

RVSC



# Laws of the Game

As generally applied to Youth Soccer  
**Rancocas Valley Soccer Club**

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with material from US Soccer and FIFA*

## Youth Play Under Modified FIFA



- The Seventeen “Laws of the Game”.
- Modifications permitted for youth soccer:
  - *size of the field of play*
  - *size, weight and material of the ball*
  - *width between the goalposts and height of the crossbar from the ground*
  - *the duration of the periods of play*
  - *substitutions*
- The 17 Laws are further interpreted by official Decisions of the International Football Association Board (IFAB).
- In the United States, the USSF provides “Advice to Referees” which is binding.

# RVSC

## Law 1 – The Field of Play



- The side lines are called touch lines.
- The end lines are called goal lines.
- A Goal Area is in front of the Goal; the line parallel to the goal is called the Six.
- **Goal Kicks** are taken from anywhere on or inside the Goal Area; the kick is sometimes called a Six Kick.
- A Penalty Area extends out 18 yards from the Goal; the line parallel to the goal is called the Eighteen. Keepers may handle the ball within their own Penalty Area. Unlike indoor, they may not reach out of the PA to touch the ball.

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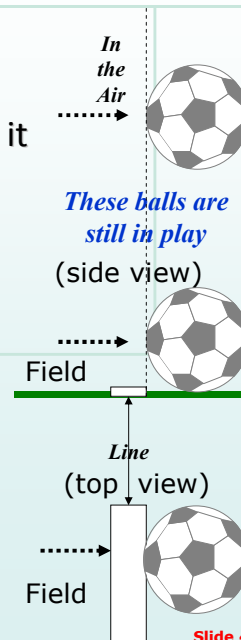
# RVSC

## Law 1 – The Field of Play



- All lines have the same property: the ball must completely cross the line to exit the area it is in and to enter the area to which it is going, in the air or on the ground. The line extends vertically into the air – a ball does not have to hit the ground to be out of play.

(e.g. to be a goal the ball must completely cross the goal line; to be out of play a ball must completely cross the touch line).

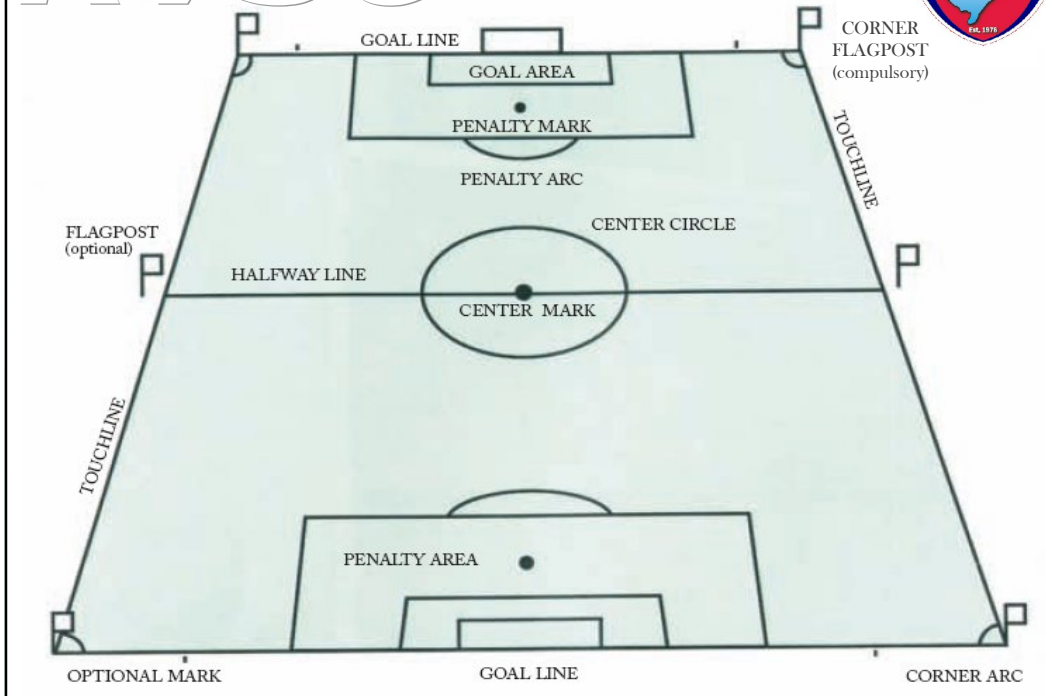
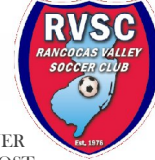


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Source: *FIFA Laws of the Game*

## Law 1 – The Field of Play



## Law 4 – The Players' Equipment



- You may not wear anything the Referee considers dangerous to you or other players; the Referee has the final word. No hoodies!
- You must wear the five "S's": Shirt, Shorts, Shin Guards, Socks, and Shoes.
- Goalkeepers must be distinguishable.
- If equipment is faulty, the player leaves the field until it is corrected.
- A child cannot be forced to take off earrings or a non-religious necklace – they just cannot play. Religious and medical symbols must be taped against the body.

