

**RULES AND GUIDELINES FOR THE CONDUCT OF  
SMALL SIDED FOOTBALL GAMES AND EVENTS**

**Non Competition for Under 6 to Under 10 – Competition for Under 11**

The following Small Sided Football Rules apply to the conduct of the Association Small Sided Football - Under 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 years games and events.

Note that the Rules listed below are contained in the Competition Rules but also apply to Small Sided Football:

<b>RULE 2</b>	<b>- CLUB UNIFORMS</b>	<b>RULE 4</b>	<b>- REGISTRATION OF PLAYERS</b>
<b>RULE 6</b>	<b>- TEAM GRADING</b>	<b>RULE 9</b>	<b>- PUBLISHED DRAW</b>
<b>RULE 12</b>	<b>- MATCH SHEETS</b>	<b>RULE 30</b>	<b>- GROUND CONTROL</b>

Managers and Coaches of Small Sided Football teams should be aware of the six Rules shown above in addition to the Small Sided Football Rules which follow. See your Club Secretary if requiring clarification of Rules 2, 4, 6, 9, 12 and 30

**POLICY OF S.S.F.A. FOR THE CONDUCT OF SMALL SIDED FOOTBALL GAMES**

It is the Policy of the Association for all S.S.F. games to be conducted within the following guidelines:

1. Where possible, place players in their correct age group and grade and ensure they are participating in games commensurate with both their football skill and physical development and are able to continue to develop their football ability without undue pressure.
2. Although not in contravention of the Rules of S.S.F., the following activities are not in the spirit of the game and should be discouraged:
  - Deliberately placing or encouraging players to stand in offside positions
  - Placing players close to goals where by doing so they are prevented from their normal participation in the game
3. Clubs to encourage coaches to follow FFA recommendations and guidelines in relation to player development, team shape and positional play, broadly defined as follows:
  - In 4 x 4 - Under 6 and 7 – No specific playing shape allowing players to move freely around the playing area and to learn by playing.
  - In 7 x 7 - Under 8 and 9 – The 1-3-3 playing shape with a goalkeeper and 2 lines of 3 players with players learning all positions.
  - In 9 x 9 - Under 10 and 11 – The 1-3-2-3 playing shape with a goalkeeper, 3 at the back, 2 midfielders and 3 forwards with players learning all positions.

## **SSF1 SMALL SIDED FOOTBALL GAMES AND EVENTS**

- A. Small Sided Football, non-competition games and events will be conducted in the Under 6, Under 7, Under 8, Under 9 and Under 10 age divisions.
- B. Under 11 age divisions will play competition games under the SSF Rules, with special provisions for the borrowing of players and a Finals Series in an agreed format.
- C. Clubs are not permitted to play any players in age divisions younger than the player's eligible age division as prescribed in Rule 4. E. - Registrations

## **SSF2 FIELD OF PLAY**

### **A. Dimensions**

The field of play should be rectangular in shape. Sizes for each age group are as follows:-

#### Under 6 and 7

Length	30m	Width	20m
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#### Under 8 and 9

Length	40m – 50m	Width	30m – 40m
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Approx. ¼ full size pitch – when converting a full size pitch into SSF fields

#### Under 10 and 11

Length	60m – 70m	Width	40m – 50m
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Approx. ½ full size pitch – when converting a full size pitch into SSF fields

Note: In the Under 11 age group, the final stage of development in the SSF Formats before players commence 11 x 11 football, it is recommended that where facilities and scheduling allows, Clubs set up the field from penalty box to penalty box and adjust the width of the field with use of markers to meet the maximum specified width.

### **B. Markings**

Soft markers or painted line markings. Not witches hats.

C. **Goal Size**

The size of the goal should be:

Under 6 and 7

Width	1.5m – 2.0m	Height	0.9m – 1.0m
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“Pop Up” goals permitted in 2010

Under 8 and 9

Width	2.5m – 3.0m	Height	1.8m – 2.0m
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Clubs should plan for 3.0m x 2.0m from 2011

Under 10 and 11

Width	4.5m – 5.0m	Height	1.8m – 2.0m
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Clubs should plan for 2.0m x 5.0m from 2011

Note: For the Under 8 and 9 age groups it is recommended that Clubs who have the capacity to do so, use 3m x 2m goals. Should a Club not be able to do this in the first instance, the 5m x 2m goal is most acceptable for use on fields for the Under 8 and 9 age groups as well as the Under 10 and 11 age groups. FFA understands that Clubs may have existing goals for the Under 8 – Under 11 age groups, however when they need to replace existing goals or are in a position to make a change they should move to the dimensions specified above.

D. **Goal Type**

It is preferable that pop up style or portable goals are used where possible, however, the use of poles and markers as the goals, particularly in the Under 6 to 9 age groups, is also suitable.

