

3rd - 5th Grade Soccer Rules

Game Day

- First game – Wamego Rec will make every effort to have goals in place. Coaches should assist Rec supervisor's in moving/setting up goals if not in place before the first games.
- Last game – coaches/parents pick up trash on or near field. Remove (5) stakes Move goals to designated tall grass as directed by Rec. Supervisor.
- Games need to start on time, on field warm up time will not be provided past game times. If you would like to warm up, please arrive 15-30 minutes prior to your game and practice in a clear area. Referees will check shin guards, safe shoes/cleats, and jewelry removal prior to game start.

Level Specific Info – 3rd - 5th Grade

- Two 30-minute halves with a 5-minute halftime
- Field size 225' x 135' Goal size: 6'6" x 18'
- Official score is kept
- Mercy rule ends the game immediately if there is ever a 7-goal difference. Scrimmaging for the remaining time is encouraged if coaches are agreeable. Mix up the players and add additional players if available.
- No ties, a full 10-minute overtime will be played. If still tied, kicks from the penalty mark will be used.
- Size 4 ball
- Play 9v9. Can play 8v8, 7v7 or 6v6 if roster size dictates. If coaches cannot decide player amount, contact the field supervisor. If there are 5 or less players for one team, then that team forfeits and a scrimmage will be played.
- All individuals (except in-game players) must remain outside the buffer line on the sidelines
- Coaches and players for both teams will be assigned to one sideline of the field, while all spectators will be assigned to the opposite sideline. Coaches and players will need to remain on their half of the sideline and allow the other team to have the other half of that same sideline.
- Substitutions may be made during the game by following the proper procedure (see below). The procedure is not used for substitutions during halftime or overtime breaks. Coaches are not limited on the number of substitutions they can make. Players substituted out may be substituted back into the game. Goalkeeper substitutions can be made at halftime, if needed at any other time during the game it must be approved by Center Referee.
- There are no modifications to the offside or goalie rules for this age group.
- Each team's goalie must wear a distinguishing color jersey/shirt that differentiates them from other field players (of both teams and ideally from the opposing goalie as well). Coaches are responsible for ensuring their goalie adheres to this requirement, whether using an individual player pinnie or a privately provided jersey/shirt.
- Kickoffs may be kicked in any direction; team winning the coin toss may choose to start with the ball
- No deliberate heading (including practices); violations result in an indirect free kick for the other team
- Coaches are encouraged to share the "Code of Conduct Agreement" with your team's parents, and coaches are responsible for their team's spectator actions during the games.
- Any coach violating the "Code of Conduct Agreement" during the game may be shown a yellow card by the referee as a warning. Two warnings or a single extreme incident will result in the referee showing a red card and thus requiring the coach to be removed from the game field.

Key Soccer Rule Reminders – 3rd - 5th Grade

The following is a reminder of some key soccer rules especially applicable to this age group. Any specific detail questions about the rules can be directed to a referee or more details can be found in the official soccer rule Laws of the Game, which a link is included in the “Other Important Websites” section of this packet.

- Foul: Term for illegal, careless physical contact by a non-bench player against a non-bench opponent while the ball is in play. Examples of fouls include pushing, holding, striking/hitting, throwing/kicking an object, tackling, tripping, kicking, jumping, charging, impeding, spitting, and biting. A handball offense is also considered to be a foul. Note; not all physical contact in soccer is illegal contact.
- Penalty Area: The larger rectangle region by each goal. This is where the defending goalie may use their hands/arms to touch the ball.
- Handball Offense: When a player with their arm/hand, either deliberately touches the ball or unnaturally makes their body bigger resulting in touching the ball. Note this means that the ball being touched by a player’s hand/arm is not always an offense. Also note, the top of the arm is defined as in line with the top of the armpit. Handball offense also applies to a goalie while the ball is completely outside the penalty area. Additionally, any player cannot even accidentally touch the ball with their hand/arm and then immediately score a goal.
- Ball Out of Bounds: The ball is out of bounds when it completely crosses the field edge line, either in the air or on the ground. A ball touching the line is still in play.
- Throw-in Technique: Remember the following is required when delivering the ball for a throw-in...
 1. The throw takes place where the ball went out of bounds
 2. Part of each foot must touch the ground on the line and/or out of bounds
 3. Two hands must be used to perform the throw
 4. The throwing motion must take the ball behind and over the head of the thrower
- Direct Free Kicks: These are free kicks after a foul that can be scored directly by the kicker.
- Indirect Free Kicks: These are free kicks after non-foul violations that must touch one other player (from either team) before being scored. The center referee will indicate these situations during the kick by holding an arm straight up in the air.
- Goal Kicks: The team taking the goal kick may have players stand in the penalty area. The kicking team players besides the player taking the goal kick may now touch the ball before it leaves the penalty area (i.e. there is no longer a requirement for the ball to leave the penalty area). The opposing team must be outside that penalty area when the goal kick is being taken, but as soon as the kick is taken, may then once again freely enter the penalty area. Free kicks taken from the defending team’s penalty area have the same player positioning requirements as goal kicks.
- Drop Ball Restart: Only a player of the team that last touched the ball can participate with all other players of both teams remaining at least 4.5 yards away. The exception is that a ball in or last touched in the penalty area will be dropped to that team’s goalie even if last touched by the other team. A referee may award a drop ball if the ball hits the referee and then goes in the goal, changes team possession, or leads to a promising attack.