## RVSC Law 5 – The Referee



- The soccer Referee is one of the most powerful officials in all of sports. He or she...
  - Enforces the Laws/Controls the match
  - Validates equipment and the field
  - Is the official and only timekeeper
  - Keeps/submits the only official match record
  - Starts and stops play
  - Decides when to take disciplinary action
  - Reacts to player injuries as required by the Laws of the Game
  - Determines who can be on the field and who can be on the sidelines

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## RVSC Law 5 – The Referee



- The Referee's determination of what constitutes a fact about the match is final, including fouls and goals scored.
- The Referee can decide to allow play to continue if the fouled team has Advantage, and may then whistle the foul if the advantage does not materialize.
- Coaches, Players and Parents may NOT question the judgment of the Referee; they must NEVER question the integrity of the Referee. The Referee is likely the only unbiased person present, whether you agree with the call or not.

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## RVSC Law 5 – The Referee



- A Referee has the authority to require anyone to be removed from the area of the field, even if it is public ground, before a match can proceed / continue.
- ***Uneven Referee quality is a match condition, like an uneven field surface or uneven coaching.***
- Just like new players and new coaches, new referees are learning at the recreation and lower travel soccer levels. Help them learn.
- **LAW 6 (Assistant Referees):** Volunteer Linesmen (parents) must NOT “coach” from their position! Parents must not coach at all!

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## RVSC Law 8 – Start and Restart of Play



- The winner of the Coin Toss before the start chooses the goal to attack, the loser kicks off – this is switched in the second half.
- On a Kick Off, the ball must **first** move forward (many Referees ignore a ball played backwards, but it should be a re-kick).
- The Kicker may not touch it again until it is touched by another player of either team.
- A Dropped Ball restarts play whenever it has been stopped for a reason that does not have a designated Restart (such as an injury).
- The **Referee** does not need both players or any players present to drop the ball.

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## RVSC Law 9 – Ball In and Out of Play



- The Ball is out of play when it **completely** crosses a boundary line or if the Referee stops play for any reason.
- It is in play at all other times, including rebounding into the field of play off goal posts, crossbars, corner flags, or the Referee on the field of play.
- A ball legally played that strikes the Referee and deflects into the Goal is a goal for the attacking team.

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## RVSC Law 11 – Offside (not “Offsides”)



- Offside is not well understood by coaches, players, and parents (and some Referees).
- An Offside **offense** has **two** components:
  - Being in an Offside **position**.
  - Actively involved in the play at the moment the ball is played.
- Actively involved is defined as a Player, **in the opinion of the Referee**:
  - Interfering with play.
  - Interfering with an opponent.
  - Gaining unfair advantage by being in the Offside position.

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## Law 11 - Offside



- A Player is in an Offside position when nearer to the opponent's goal line than both the ball and the second-to-last Defender (2LD) in the opponent's half of the field.
- The last two defenders are normally the goal keeper and a field player, but it can be two field players when the keeper moves away from the goal line.
- It is **NOT** an Offside **offense** when in an Offside **position** to receive the ball from
  - a Goal Kick
  - a Throw-In
  - a Corner Kick

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## Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct



- A Direct Free Kick (DFK) or Penalty Kick (PK) is awarded for these offenses:
  - During tackle, making contact first with opponent
  - Holding an opponent (does not require a “grab”)
  - Spitting at opponent
  - Handling the ball **deliberately** (except GK in PA)
- And if done, in the opinion of the Referee, **carelessly, recklessly, or with excessive force:**
  - Kicking or attempting to kick opponent
  - Tripping or attempting to trip opponent
  - Jumping at an opponent
  - Charging an opponent
  - Striking or attempting to strike opponent
  - Pushing an opponent

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## RVSC Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct



- An Indirect Free Kick (IFK) is awarded if the goal keeper commits these inside the PA:
  - Keeps hand possession of the ball for more than six seconds – bouncing is still possession.
  - Touches the ball again with hands after releasing it before another player touches it.
  - Touches the ball with hands after ball is **deliberately** kicked by a teammate.
  - Touches the ball with hands after direct throw-in to goal keeper by a teammate.