E. **Penalty Area**

Under 6 and 7

No penalty area or goal area

Under 8 to Under 11

Rectangular – 5m depth x 12m width

The penalty area can be marked by the use of marked lines, flat or soft markers or cones.

**SSF3 BALL SIZE**

**Under 6 to Under 9**

Size 3

**Under 10 and Under 11**

Size 4

**SSF4 NUMBER OF PLAYERS**

**Under 6 and Under 7**

4 x 4 – no goalkeeper

Maximum of three (3) substitutes who may be rotated during the entire game. The coach or parent is allowed to make the substitutions while the ball is in play, but must wait until the substituted player has left the field.

**Under 8 and Under 9**

7 x 7 – including goalkeeper

Maximum of four (4) substitutes who may be rotated during the entire game. The coach or parent is allowed to make the substitutions while the ball is in play, but must wait until the substituted player has left the field.

**Under 10**

9 x 9 – including goalkeeper

Maximum of nine (9) players on the field from each team plus three (3) substitute players who can be interchanged at any time. The coach may make the substitutions at any time but must wait until the substituted player has left the field.

**Under 11**

9 x 9 – including goalkeeper

Maximum of nine (9) players on the field from each team plus five (5) substitute players who can be interchanged only at a stoppage in play and as permitted by the Instructing Referee but not before the substituted player has left the field.

**SSF5 GOALKEEPER**

**Under 6 and Under 7**

No goalkeeper.

The Game Leader, coaches and managers should continually discourage children from permanently standing in front of the goal.

## **Under 8 to Under 11**

### Goalkeeper

The goalkeeper is allowed to handle the ball anywhere in the penalty area. To restart play after a save or gathering the ball with their hands, the goalkeeper is not allowed to kick or drop kick the ball directly from their hands. The ball must be thrown or rolled from the hands or played from the ground with their feet, within six (6) seconds. Opponents must be at least 5m outside the penalty area and cannot move inside the penalty area until the ball is in play. The ball is in play once it moves out of the penalty area.

## **SSF6 DURATION OF THE GAME**

### **Under 6 and Under 7**

2 x 15 minutes (half time break 5 minutes)

### **Under 8 and Under 9**

2 x 20 minutes (half time break 5 minutes)

### **Under 10 and Under 11**

2 x 25 minutes (half time break 5 minutes)

## **SSF7 GAME LEADER AND INSTRUCTING REFEREE**

### **Under 6 and Under 7**

Game Leader

### **Under 8 to Under 11**

Instructing Referee

#### A. Game Leader

The main role of the Game Leader is to keep the game moving fluently, limit stoppages and assist players with all match restarts. Most importantly, they must make every effort to create an environment that ensures that all players have fun and have maximum involvement. The children are learning the game at this level, be flexible and patient. The game leader can be a Club official, parent, older child or player or young referee and should always be enthusiastic and approachable.

The Game Leader should:

- Encourage all children to have fun and different children to take restarts
- Ensure the correct number of players are on the field

- Discourage players from permanently over-guarding the goal
- Use a “Ready, Set, Go” prompt to encourage quick decisions when restarting play
- Encourage children to dribble or pass ball into play from all restarts rather than a big kick
- Ensure opposing team is back to the halfway line for all goal line restarts
- Ensure team officials and parents create a safe, enjoyable and positive playing environment for the children and do not emphasise winning or losing
- Encourage children to be involved in all aspects of the game, attacking and defending
- Remember most acts of handball or fouls and misconduct at this level are caused by a lack of coordination, with no intent. If you decide a deliberate or serious act of handball or foul and misconduct has occurred, explain to the child they have done the wrong thing and that they should not do this again
- Let the game flow and give instruction to all players on the run where you can
- Praise and encourage both teams
- Be enthusiastic and approachable
- **Most Importantly – Remember the children are learning the game – be flexible and patient**

#### B. Instructing Referee

The main role of the instructing referee is to control the game to ensure it is played fluently and instruct and correct the players (with minimal blowing of the whistle) on how to behave and what the rules are, e.g. what a foul is, what a free kick is and how to throw in etc. Should these indiscretions happen a second time the referee should stop the game and apply the appropriate action and decisions. This person can be a Club official, capable parent, older child or player, or an official referee from the Association.

The Instructing Referee should:

- Encourage players to participate and enjoy the game
- Ensure the correct numbers of players are on the field
- Discourage players from permanently standing in blatant offside positions and instruct them to move into onside positions. In the Under 10 and Under 11 age groups children should be made aware of the offside rule during training and be encouraged to adopt this philosophy during the game at all times
- Let the game flow and give instruction to all players on the run where you can
- Instruct players in the first instance before blowing the whistle where possible

- Ensure team officials and parents create a safe, enjoyable and positive playing environment for the children and do not emphasise winning or losing
- Be enthusiastic, consistent and approachable

## **SSF8 START OF PLAY AND RESTART AFTER A GOAL**

### **A. Procedure to Start a Game**

#### (a) Under 6 to Under 9

- (i) The 'home' team will take the kick off and the Game Leader or Instructing Referee will decide the direction of play.
- (ii) The kick off and direction of play will be reversed at half time.

