



RULES AT A GLANCE - U4 THROUGH U14

Every age group plays the game a little differently. This chart shows the format, timing, and rules for each division as set out in the 2026/27 Recreational Handbook.

RULE	U4	U6	U8	U10	U12	U14
Format	3v3	4v4	4v4	7v7	7v7	7v7
Ball size	3	3	3	4	4	5
Game length	4 × 8 min	4 × 8 min	4 × 10 min	2 × 25 min	2 × 25 min	2 × 25 min
Breaks	3 min	3 min	3 min	5 min	5 min	5 min
Substitutions	~4 min	~4 min	~5 min	~10–12 min	~10–12 min	~10–12 min
Goalkeeper	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES
Referee	No (coaches)	No (coaches)	YES	YES	YES	YES
Coaches on field	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
Offsides	NO	NO	NO	When obvious	When obvious	When obvious
Heading	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES
Punting	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES
Throw-ins	No	No	YES	YES	YES	YES
Penalty kicks	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES
Slide tackling	NO	NO	NO	FIFA laws	FIFA laws	FIFA laws
Switch sides at half	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES

APPLIES TO EVERY AGE

Every player is guaranteed a minimum of 50% playing time each game and should take an active part in gameplay. All free kicks are direct at every age. Scores and league standings are not kept anywhere in our recreational league.

WHERE EVERYONE SITS

Players and coaches from both teams sit on one side of the field; families from both teams sit on the opposite side. Stay at least 6 feet back from the sidelines, and never behind the goals or on the end lines.

BEFORE KICK-OFF

Arrive 10 minutes early. Home is red jersey, navy shorts, red socks; away is navy jersey, navy shorts, navy socks. Bring a ball, water, shin guards (required), and proper shoes.

ZERO TOLERANCE

TSA maintains zero tolerance for any negative behavior or speech toward any player, parent, referee, or coach. It is enforced and may result in removal from the field or suspension of the game.



HOW U4 GAME DAYS WORK

U4 absolutely does play soccer games. The format is simply different from our older age groups. This guide explains what game days look like, why they are set up this way, and what players and families can expect.

WHAT U4 IS

U4 is intentionally an introductory 3v3 program focused on fundamentals, participation, fun, and scrimmage-style games. There are no referees at this age; coaches manage the games and are permitted to be on the field helping, teaching, encouraging, and directing the players.

GAME FORMAT, PER THE HANDBOOK

- 3v3
- 3-minute breaks between quarters
- No goalkeeper
- No referee, coaches manage the game
- No scores or standings are kept
- Four 8-minute quarters
- Substitutions about every 4 minutes or whenever needed
- No heading
- Coaches may be on the field helping players

HOW GAME DAY IS ORGANIZED

During the game portion of each session, coaches split the squad into groups of six and play 3v3. Six players are on the field at a time; after about 4 minutes they rotate off and the next six come on. In the next quarter, the next group of six plays 3v3 against each other and rotates after 4 minutes, and so on. The four quarters give the session structure: line up, start from the middle, play, take a short water break, rotate, and go again.

Matchups change every week. Players are not kept in the same groups all season. We are building one squad of young soccer players, not several separate teams within the squad. This also prevents "strong teams" and "weak teams" from forming.

Week 1 Group A vs. B · Group C vs. D

Week 2 Group A vs. C · Group B vs. D

Week 3 Mix the players into completely new groups and go again

This is not tracked perfectly. Attendance changes week to week; the goal is simply that every child plays with and against everyone over the season.

REMEMBER: THESE ARE 3-4 YEAR OLDS

The game is not going to look like an older recreational soccer game, and we don't want it to. A player may stop and pick a flower. Someone may suddenly decide they need Mom. A child may forget which direction they're going. A parent may occasionally need to step onto the field to settle or redirect their child. That's okay. Coaches and parents work together to keep things moving and bring the child's attention back to the game when possible. This age requires flexibility and patience.