*Within the Laws, “deliberately” is not a synonym for “intentionally”. Deliberately means that the player made a choice to do something, even if the **result** was not intentional.*

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## RVSC Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct



- An Indirect Free Kick (IFK) is awarded if a player, in the opinion of the Referee:
  - Plays in a dangerous manner.
  - Impedes the progress of an opponent.
  - Prevents the goal keeper from releasing the ball from his or her hands.
  - Commits any other offense, not specifically mentioned in Law 12, for which play is stopped to Caution or Dismiss a Player.
- A Direct Free Kick or an Indirect Free Kick is taken at the place where the offense occurred; a Penalty Kick is taken from the Penalty Mark.

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## RVSC Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct




- Disciplinary Sanctions  
Yellow and Red Cards  
- The Referee can impose card sanctions from anytime after arrival at the field until he or she leaves.
- General Rule for Fouls (Misconduct):
  - Careless (potential unsporting) – no card
  - Reckless (unsporting) – Yellow Card 
  - Serious Foul Play (violent) – Red Card 
- Most youth soccer leagues permit issuing cards to coaches to document their misbehavior. The Laws do not **require** a card in order to warn or dismiss a coach.

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## RVSC Law 12 – 7 Cautionable Offenses




- A Player receives a Yellow Card  for the following offenses:
  - Unsporting Behavior.
  - **Dissent by Word or Action** (Disagreeing with a call, as opposed to asking for an explanation).
  - Persistent Infringement of the Laws.
  - Delaying a Restart.
  - Failing to Respect the Required Distance.
  - Entering or Re-entering Field without Permission of the Referee (not as likely with unlimited subs).
  - Deliberately Leaving the Field without Permission of the Referee (also unlikely with unlimited subs).

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## RVSC Law 12 – 7 Sending-Off Offenses



- A Player receives a **Red Card** and is **dismissed\*** for the following offenses: 
  - Serious Foul Play (*playing the ball*).
  - Violent Conduct (*away from the ball*).
  - Spitting at Anyone.
  - Denying an Obvious Goal-Scoring Opportunity by Illegal Handling the ball.
  - Denying an Obvious Goal-Scoring Opportunity with a Direct Free Kick/Penalty Kick Foul.
  - Offensive, Insulting, or Abusive Language or Gestures (OffInAbus).
  - Receiving a Second **Yellow Card** in Match. 

\* *The team plays short provided there are still sufficient players as required by the Laws/Competition Authority.*

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## RVSC Law 13 – Free Kicks



- The ball must be stationary.
- The kicking player cannot touch the ball a second time before another player does.
- Direct Free Kick (DFK)
  - Directly into opponent's goal is a Goal.
  - Directly into own goal is a Corner Kick for the opponents.
- Indirect Free Kick (IFK)
  - Directly into opponent's goal is a **Goal Kick**.
  - Directly into own goal is a Corner Kick for the opponents.

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## Law 13 – Free Kicks



- The Referee will raise his or her hand for an Indirect FK and keep it raised until a second player touches the ball or it goes out of play.
- For either Free Kick to Defending Team inside its own Penalty Area
  - Opponents must be AT LEAST ten yards away. They do not have to be asked (cautionable offense).
  - Opponents must be outside of Penalty Area.
  - The ball must leave the Penalty Area before it can be touched by a second player.
  - Defensive Free Kick inside the Goal Area can be taken from anywhere inside the Goal Area (like a goal kick).

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# RVSC

## Law 13 – Free Kicks



- For Indirect Free Kick to Attacking Team inside opponent's Penalty Area
  - Opponents must be AT LEAST ten yards away or lined up ON the goal line between the posts.
  - If the offense occurred within the goal area, then the kick is taken on the six yard line closest to the point of the infringement.
  - Make a defensive wall on the goal line between the posts, but you must keep your arms down (handling would be a red card)!
- Per USSF ATR a tap on the top of the ball is **no longer** to be considered the "first touch". The ball must be "**kicked and moved**".

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## RVSC Law 13 – Free Kicks



- Free Kicks Outside the Penalty Area
  - Taken at point of infringement.
  - Opponents must be AT LEAST ten yards away.
  - You do not have to wait for opponents to move ten yards (unless you have asked the Referee for ten yards – called a Ceremonial Restart).
  - The ball is in play as soon as it moves.
- Direct Free Kicks for the Attacking Team inside the PA result in a Penalty Kick.
- Infringements of the Free Kick Law will result in a re-kick for the kicking team or in a Direct or Indirect Free Kick for the opponent, depending on the situation.

