remains tied after ten kicks from each team, the coaches may then choose any kicker for each additional sudden-victory round.
- c. During all tie-breaker penalty kicks, the ball remains alive until its momentum is spent, it goes out of bounds, or it is retouched by the kicker.
- d. All coaches, players not designated as kickers for the current set of five kicks, and spectators shall remain beyond the touchline on their team's side of the field. The referee will motion one kicker at a time to the penalty dot. After each kick has been completed the kicker will join their team on the touchline.

Section 7 – Weather Policy

- a. Kids generally enjoy playing in light rain. So, we play through light rain, as long as there is not lightning. We also have occasionally played through light snow in the past.
- b. Heavy rain or lightning will delay games – or postpone them.
- c. Coaches will be contacted by text message if we have to postpone a game or games before the games begin.
- d. If we have to delay a game in progress, we will wait out the thunderstorm in the pavilion (or you may take your child to your car). If radar indicates that the storm will be around for a while, we may have to postpone a game.
- e. If we have to postpone a game, BIYS will work with both coaches to work out a suitable time to reschedule.

*** The 2025-26 NFHS Soccer Rules Book, published by the National Federation of State High School Associations (<http://www.nfhs.org>), was also used as the basis for BIYS rules and can be ordered in paper or electronic format. ***