

**KANNAPOLIS PARKS &
RECREATION 2025 YOUTH SOCCER
LEAGUE
5-6, 7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15
RULES AND REGULATIONS**

United States Youth Soccer Federation Rules and North Carolina High School Federation Rules apply with the following local rule exceptions.

Section 1. Eligibility/Age Division.

Age groups reflect players' age as of February 1, 2025.

All divisions are COED.

1. 5-6 Division
2. 7-8 Division
3. 9-10 Division
4. 11-12 Division
5. 13-15 Division

Section 2. Field of Play

1. Field Size for 5-6 will be 30 x 40 yards.
Field Size for 7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15 will be 40 X 60 yards.
2. Regulation goals for 5-6 will be 4' x 6'.
Regulation goals for 7-8, 9-10, 11-12, 13-15 will be 12' x 7'.
3. The goalie area, penalty area and other areas/boundaries will be designated by field markings and corner flags.

Section 3. Game Balls

1. 5-6 will use size 3 soccer balls.
2. 7-8 & 9-10 will use size 4 soccer balls.
3. 11-12 & 13-15 will use size 5 soccer balls.

Section 4. Players and Substitutions

1. All Divisions will play 7 vs 7 players plus a goalkeeper for a total of 8 players on field. Each team must have at least 6 players to start. Coaches are not allowed to be on the field and must be on the team's sideline.
2. Exceptions for 5-6 Division: play will be 6 vs 6, NO goalkeepers will be used and 1 coach per team is allowed on the field but must not hinder play and cannot be located in front of the goal.
3. All teams must play equal number of players at all times regardless of score. **Example** - Team A shows up with 6 players then Team B must play only 6 players also. Numbers of players should not drop below the minimum number needed to play.
4. There is a 5 minute grace period from the scheduled game time to get the amount of players that are required to start.
5. Substitutions may be made with the consent of the referee at any dead ball, goal kicks or throw ins. Play will also be stopped at the 5 minute, 10 minute and 15 minute mark of each half to allow for substitutions.

Section 5. Players Equipment

1. A player shall not wear anything that is dangerous to another player. Casts must be padded and are allowed at the referee's discretion. No metal braces will be allowed.
2. Uniforms shall consist of same color reversible jerseys with number on the back. Shorts/pants and sock colors are at the discretion of players. Knee socks are recommended.
3. The goalkeeper may wear a different color shirt or penny than the referee and different color shirt than members of both teams. Mouthpieces are recommended for goalies at all times.
4. No metal cleats or baseball/softball cleats are allowed. Tennis shoes are allowed.
5. Shin guards are required for league play and practices.
6. No jewelry shall be worn by any player, except for medical identification.

Section 6. Referees

1. The referee has jurisdiction from the time he/she enters the field of play until he/she signals the end of the game. The referee's decisions are final.
2. The referee shall enforce the Rules of the Game, but shall refrain from stopping the game for an infraction when he is satisfied that by doing so, would be giving an advantage to the offending team.
3. The referee can stop the game for infringements of the rules by blowing a whistle.
4. The referee can suspend or terminate a game whenever he deems necessary. For example, severe weather or interference by spectators or coaches.
5. The referee can caution a player, coach or parent and shall eject from play any player, coach or parent guilty of violent conduct or serious foul play, using profanity or foul language, or persistent infringement of the playing rules.
6. The referee acts as the timekeeper and keeps a record of the game. Staff will also run a timer so coaches/players/spectators are aware of time when possible.
7. Boys and girls will be allowed to fold arms to provide lower (below waist)) and upper body (chest area) protection. This will be a judgment call by the referee.

Section 7. Start of Play

1. The start of play at the beginning of each half and after a goal shall proceed with a kick-off.
2. At the beginning of the game, the choice of the end or kick-off shall be determined by the toss of a coin. The team winning the toss shall have the option of the choice of ends or kick-off.
3. After half time, the ends shall be changed (unless teams agree to stay in the same direction to limit confusion in the younger divisions) and the kick-off shall be taken by the team opposite from the team that took the kick-off at the beginning of the game.
4. On a kickoff, the ball must be stationary on the ground at the center of the field is considered in play once it has been kicked and has moved forward. The kicker shall not play the ball a second time until it has been touched by another player.
5. Every player on each team must be in their own half of the field and all players of the team opposing the kicker must be at least 10 yards away from the ball when the ball is put into play. If this rule is violated, the kickoff shall be retaken.
6. A goal cannot be scored directly from a kickoff.
7. After a temporary suspension of play for any reason not otherwise mentioned in these rules, the referee shall restart the game by a drop ball where the ball was when play was stopped. A player may not play the ball until it touches the ground. If this rule is violated, the drop ball shall be retaken. A goal may be scored directly from a drop ball.