#### (b) Under 10 and Under 11

- (i) The Instructing Referee will toss a coin, or similar action, and the 'home' team will call the toss.
- (ii) The winner of the toss will nominate the direction of play to start the game and the loser of the toss will kick off.
- (iii) The kick off and direction of play will be reversed at half time.

### **B. Procedure to be Followed for Kickoffs**

- (a) For all starts and restarts of play at the commencement of a game, after half time and after a goal is scored, all players must be in their own half of the field.
- (b) The team taking the kick off shall kick the ball forward. In Under 6 and Under 7 the player taking the kick off may kick the ball more than once.
- (c) All members of the opposing team must be at least 5 metres from the ball until the ball is kicked to start or restart the game.
- (d) For a goal to be scored directly from a kick off the ball must touch another player before entering the goal or a goal kick will be awarded.

## **SSF9 BALL OUT OF PLAY**

The ball is out of play when it has wholly crossed the goal line or the touch line on the ground or in the air, or when play has been stopped by the game leader or instructing referee.

## **SSF10 BALL CROSSING THE TOUCH LINE**

### **Under 6 and Under 7**

There is no throw in. A player from the opposing team to the player who touched the ball last before crossing the touch line will place the ball on the touch line and pass or dribble the ball into play. Opponents must be a least 5m away from the ball until it is in play. The ball must touch a team mate before a goal can be scored. The player taking the kick in may kick the ball more than once before it is played by another player.

### **Under 8 to Under 11**

Throw In – Player faces the field of play, has part of each foot on the ground either on or behind the touch line, uses both hands and delivers the ball from behind and over the head. The thrower must not touch the ball again until it has touched another player. Opponents must be a least 5m away from the ball until it is in play. The ball is in play once it enters the field of play. A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw in. A player taking a throw in may not kick the ball until it has been played by an opponent or team mate.

## **SSF11 BALL CROSSING THE GOAL LINE AFTER TOUCHING THE DEFENDING TEAM LAST**

### **Under 6 and Under 7**

There is no corner kick. Regardless of which team touched the ball last, a player from the team whose goal line the ball has crossed will place the ball anywhere along the goal line and pass or dribble the ball into play. Opponents must retreat to the half way line and can move once the ball is in play. The ball must touch a team mate before a goal can be scored. The player kicking the ball into play may kick the ball more than once before it is played by another player.

### **Under 8 to Under 11**

Corner Kick – A player from the attacking team places the ball inside the corner arc nearest to the point where the ball crossed the line. Opponents must be a least 5m away from the ball until it is in play. The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves. A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick.

A player taking a corner kick is not permitted to kick the ball a second time until the ball touches a team mate or an opponent.

## **SSF12 BALL CROSSING THE GOAL LINE AFTER TOUCHING THE ATTACKING TEAM LAST**

### **Under 6 and Under 7**

Regardless of which team touched the ball last, a player from the team whose goal line the ball has crossed will place the ball anywhere along the goal line and pass or dribble the ball into play. Opponents must retreat to the half way line and can move once the ball is in play. The ball must touch a team mate before a goal can be scored. The player kicking or dribbling the ball out is permitted to kick the ball more than once before it is played by another player.

### **Under 8 to Under 11**

Goal kick from anywhere within the penalty area. Opponents remain at least 5m outside the penalty area until the ball is in play. The ball is in play once it is kicked directly out of the penalty area. The ball must contact a team mate or an opponent before the kicker may kick the ball a second time.

## **SSF13 METHOD OF SCORING**

A goal is scored when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, between the goalposts and under the crossbar. When goal posts are not available and cones are used for goals, the goal is scored when the ball passes between the cones without touching them, below shoulder height of the player.

## **SSF14 OFFSIDE**

### **Under 6 to Under 11**

No offside

Note: In the Under 8 to Under 11 age groups, team coaches and managers should strongly discourage children from permanently standing in blatant offside positions. In the Under 10 and Under 11 age groups, children should be made aware of the offside rule during training and be encouraged to adopt this philosophy during the game at all times.

Instructing Referees should direct players permanently standing in blatant offside positions to move into onside positions.

## **SSF15 FOULS AND MISCONDUCT**

### **Under 6 and Under 7**

Indirect Free Kicks are awarded for all acts of handball or fouls or misconduct. The kicks shall be taken 8 metres from the defending team's goal line on a line parallel to the sideline and the defending players must remain at least 5 metres from the ball until the kick is taken.