THE OBJECTIVE IS TO GET THEM

- Touching the ball
- Chasing it
- Learning which direction to go
- Becoming comfortable on a soccer field
- Dribbling
- Scoring goals
- Interacting with teammates
- Having enough fun to come back next week

"WHY AREN'T WE PLAYING ANOTHER TEAM?"

A common question from families. The answer:

At U4, the game portion is intentionally structured as small 3v3 developmental scrimmages within the group. We rotate the players so they play with and against different children. At this age, we're focused on maximizing involvement, touches on the ball, confidence, and teaching children how soccer works rather than creating a traditional competitive game environment.

THIS IS THE PROGRAM AS DESIGNED

This is not a change made after registration. The U4 structure, 3v3 format, playful scrimmage model, and developmental philosophy are set out in our 2026/27 Recreational Handbook, available from the start of registration and acknowledged by families when they register. Questions are always welcome; please reach out to your coach or the club.

AT U4, WE'RE TEACHING KIDS HOW TO LOVE SOCCER BEFORE WE'RE TEACHING THEM HOW TO COMPETE IN SOCCER.

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. BELONG.

tennesseesocceracademy.com



HOW U6 GAME DAYS WORK

The U6 program builds on teaching soccer to young children, their parents, and coaches in a family-friendly environment that emphasizes participation and fun. Players practice once a week and take part in organized weekly games.

FORMAT

4v4

No goalkeepers

BALL

SIZE 3

U4 · U6 · U8

GAME TIME

4 × 8 MIN

3-minute breaks

OFFICIALS

COACHES

No referee

SUBS

~4 MIN

Any time

HEADING

NO HEADING

Not allowed at this age

RULES OF THE GAME

- Four 8-minute quarters, continuous running clock, 3-minute breaks.
- Substitutions approximately every 4 minutes or as needed, allowed at any time.
- No offsides. No slide tackling. No goalkeepers. No heading.
- No referee. Coaches manage the game; both coaches may be on the field directing and refereeing.
- Teams do not switch sides at halftime.
- No scores or standings are kept.

EVERY PLAYER PLAYS

Every player is guaranteed a minimum of 50% playing time each game, and all players should take an active part in gameplay. Scores and league standings are not kept anywhere in our recreational league.

RESTARTS

- **Out of bounds:** no throw-ins. The ball is placed where it went out and the team in possession may kick or dribble it back in.
- **Free kicks:** awarded for an intentional foul or obvious handball, taken at the spot of the foul, kicked or dribbled to restart.
- **All kicks are direct** — a goal can be scored straight from a restart.
- **Goal kicks:** from anywhere on the goal line, restart with a dribble or a pass.
- **Corner kicks:** from the corner on the side the ball went out, restart with a dribble or a pass.
- **Kick-off:** from the center mark, all players in their own half, opponents at least 10 feet away.
- No penalty kicks at this age.

WHAT THE GAME LOOKS LIKE

Small-sided 4v4 is designed with the players in mind: more touches on the ball, more involvement, and more chances to score. Coaches are on the field to instruct, encourage, and keep the game moving. Unintentional tripping happens when young children use their feet to control the ball; coaches use those moments to teach safe play and good sportsmanship.

BEFORE KICK-OFF

Arrive 10 minutes early so your coach can get everyone ready. Home is red jersey, navy shorts, red socks; away is navy jersey, navy shorts, navy socks. Bring a ball, water, shin guards (required), and proper shoes. Schedules are on our website and TeamSnap.

WHERE EVERYONE SITS

Players and coaches from both teams sit on one side of the field; families from both teams sit on the opposite side. Please stay at least 6 feet back from the sidelines, and never behind the goals or on the end lines.

ZERO TOLERANCE

TSA maintains zero tolerance for any negative behavior or speech toward any player, parent, referee, or coach. It is enforced and may result in removal from the field or suspension of the game.



HOW U8 GAME DAYS WORK

U8 can be coed or gender specific and continues to develop every player's love for the game in a positive, family-oriented environment. Players stay in the 4v4 format to maximize touches on the ball and create more engagement, so they develop quicker and have more fun.