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## RVSC Law 14 – The Penalty Kick



- A Penalty Kick is awarded against a team committing a Direct Free Kick offense inside its own Penalty Area.
- If a Penalty Kick is awarded at the end of a regulation or extra-time period, the period is extended for the taking of the Penalty Kick.
- The ball is placed on the Penalty Mark and the kicking player is identified.
- The goal keeper must remain on the goal line between the goal posts until the ball is kicked.

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## RVSC Law 14 – The Penalty Kick



- All other players must be outside the Penalty Area, at least ten yards from the Penalty Mark (outside the Penalty Arc), and behind the Penalty Mark (no closer to the goal line).
- The Referee must signal when the Penalty Kick can be taken (ceremonial restart).
- The ball must be kicked forward.
- The kicking player may not touch the ball again until it is touched by another player (the kicker cannot first touch a ball that rebounds off the goal post or crossbar).

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## RVSC Law 15 – The Throw-in



- A throw-in is awarded when the entire ball crosses a touch line out of play.
- It is awarded to the opponent of the last team to touch the ball, **as determined by the Referee.**
- The ball is delivered with both feet on the ground, with two hands, from behind and over the head.
- Defenders must stand back two yards from the thrower.
- The thrower may not touch the ball until it is touched by another player.

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## Law 15 – The Throw-in



- A goal cannot be scored directly from a Throw-in, untouched by any other player.
- The Offside Law is not in effect during a Throw-in.
- An infringement of the proper throwing technique results in a Throw-in for the opponent (instruction/guidance for U8/U9).
- If the thrower is the first to touch the ball after it enters play, it results in a Direct Free Kick (if handled) for the opponent, otherwise an Indirect Free Kick.

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## Law 15 – The Throw-in



- If the thrown ball crosses the touch line into play in the air, but then curves back across the touch line still in the air, a Throw-in is awarded to the opponent (In and Out).
- If the thrown ball never completely crosses the touch line, it is retaken (Never In). This is unlike high school, where this is a foul throw.
- An intentional throw at an opponent's head will result in a **yellow** or **red** card.
- An opponent that fails to give 2 yards or impedes the Thrower shall be cautioned.
- One or both of the thrower's feet may be on the touch line; neither foot may be completely inside.

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## RVSC Law 15 – The Throw-in



- The thrower should release the ball within one yard of where the ball went out of play.
- When club linesmen (volunteer parents) are used, they should **only** indicate direction if asked by the Referee.
- Many Throw-ins are a toss-up (two players kick the ball at the same time). The Referee's role is to get the call right if possible, but most importantly to maintain control of the match and restart it without wasting time.

*A throw-in is just a way to restart the match  
(at lower levels the defenders win a majority of throw-ins.)*

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## RVSC Law 17 – The Corner Kick



- Whenever a ball is sent completely across the goal line by the Defending Team and it does not result in a goal by definition of Law 10, it results in a Corner Kick.
- A goal can score directly off a Corner Kick.
- The Offside Law is not in effect on the kick.
- The kick is taken on or inside the corner arc as designated by the Referee.
- The kicker may not touch the ball again before it is touched by another player.
- The ball is in play when it is touched and moves.

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## Other Guidelines



- **The Referee's Motto**  
**"Aliquando falsum, semper certum"**  
(Sometimes Wrong, Always Certain)
- **USFS Advice to Referees 5.5 (Trifling Infractions):**  
"The Laws of the Game are intended to provide that games should be played with as little interference as possible ... whistling for trifling and doubtful breaches produces bad feeling..."
- **Purpose of Youth Soccer:**  
Provide a structured and safe program to learn the game of soccer and the enjoyment of sports.  
*Adults yelling at referees or children (theirs or others) is neither structured nor safe.*  
Tell your parents – **"Don't yell at anyone!"**

Don't forget **Law 18: "Common Sense"**

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## Myths of the Game



- It is a foul when the ball strikes a player's hand or arm (**it is not** – the handling must be deliberate).
- Coaches are entitled to "work the referee" to their advantage (**they are not** – they should be dismissed if they try).
- Parents are allowed to shout instructions to their players (they should not) and "corrective advice" (dissent) to the referee (**they must not**).
- Coaches are allowed to scream instructions (they should not) and insults (**they are not**) at their players.
- Defenders do not have to give ten yards on a free kick unless asked (**they must move away** as soon as the foul is called).
- Throw-ins are critical tactical points in a match (**they are not** – they're just a way to restart the match!)
- You cannot kick the ball while you are on the ground (**you may** if not dangerous to yourself or an opponent).
- Every trip, push, hold, bump etc. is a foul and must be called (**they are not** and should not). Don't forget **Law 0: the Laws of Physics!** Some players fall down when fairly charged.

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