- Cards: May be shown to players or coaches. A yellow card is strictly a warning. A red card will result in the person being disqualified for the rest of the game (that person may not be replaced). If a person is shown a second yellow card in the same game, that person will then be shown a red card.
- Dangerous Play: Players should “keep their feet” during play. If a player endangers him/herself (i.e., being/staying on the ground) or endangers others (i.e., kicking high near someone’s face), the referee will reward an indirect free kick for dangerous play to the other team.
- Goalie Possession: A goalie cannot be challenged for the ball when the goalie has the ball either between their two hands or between one hand and any surface.
- Goalie Illegal Use of Hands: Once a goalie loses possession of the ball from their hands (such as from an attempted throw) the goalie cannot touch the ball again with their hands until it is touched by another player. Also, if a player on the goalie’s team deliberately kicks the ball, the goalie then cannot touch the ball with their hands (unless the goalie has already clearly kicked or attempted to kick the ball into play). Violations are penalized by an indirect free kick for the opposing team (assuming the goalie did not commit a handball offense outside their penalty area).
- Changing the Goalie: The goalie on the field may be swapped with another player on the field at any stoppage of play if granted permission by the center referee. If permission was not received, players involved in a goalie swap will each be penalized with a yellow card.
- Penalty Kick Goalie Foot Requirement: Until the ball is kicked on a penalty kick, the defending goalkeeper must have at least part of one foot touching, or in line with, the goal line.
- Wall Positioning/Distance: On free kicks, the opponent has the privilege (but is not obligated) to form a wall with players to try and block free kicks. For this young of an age group, when appropriate (particularly on free kicks close to the opponent’s goal) the referee will indicate the minimum distance away the opponent’s wall (and any opponents not in the wall) must be until the ball is kicked on the free kick. The minimum distance will not be precisely measured off but will generally be the same distance as from the center spot on the field to the edge of the center circle. All players defending and/or forming a wall always have the right to be on their goal line between their goal posts even if that location puts them closer than the minimum distance requirement would normally allow. All attackers until the ball is kicked must remain at least one yard away from any wall made up of three or more defending players.
- Wall Player Safety: Players in the wall have the right to use their hands and arms to protect their bodies. Requirements for this to be done legally and not potentially result in a handball offense (see the description earlier in the packet) is that the hand/arm must be against the person’s body and must not deliberately be making the body bigger. Also, players forming the wall must face the direction of the ball. Referees are not required at all to instruct players on what to do in the wall, but to encourage safety, Wamego Recreation referees will generally give a few brief reminders and maybe show a couple legal hand/arm examples, but the referee will not cover all scenarios as this is the coach’s responsibility to train their players. A generally accepted practice is for coaches to teach boys to protect below their waist and girls to protect their chest. Some coaches also have their players use one hand to protect their face.

- **Offside Rule Summary:** There are two criteria that must be met for a player to be called offside.

First, the player must be in an offside position (see below) at the time the ball was played by a teammate. Second, the offside position player must then proceed to interfere with active play. Interfering with active play is touching the ball or interfering with an opponent's ability to play the ball (by challenging, blocking vision, or clearly attempting to play the ball), even if the interference happens off a deflection, rebound, or deliberate save. Only after both these two criteria have been met will a player be called offside, resulting in an indirect free kick at the position the player was at the time of the second condition.

- **Offside Position Summary:** There is nothing illegal inherently by a player being in an offside position. A player is in an offside position if a part of their body that can legally play the ball is closer to the opponent's goal line than the second to last opponent. However, a player is never considered to be in an offside position if the ball is closer than the player to the opponent's goal line, the player is on their own (defending) half of the field, or the restart of play is not a free kick (e.g., throw-in, goal kick, etc.).

Offside Example: The opponent has their defenders on penalty area line and the goalie by the goal. Your player is standing right next to their goalie, and a player with the ball on your team from your defensive half of the field completes a pass to your player who is standing next to their goalie. Your player is called offside by the referee. This is because both of the criteria outlined above happened as your player was closer to the opponent's end line than the last non-goalie defender at the time a teammate kicked the ball (criteria one) and that player was then the first player to touch the ball (criteria two).