FORMAT

4V4

No goalkeepers

BALL

SIZE 3

U4 · U6 · U8

GAME TIME

4 * 10 MIN

3-minute breaks

OFFICIALS

REFEREE

Official referee

SUBS

~5 MIN

Any stoppage

HEADING

NO HEADING

Not allowed at this age

RULES OF THE GAME

- Four 10-minute quarters, continuous running clock, 3-minute breaks.
- Substitutions approximately every 5 minutes or as needed, allowed at any stoppage no matter who has the ball.
- No offsides. No slide tackling. No goalkeepers. No heading.
- Teams switch sides at half.
- Official referee, officiating to the FIFA Laws of the Game with some exceptions based on TSA recreational league rules.
- Coaches stay off the field unless the referee asks for assistance. If no referee is available, both coaches work together to referee the game.
- No scores or standings are kept.

EVERY PLAYER PLAYS

Every player is guaranteed a minimum of 50% playing time each game, and all players should take an active part in gameplay. Scores and league standings are not kept anywhere in our recreational league.

RESTARTS

- **Throw-ins** restart play when the ball crosses a sideline. Opponents must be at least 10 feet away. A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw-in.
- **Free kicks:** awarded for an intentional foul or obvious handball, taken at the spot of the foul. Must be kicked to restart, no dribbling.
- **All kicks are direct** — a goal can be scored straight from a restart.
- **Goal kicks:** from anywhere on the goal line, kicked to restart.
- **Corner kicks:** from the corner on the side the ball went out, kicked to restart.
- No penalty kicks at this age.

WHAT THE GAME LOOKS LIKE

The small-sided 4v4 concept is designed with the players in mind: kids should be able to have fun in a safe and positive environment. Coaches teach safe play and good sportsmanship. If a player continues to intentionally push, shove, trip, or foul other players, the coach will remove them from the game and ask the parent to talk with them.

BEFORE KICK-OFF

Arrive 10 minutes early so your coach can get everyone ready. Home is red jersey, navy shorts, red socks; away is navy jersey, navy shorts, navy socks. Bring a ball, water, shin guards (required), and proper shoes. Schedules are on our website and TeamSnap.

WHERE EVERYONE SITS

Players and coaches from both teams sit on one side of the field; families from both teams sit on the opposite side. Please stay at least 6 feet back from the sidelines, and never behind the goals or on the end lines.

ZERO TOLERANCE

TSA maintains zero tolerance for any negative behavior or speech toward any player, parent, referee, or coach. It is enforced and may result in removal from the field or suspension of the game.

THE FOCUS IS NOT ON GAME RESULTS BUT ON GAME EXPERIENCE.

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. BELONG.

tennesseesocceracademy.com



HOW U10 GAME DAYS WORK

U10 through U14 are gender specific. Players at this age are introduced to a 7v7 format including goalkeepers, a larger field, and official referees. The goal is still a safe and positive environment where players continue to develop their love for the game.

FORMAT

7V7

6 field + goalkeeper

BALL

SIZE 4

U10 · U12

GAME TIME

2 * 25 MIN

5-minute halftime

OFFICIALS

REFEREE

Offsides & PKs

HEADING

NO HEADING

Not allowed at this age

PUNTING

ALLOWED

U10 and up

RULES OF THE GAME

- Two 25-minute halves, continuous running clock, 5-minute halftime.
- 7v7: six field players plus a goalkeeper.
- Substitutions approximately every 10–12 minutes or as needed, allowed at any stoppage no matter who has the ball.
- Teams switch sides at half.
- Offsides is called when obvious. There is one referee and no assistant referees, so please be supportive and understanding.
- Penalty kicks are awarded for a foul or handball in the penalty box.
- No heading. Punting is allowed. No build-out line.
- No scores or standings are kept.