Section 8. Ball In and Out of Play

1. The ball is out of play only when:
 - A. It has crossed the goal line or touch line in its entirety by ground or air.
 - B. When the game has been stopped by the referee.
 - C. Referee stops game due to injury
 - D. Play is stopped for substitution purposes
2. The ball is in play from the beginning of the game until the end, even if:
 - A. It rebounds from a goalpost, crossbar, or corner flag into the field of play.
 - B. It rebounds off the referee or a linesman when he is in the field of play.
 - C. An apparent infraction has occurred but the referee has not stopped the game.

Section 9. Method of Scoring

1. A goal is scored when the whole of the ball crosses the goal line between the goal posts and under the cross bar, provided it was not thrown, carried, or intentionally propelled by arm or hand by an attacking player (except the goalkeeper who throws the ball from his own penalty area.). The ball has to cross in its entirety.
2. If a defending player deflects the ball with his hand or arm and the ball goes in the goal, a goal is scored.
3. Each goal scored counts one point. The team scoring the greater number of goals during the game wins.
4. If both teams have scored an equal number of goals during the game, the game ends in a tie.
5. No score will be kept in the 5-6 Division.

Section 10. Offside

1. No offside will be called in the 5-6 Division.
2. Age divisions 7-8 should be called by the official when offside by player(s) has gained that player an advantage.
3. Age Divisions 9-10, 11-12, 13-15, a player is offside if he/she is nearer the opposing team's goal line than the ball at the moment the ball is played unless:
 - The player is in own half of the field.
 - Two opposing players are nearer their goal line than he is (including the opposing goalkeeper).
 - An opponent last touches the ball.
 - Player received the ball directly from a goal kick, corner kick, throw in, or drop ball.
4. A player in an offside position is not offside unless, in the opinion of the referee, he is seeking to gain advantage by being in an offside position.
5. For an offside infraction, the defending team is awarded an indirect free kick from the place where the offside occurred.

Section 11. Duration of the Game

1. All Divisions will play two (2) twenty (20) minute halves. The clock will run with no stoppage.
2. Half time will be 5 minutes.
3. No overtime play.
4. When hot weather exists, additional water breaks shall be granted at the referee's discretion during each half.

Section 12. Fouls and Misconduct

1. Fouls and misconduct are penalized by awarding free kicks to the opponent. The guilty player may also be cautioned or ejected even if a free kick is not awarded due to application of advantage.
2. Direct free kicks are awarded only for intentionally:
 - A. Kicking or attempting to kick a player
 - B. Tripping
 - C. Jumping at opposing players
 - D. Charging Violently / Charging from behind
 - E. Striking or attempting to strike
 - F. Holding / Pushing
 - G. Intentionally Handling the Ball to Gain an Advantage (except goalkeeper in penalty area)
 - H. Spitting
3. A direct free kick offense committed in the guilty player's penalty area is a penalty kick (except 5-6 Division).
4. Indirect free kicks are awarded for all fouls, misconduct, and offenses other than the previous direct free kick fouls. Other fouls and misconduct include:
 - A. Dangerous play
 - B. Charging fairly when not within playing distance of the ball
 - C. Obstructing
 - D. Charging the goalkeeper
5. A goalkeeper may handle the ball only in his own penalty area, and the goalkeeper may not delay the game by holding on to the ball. At the discretion of the referee, the penalty for a delay by the goalkeeper is loss of possession and a corner kick for the opposing team (exception 5-6 Division has no goalkeeper).
6. A player shall be cautioned if they
 - A. Persistently infringes the Rules of the Game.
 - B. Dissents from any decision by the referee.
 - C. Is guilty of unsportsmanlike conduct.
 - D. Enters the game without the referee's permission.
7. A player shall be ejected from the game if they
 - A. Is guilty of violent conduct or serious foul play.
 - B. Uses foul or abusive language.
 - C. Persists in misconduct after being cautioned. An ejected player may not be replaced.
8. In the 5-6 Division, the official has the authority to give a warning without a change of possession to provide a teachable moment for the players.

Section 13. Free Kicks

1. The two kinds of free kicks are:
 - A. Direct free kicks, from which a goal may be scored against the offending team.
 - B. Indirect free kicks, from which a goal cannot be scored unless the ball is touched by a player other than the kicker before going into the game.
2. Direct free kicks are awarded only for the direct free kick fouls. All other offenses are awarded with an indirect free kick unless specifically stated otherwise in the rule describing the offense.
3. A free kick is taken from the place where the offense occurred.
4. The ball must be stationary on the ground and is considered in play when it has been kicked or moved forward. The kicker may not play it a second time before being touched by another player.
5. All opposing players must be at least 10 yards away from the ball when the ball is put into play. If this rule is violated, the free kick is retaken.
6. If the offense occurred less than 10 yards from the opponent's goal line, the opposing players may stand on their own goal line between the goal posts.
7. On free kicks taken within its penalty area by the defending team, all opposing players must be outside the penalty area and at least 10 yards away from the ball. The ball must travel outside the penalty area before being in play.

