

NERRC YOUTH INDOOR SOCCER
Rules of Play and League Administration Guidelines
Updated November 2023

Game Rules
Referee's, Parents, Coaches, & Commissioner's

1. Northeast Regional Recreation Center (NERRC) Indoor Soccer League (NISL) matches shall be played in accord with the United States Indoor Soccer Association Rules of Play, conformed as necessary for use at NERRC. An abridged version of the Rules of Play appears below.
2. Field of play:
 - a. U8 divisions play exclusively on Field #2. U10 divisions play on both Field #1 or Field #2. Divisions U12 and up play exclusively on Field #1.
3. Ball:
 - a. U8 Size 3 Ball
 - b. U10-U12 Size 4 Ball
 - c. U14 and High School- Size 5 Ball
4. Time Duration:
 - a. A regulation game consists of two halves each lasting twenty-two (22) minutes and a 3-minute half time. The clock will start at game time.
 - b. Each team will be allowed one time out per game consisting of 30 seconds. The clock will stop during the timeout. A team may request time out only when its goalkeeper is in possession of the ball or when there is a stoppage in play and the team will possess the ball after the stoppage. Ties are a permissible result for a match, and no overtime shall be played.
 - c. For each match, forfeit time is five minutes after the scheduled start time.
5. The players equipment:
 - a. Players shall wear their team's uniform, consisting of jerseys of the same colors (no duplicate numbers will be allowed), shin guards, and indoor footwear. Tennis shoes, indoor/turf shoes are permissible, NO CLEATS.
 - b. Players are prohibited from playing with any hard cast (even padded), ANY hard hair accessories along with any piecing's and/or jewelry. The only exception to this rule will be a medical alert necklace which can be tapped to the chest under their jersey.
 - c. The goalie Jersey must be a different color from all other players.
 - d. If two teams have similar colors, the home team will be asked to wear an alternate color. If the home team does not have an alternate color, the visiting team will be asked to wear an alternate color. If neither team has an alternate jersey, NISL will supply contrasting pinnies available upon request from NERRC staff and to be worn by the home team.
6. The players:
 - a. Including the goalkeeper, teams U14 and below will play 7v7 with a minimum of 5 players. Teams U16 and above will play 6v6 with a minimum of 4.
 - i. Substitutions. Each team may substitute players freely, players must substitute off the field of play within 3 feet of the door.
 - ii. Guaranteed substitutions
 1. Ball hitting net
 2. Injury stoppage
 - b. Fouls are NOT guaranteed substitutions

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- 7. Referees:**
 - a. Paid officials will be used for all league games.
 - b. The decisions of the referee are final.
 - c. Referees must change their jersey as to be different from either team
- 8. Spectators and Fans:**
 - a. Spectators need to be on the opposite side of the field as the player they came to support. This means at no time during the game spectators from either team will be on the same sideline as the coach.
- 9. No one other than the coaches and uniformed players are permitted in the team box. No more than three (3) coaches will be allowed in the team box at one time during any game. All others must be seated or standing in the spectators' area.**
 - a. For U8 divisions only, a maximum of one coach per team is permitted on the field of play and may offer tactical instruction. U8 Coaches must remain by the bench when on the playing field.
 - b. All coaches, and all volunteers must have completed a background check within the current year.
- 10. In order to encourage fair competition and discourage coaches from running up the score:**
 - a. U14 and under, if a team trails by five goals or more, the team may add an additional field player until such time as the team trails by four goals or less.
 - b. High School teams, the leading team must pull 1 starting player until such time as the team that trails by four goals or less.
- 11. Team Rosters, Player Eligibility**
 - a. Only players registered with one of the participating recreation council soccer programs are eligible to participate.
 - b. Players may play up one age group. Players may not play down one or more age groups.
 - c. Subject to applicable age group limitations, girls may play on a team in the boys' division. Boys may not play on girls' teams.
 - d. No player may be rostered with or play for more than one team within the same age bracket/ or same gender.
 - e. The primary focus of the NERRC Youth Indoor Soccer League is upon facilitating recreational, as opposed to travel or club, play. Each team roster shall be limited to four travel or club players per team, and each team shall limit the number of travel or club players on the field at any one time to not more than two. Travel or club players are those players carded for play through USYSA, SAY, US Club, or any other like organization.
- 12. The start and restart of play-**
 - a. A Kickoff from the Center Mark starts play at the beginning of each Half and after every goal. A player who starts play may not again play the ball until it touches another player. The Home Team takes the Kickoff for the First Half Kickoff, and the Visiting Team takes the Kickoff for the Second Half. The referee shall designate the teams' defensive ends. Teams shall switch defensive ends at the half.
 - b. Restarts take place by a Kickoff, Free Kick, Goalkeeper Distribution, or Dropped Ball. Other than for Kickoffs or as provided below, Restarts occur within three feet from the spot of the ball at the moment of stoppage

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- c. A team receives a Free Kick after stoppages other than when a Dropped Ball or Goalkeeper Distribution is required.

13. Scoring:

- a. A team scores a goal when the whole of the ball legally passes over the Goal Line. A goal may be scored directly from a Kickoff or Restart.