From an indirect free kick a goal can be scored only if the ball subsequently touches another player, a team mate or an opposition player, before it enters the goal.

Most acts of handball or fouls and misconduct at this level are caused by a lack of coordination, with no intent. In this case try and give the advantage to the attacking team and continue play. If you decide a deliberate or serious act of handball, foul or misconduct has occurred, explain to the child they have done the wrong thing and that they should not do this again.

### **Under 8 to Under 11**

Indirect Free Kicks are awarded for all acts of handball or fouls and misconduct. The kick shall be taken 8 metres from the defending team's goal line on a line parallel to the sideline and defending players must remain at least 5 metres from the ball until the kick is taken. From an indirect free kick a goal can be scored only if the ball subsequently touches a team mate or an opposition player, before it enters the goal.

Penalty Kicks may be awarded for deliberate or serious acts of handball or fouls and misconduct in the penalty area. The penalty kick is taken from an 8m penalty mark with only a goalkeeper in position. All other players must be outside the penalty area and be at least 5m behind the penalty mark.

### **Fouls and Misconduct Are:**

- Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent
- Trips or attempts to trip an opponent
- Jumps at an opponent
- Charges an opponent
- Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent
- Pushes an opponent
- Tackles an opponent from behind to gain possession of the ball
- Making contact with the opponent before touching the ball
- Holds an opponent
- Spits at an opponent
- Handles the ball deliberately
- Plays in a dangerous manner
- Impedes the progress of a player

## **SSF16 BORROWING OF PLAYERS**

In order to provide a full team for a game, players can be borrowed from other teams in accordance with the following guidelines. Only under special circumstances should a listed player in a team be replaced by a borrowed player.

### **A. Borrowing into Under 6 to Under 10 Teams**

- (a) Players in Under 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 age divisions may be borrowed up and down within their own age division without restriction.
- (b) Players in Under 6 divisions may be borrowed into any grade of Under 7 and Under 8 divisions.
- (c) Players in Under 7 division may be borrowed into any grade of Under 8 or Under 9 divisions.
- or (d) Players in Under 8 division may be borrowed into any grade of Under 9 Under 10 divisions.
- (e) Players in Under 9 division may be borrowed into any grade of Under 10 division but not the Under 11 (competition) division.
- (f) In Under 6 to Under 10, male players may NOT be borrowed into any ‘W’ (female) divisions.
- (g) Players in Under 10 division may be borrowed into Under 11 teams in accordance with Clause SSF16. B. but NOT into any Under 12 division.

**B. Borrowing into Under 11 Divisions from Under 10**

- (a) ‘A’ grade players must play ‘A’ grade – i.e. 10A players to 11A only.
- (b) A team may borrow up to a maximum of four (4) players for any one match.
- (c) A player may be borrowed any number of times and return to their own team without penalty.
- (d) A player may not play in a lower grade of Under 11 than that in which he or she is registered e.g. 11B player cannot play in 11C.
- (e) Borrowing of players between teams in the same grade, e.g. 11C/1 to 11C/2 or reversed etc. is permitted.
- (f) Players may not be borrowed from a higher graded team in Under 10.
- (g) Male players may NOT be borrowed into any 11 ‘W’ (female) team.
- (h) The name, I.D. number, age division and grade of all borrowed players must be shown on the Match Sheet.
- (i) Breaches of the Borrowing Rules will result in the match being declared LOST BY FORFEIT.

## **Small Sided Football Games Formats**

A quick view of the format of small sided games is seen below.

<b>Playing Format</b>	<b>Under 6 &amp; 7</b>	<b>Under 8 &amp; 9</b>	<b>Under 10 &amp; 11</b>
Numbers	4 v 4	7 v 7	9 v 9
Field Size	30m x 20m	40m x 30m	60m x 40m
Field Markings	Markers or painted line markings	Markers or painted line markings	Markers or painted line markings
Penalty Area	Nil	Nil	5m long by 12m wide
Goal Size	Min: 1.5m x 0.90m Max 2.0m x 1.0m	Min: 2.5m x 1.8m Max 3.0m x 2.0m	Min: 4.50m x 1.8m Max 5.0m x 2.00m
Goal Type	Markers, poles, Goals	Markers, poles, Goals	Goal Posts
Ball Size	Size 3	Size 3	Size 4
Goalkeeper	No	Yes	Yes
Recommended Playing Time	2 x 15 minutes	2 x 20 minutes	2 x 25 minutes
Half Time Break	5 minutes	5 minutes	5 minutes
Referee	Game Leader	Instructing Referee	Instructing Referee
Competition	No	No	No for Under 10 Yes for Under 11