Section 14. Penalty Kick

1. A penalty kick is awarded if the defending team commits one of the direct free kick fouls in its own penalty area.
2. The penalty kick is taken from the penalty mark, which is centered 10 yards in front of the goal.
3. All players, except the kicker and the goalkeeper, must be outside the penalty area and at least 10 yards away from the penalty mark.
4. The goalkeeper must stand with both feet touching the goal line and must not move his feet until the ball is kicked.
5. The ball must be kicked forward, must travel the distance of its circumference before being in play, and may not be played by the kicker a second time before being touched by another player.
6. A goal may be scored directly on a penalty kick. For any violation of this rule:
 - A. If by the kicker, an indirect free kick is awarded the defending team.
 - B. If by the attacking team other than the kicker and goal results, the penalty kick shall be retaken.
 - C. If by the defending team and a goal does not result, the penalty kick shall be retaken.
7. Time shall be extended to allow a penalty kick to be taken.
8. No penalty kicks in the 5-6 Division.

Section 15. Throw In

1. A throw in is awarded if the ball passes completely over a touchline, either on the ground or in the air.
2. The ball is thrown in at the place where it crosses the line by a player of the team opposite to that of the player who last touched it.
3. The thrower must face the field and part of each foot must be on the ground either on the touchline or outside the field of play. The ball must be thrown with both hands and must be delivered from behind and over the head.
4. A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw in.
5. If the throw in is improper, a throw in from the same place shall be awarded to the opposing team. Exception 5-6 Division: the player will be allowed to make the throw in until it is correct.
6. The ball is in play immediately upon entering the playing field but may not be played by the thrower before being touched by another player.

Section 16. Goal Kick

1. A goal kick is awarded to the defending team if the ball passes completely over its goal line, outside the goal, after having last been touched by a player of the attacking team.
2. The goal kick is taken from any point within that half of the goal area nearest the place where the ball crossed the goal line.
3. All opposing players must be outside the penalty area.
4. The ball must travel outside the penalty area before being in play and may not be played by the kicker a second time before being touched by another player.
5. A goal cannot be scored direct from a goal kick.

6. If the ball does not travel outside the penalty area, the goal kick shall be retaken.
7. 5-6 Division only: All opposing players opposite of the team taking the goal kick must be positioned beyond the mid field line until the ball is kicked

Section 17. Corner Kick

1. A corner kick is awarded the attacking team if the ball passes completely over the defending team's goal line, outside the goal, after having last been touched by a player of the defending team.
2. The corner kick is taken from within the quarter circle next to the goal post nearest the place where the ball crossed the goal line.
3. All opposing players must be at least 10 yards away from the ball.
4. The ball must travel the distance of its circumference before being in play and may not be played by the kicker a second time before being touched by another player.
5. A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick.
6. If the kicker plays the ball before another player touches it, the opposing team shall be awarded an indirect free kick. For any other violation of this rule, the corner kick shall be retaken.

Section 18. Miscellaneous

1. No Slide tackling allowed.
2. No heading allowed.
3. In the event a referee is not present at a game, staff and coaches of each team shall referee the game or appoint someone by mutual consent.
4. No spectators will be allowed behind the goal lines or on the same side of the field as the teams during the course of the game. The referee shall halt the game to enforce this if necessary.
5. The team side of the field shall be divided into two equal areas separated by the midfield line. Each coach is responsible for keeping his team within his or her respective team area during the game. Teams are prohibited from standing on the spectator side of the field.
6. Only 2 team coaches will be allowed on the sideline during the game. They must have the proper photo ID badge at all times.
7. Any coach caught playing illegal players or adding players to their roster without prior approval from the league coordinator will be suspended for one year from coaching in all Kannapolis Park & Recreation Youth Athletic Leagues.

Section 19. Participation Rule

1. Every player shall play at least half of each game half, unless injury or related circumstances prevent such play. The coach shall notify the official and opposing coach if a player will be ineligible due to unexcused absenteeism from practice. Coaches caught not playing players will be warned by the League Coordinator first and relieved indefinitely of their duties if this action continues.

Section 20. Unsportsmanlike Conduct

1. Any player/coach who receives a yellow card during a game gets a warning. A second yellow card in the same game to a player results in that player being ejected for the remainder of that game.
2. Any player/coach who receives a red card during a game must sit out the remainder of that game plus the teams next game and practices for 1 week.
3. Any coach who receives a 2nd offense of a red card any time during the course of the season is subject to removal from coaching in all Kannapolis Parks and Recreation Youth Leagues for an indefinite period of time.
4. Any player, coach, or parent guilty of violent conduct or serious foul play, using profanity or foul language, or persistent infringement of the playing rules will not be tolerated. If anyone acts in this manner or participates in this activity will be subject to suspension.

Revised: January 2025