EVERY PLAYER PLAYS

Every player is guaranteed a minimum of 50% playing time each game, and all players should take an active part in gameplay. Scores and league standings are not kept anywhere in our recreational league.

RESTARTS & SET PIECES

- **Kick-off:** from the center mark, all players in their own half, opponents outside the center circle. Kick-offs cannot start with a dribble.
- **Throw-ins** restart play when the ball crosses a sideline. A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw-in.
- **Free kicks** are all direct. Opponents must be at least 12 feet from the ball.
- **Penalty kicks** are taken from the spot, 8 yards from the goal line. The goalkeeper may move along the goal line but cannot have two feet across it before the ball is played.
- **Goal kicks:** from anywhere inside the goal box, opponents outside the penalty box.
- **Corner kicks:** from the corner on the side the ball went out.

REFEREES AT THIS AGE

We have both experienced and newer referees working our games. They will make mistakes, as we all do. Coaches are not allowed on the field unless the referee asks for assistance. If a referee is not available, both coaches work together to referee the game. Support for young officials is what keeps the game growing.

BEFORE KICK-OFF

Arrive 10 minutes early so your coach can get everyone ready. Home is red jersey, navy shorts, red socks; away is navy jersey, navy shorts, navy socks. Bring a ball, water, shin guards (required), and proper shoes. Schedules are on our website and TeamSnap.

WHERE EVERYONE SITS

Players and coaches from both teams sit on one side of the field; families from both teams sit on the opposite side. Please stay at least 6 feet back from the sidelines, and never behind the goals or on the end lines.

ZERO TOLERANCE

TSA maintains zero tolerance for any negative behavior or speech toward any player, parent, referee, or coach. It is enforced and may result in removal from the field or suspension of the game.

THE FOCUS AT THESE AGE GROUPS CONTINUES TO BE ON DEVELOPING A LOVE FOR THE GAME AND NOT RESULTS.

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. BELONG.

tennesseesocceracademy.com



HOW U12 GAME DAYS WORK

U10 through U14 are gender specific. Players at this age play a 7v7 format including goalkeepers, a larger field, and official referees. The goal is still a safe and positive environment where players continue to develop their love for the game.

FORMAT

7V7

6 field + goalkeeper

BALL

SIZE 4

U10 · U12

GAME TIME

2 * 25 MIN

5-minute halftime

OFFICIALS

REFEREE

Offsides & PKs

HEADING

HEADING

Allowed at U12 and up

PUNTING

ALLOWED

U10 and up

RULES OF THE GAME

- Two 25-minute halves, continuous running clock, 5-minute halftime.
- 7v7: six field players plus a goalkeeper.
- Substitutions approximately every 10–12 minutes or as needed, allowed at any stoppage no matter who has the ball.
- Teams switch sides at half.
- Offsides is called when obvious. There is one referee and no assistant referees, so please be supportive and understanding.
- Penalty kicks are awarded for a foul or handball in the penalty box.
- Heading is allowed. Punting is allowed. No build-out line.
- No scores or standings are kept.

EVERY PLAYER PLAYS

Every player is guaranteed a minimum of 50% playing time each game, and all players should take an active part in gameplay. Scores and league standings are not kept anywhere in our recreational league.

RESTARTS & SET PIECES

- **Kick-off:** from the center mark, all players in their own half, opponents outside the center circle. Kick-offs cannot start with a dribble.
- **Throw-ins** restart play when the ball crosses a sideline. A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw-in.
- **Free kicks** are all direct. Opponents must be at least 12 feet from the ball.
- **Penalty kicks** are taken from the spot, 8 yards from the goal line. The goalkeeper may move along the goal line but cannot have two feet across it before the ball is played.
- **Goal kicks:** from anywhere inside the goal box, opponents outside the penalty box.
- **Corner kicks:** from the corner on the side the ball went out.

REFEREES AT THIS AGE

We have both experienced and newer referees working our games. They will make mistakes, as we all do. Coaches are not allowed on the field unless the referee asks for assistance. If a referee is not available, both coaches work together to referee the game. Support for young officials is what keeps the game growing.