Wamego Recreation Specific Rules and Reminders – 3rd - 5th Grade

The following are specific Wamego Recreation rules or points of emphasis. Questions about these can be directed to a Wamego Recreation employee or referee.

Substitution Timing During Wamego Recreation Games

Substitutions may happen at any stoppage of play with the center referee's permission. However, most of the substitutions granted will be at the following times:

- When a team wanting to substitute has earned a goal kick
- When a team wanting to substitute has earned a throw-in
- When the opposing team is granted a substitution
- For an injury
- Before a kickoff is taken

Note the referee is not obligated to interrupt a quick restart by either team to allow for a substitution.

In-Game Standard Substitution Procedure for Wamego Recreation

1. Player(s) must already be waiting in between the substitution flags at the center of the field at a stoppage of play.
2. The center referee notices substitutes are present in the substitution flags or receives indication of that fact from an assistant referee.
3. The center referee whistles to initiate the substitution.
4. The center referee indicates verbally by number and color the substitutes allowed (e.g. "three red subs and two blue subs").
5. Player(s) being subbed out must go over to the substitution flag area to step off the field and then they give a "five" to the player that will be replacing them.

6. Players being subbed on must wait between the substitution flags until they receive an air “high five”, wave, or player cross each other at flags to enter the field. Or as ref signals and directs.

7. Once the substitutions are complete, the center referee signals by a whistle that the next restart may be taken.

Note any referee verbal instructions may supersede the procedure and any players not following the procedure or the referee’s instructions may be shown a yellow card.

8. Goalie substitution requires approval from Center Referee.

Player Safety – Slide Tackling, Goalies, and Foul Consideration

No slide tackling is allowed. Slide tackling is defined as challenging the opponent for the ball by sliding. This includes goalies who slide while using their hands, body, and/or feet to challenge for the ball. Also, goalies do not have special privileges when it comes to putting themselves in harm’s way or fouling other players. For example, a goalie who does not have possession of the ball is reaching for the ball and there is contact with the opposing player, this is not automatically a foul on the non-goalie player because contact was made with the goalie. Instead, the contact by both players (like any situation with contact) is evaluated by who was there first (i.e. had a right to the spot) and if the contact was a foul (refer to the definition of fouls earlier in the packet). Unfortunately, there are situations from time to time where it is the goalie who gets the worse end of the contact but based on normal foul evaluation, it is the goalie who actually committed the foul.

Player Safety – Equipment

- Players must wear shin guards; hard plastic ones must be completely covered by socks or pants.
- Cleats may be worn and if worn should be safe and ideally soccer designed. Any unsafe portion of any shoe like a dangerous toe cleat at the front of the shoe, such as is found on many baseball and football cleats, would need to be cut off. Referees have the final say as to what is considered dangerous.
- Jewelry may not be worn, even if it is covered by tape or is a new piercing. Medical ID jewelry is allowed if made safe.
- Accessories like non-prescription eyewear/sunglasses, caps with bills, etc. may not be worn.

Wamego Recreation Referees

The referees are not volunteers. They are current or former nationally certified, trained Kansas United States Soccer Federation (USSF) referees. Normally three referees (one center and two assistant referees) will be assigned to each game of this age group. They are the ultimate authority in charge of the game, enforcing the Laws of the Game and upholding the spirit of the game, but they will also be there to help educate and provide reminders regarding the rules.

Coaching Games/Drills/Tips

<https://www.usyouthsoccer.org/lesson-plans/>

https://www.soccerhelp.com/Soccer_Tactics_Soccer_Tips_Index.shtml

<https://www.soccerxpert.com/drills/u10-u12-soccer-drills>

<http://www.freeyouthsoccerdrills.com/soccer-practice-plans.html>

Coaching Course and Tips:

<https://learning.ussoccer.com/coach/courses/available/16/details/1546>

There are online course available, but it is not required by WRD.

https://www.soccerhelp.com/Soccer_Tactics_Soccer_Tips_Index.shtml

Helpful Websites

WRD Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WamegoRecreationDepartment>

Soccer (IFAB) Laws of the Game: <http://theifab.com> > Laws of the Game Laws 1-17

Kansas Youth Soccer: www.kansasyouthsoccer.org

US Youth Soccer: www.usyouthsoccer.org

Laws of the Game Made Easy (not updated since 2011 so some rules have changed since then):

<https://soccerrefereeusa.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/laws-of-the-game-made-easy.pdf>

Kansas USSF Referees: www.kansasreferee.org