BEFORE KICK-OFF

Arrive 10 minutes early so your coach can get everyone ready. Home is red jersey, navy shorts, red socks; away is navy jersey, navy shorts, navy socks. Bring a ball, water, shin guards (required), and proper shoes. Schedules are on our website and TeamSnap.

WHERE EVERYONE SITS

Players and coaches from both teams sit on one side of the field; families from both teams sit on the opposite side. Please stay at least 6 feet back from the sidelines, and never behind the goals or on the end lines.

ZERO TOLERANCE

TSA maintains zero tolerance for any negative behavior or speech toward any player, parent, referee, or coach. It is enforced and may result in removal from the field or suspension of the game.

THE FOCUS AT THESE AGE GROUPS CONTINUES TO BE ON DEVELOPING A LOVE FOR THE GAME AND NOT RESULTS.

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. BELONG.

tennesseesocceracademy.com



HOW U14 GAME DAYS WORK

U10 through U14 are gender specific. Players at this age play a 7v7 format including goalkeepers, a larger field, and official referees. The goal is still a safe and positive environment where players continue to develop their love for the game.

FORMAT

7V7

6 field + goalkeeper

BALL

SIZE 5

U14

GAME TIME

2 * 25 MIN

5-minute halftime

OFFICIALS

REFEREE

Offsides & PKs

HEADING

HEADING

Allowed at U12 and up

PUNTING

ALLOWED

U10 and up

RULES OF THE GAME

- Two 25-minute halves, continuous running clock, 5-minute halftime.
- 7v7: six field players plus a goalkeeper.
- Substitutions approximately every 10–12 minutes or as needed, allowed at any stoppage no matter who has the ball.
- Teams switch sides at half.
- Offsides is called when obvious. There is one referee and no assistant referees, so please be supportive and understanding.
- Penalty kicks are awarded for a foul or handball in the penalty box.
- Heading is allowed. Punting is allowed. No build-out line.
- No scores or standings are kept.

EVERY PLAYER PLAYS

Every player is guaranteed a minimum of 50% playing time each game, and all players should take an active part in gameplay. Scores and league standings are not kept anywhere in our recreational league.

RESTARTS & SET PIECES

- **Kick-off:** from the center mark, all players in their own half, opponents outside the center circle. Kick-offs cannot start with a dribble.
- **Throw-ins** restart play when the ball crosses a sideline. A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw-in.
- **Free kicks** are all direct. Opponents must be at least 12 feet from the ball.
- **Penalty kicks** are taken from the spot, 8 yards from the goal line. The goalkeeper may move along the goal line but cannot have two feet across it before the ball is played.
- **Goal kicks:** from anywhere inside the goal box, opponents outside the penalty box.
- **Corner kicks:** from the corner on the side the ball went out.

REFEREES AT THIS AGE

We have both experienced and newer referees working our games. They will make mistakes, as we all do. Coaches are not allowed on the field unless the referee asks for assistance. If a referee is not available, both coaches work together to referee the game. Support for young officials is what keeps the game growing.

BEFORE KICK-OFF

Arrive 10 minutes early so your coach can get everyone ready. Home is red jersey, navy shorts, red socks; away is navy jersey, navy shorts, navy socks. Bring a ball, water, shin guards (required), and proper shoes. Schedules are on our website and TeamSnap.

WHERE EVERYONE SITS

Players and coaches from both teams sit on one side of the field; families from both teams sit on the opposite side. Please stay at least 6 feet back from the sidelines, and never behind the goals or on the end lines.

ZERO TOLERANCE

TSA maintains zero tolerance for any negative behavior or speech toward any player, parent, referee, or coach. It is enforced and may result in removal from the field or suspension of the game.

THE FOCUS AT THESE AGE GROUPS CONTINUES TO BE ON DEVELOPING A LOVE FOR THE GAME AND NOT RESULTS.

DEVELOP. INSPIRE. BELONG.

tennesseesocceracademy.com