14. Fouls and other violations:

- a. A Foul occurs and a free kick is awarded if a player intentionally:
 - i. Holds an opponent.
 - ii. Intentionally handles the ball (except by the Goalkeeper within his Penalty Arch);
 - iii. Plays in a dangerous manner;
 - iv. Slide tackles an opponent;
 - v. Impedes the progress of an opponent ("Obstruction"), or
 - vi. Prevents the Goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his hands;
 - vii. Kicks an opponent;
 - viii. Trips an opponent;
 - ix. Jumps at an opponent;
 - x. Charges an opponent;
 - xi. Strikes or elbows an opponent; or
 - xii. Pushes an opponent.
 - xiii. Leverage: Using the body of a teammate or any part of the field to gain an advantage.
 - xiv. Encroachment: Entering the protected area of an opposing player taking a Free Kick (after initial Warning);
 - xv. Dissent: (i) Protesting verbally or nonverbally against a referee's decision; or (ii) Breach of Penalty Area Decorum; and
 - xvi. Other: Behavior which, in the referee's discretion, does not warrant another category of penalty (e.g., taunting, foul language).

15. The Officials use blue, yellow and red card(s) to communicate to players and coaches. The definitions of the cards are as follows:

- a. Blue Card(s): officials will use a blue card to indicate serious fouls. A blue card may be given for the following, but not limited to;
 - i. Goalkeeper Endangerment;
 - ii. Boarding; and
 - iii. Team Violations
- b. Yellow Card(s): Officials may issue Yellow Card for reckless Fouls and offenses. A yellow card may be given for the following, but not limited to;
 - i. Second Blue Card;
 - ii. Unsporting Behavior by any non-player personnel;
 - iii. Provoking Altercation: Making physical contact with an opponent (e.g., pushing or poking), short of fighting, or using the ball in so doing.

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- c. Red card(s): An official will issue a red card for fouls and offenses described directly above, which the referee considers violent or involving use of excessive force. A red card may be given for the following, but not limited to;
 - i. Receipt of a Third Time Penalty;
 - ii. Elbowing: Intentionally elbowing an opponent above the shoulder;
 - iii. Vicious Slide Tackling: A tackle from the side or from behind directly into one or both legs of an opponent, seriously endangering him;
 - iv. Fighting;
 - v. Leaving Team Bench or Penalty Area to engage in a fracas or confrontation with the opposition or a game official;
 - vi. Extreme Unsporting Behavior: Committing particularly despicable behavior, including: (i) Spitting at an opponent or any other person; (ii) Persistent use of extremely abusive language or behavior toward a game official; (iii) Bodily contact with a game official in dissent.
 - vii. Coaches and players receiving a red card do not have to leave the building but must leave the team box area and go to the lobby of NERRC.
 - viii. Those receiving a red card will serve a one game suspension for the team's next scheduled game.
 - ix. NERRC staff reserves the right to enforce NERRC's house rules regarding behavior and may assess penalties above and beyond those assessed by the NISL. Both the League Board and NERRC staff reserve the right to review material occurrences involving the league and assess or modify penalties.
 - x. Any person involved in an act of violence will be escorted from the building. Any player or coach involved in any pre-game, game time, or post-game altercations or implied act of violence will be suspended from participating in future games. The NISL maintains a zero-tolerance policy with regard to acts of violence. No player or coach will be allowed to return until an investigation is completed and decision rendered by the League Board. All decisions of the League Board are final.

16. Time Penalties:

- a. Blue Card: Two-minute Releasable Time Penalty for a goal (served in the Penalty Area);
- b. Administrative Yellow Card (for a player's second Blue Card): Two-minute Releasable when a goal is scored or after two-minutes Time Penalty for a second carded offense.
- c. Straight Yellow Card- two-minute releasable Time Penalty or goal scored; (this is considered to be 2 blue cards.
- d. Administrative Red Card (for a player's third Blue Card): Two-minute Non-releasable Time Penalty and ejection;
- e. Straight Red Card: Five-minute Non-releasable Time Penalty and ejection.
- f. Time Penalties either expire prior to their completed countdown, or have the beginning of their countdowns delayed in the following instance:
 - i. Power Play Goal: If a team is scored upon having fewer players on the field of play, due to one or more players serving Releasable Time Penalties, a player from the team is released from the Penalty Area into the field of play, unless

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otherwise prohibited, and the player's Penalty or Penalties are wiped out. If the team has two players in the Penalty Area, only the player whose Time Penalty or Penalties are recorded earlier is affected.

- ii. Multiple Penalties: If two teammates are serving Time Penalties when another teammate is penalized, his Time Penalty does not begin to count down until at least one of the teammates' Time Penalties has expired and his Time Penalty is next to begin.
 - iii. Simultaneous Ejections: When two simultaneous Red Cards carrying the same Time Penalties are assessed to opposing players, their Time Penalties are not served.
 - iv. Maximum Time Penalty: No player may receive more than 5 minutes for penalties arising at the same time on the game clock, irrespective of the number or nature of accumulated offenses or the fact that one or more teammates may be designated to serve such time.
 - v. End of Game: All Time Penalties carry over between periods and expire at the end of the game.
- g.** Short-Handed Play: For each Time Penalty being served by a player, his team plays with one fewer field player until expiration of the penalty; provided that a team may not have fewer than the minimum required, regardless of the number serving Time Penalties. Should a player receive a Time Penalty, while two or more teammates are already in the Penalty Area, his team continues to play with the minimum while he joins his teammates in the Penalty Area. If a goal is scored ONLY the first blue card player is released
- h.** Teams shall designate a player to serve time penalties of their team, their Goalkeeper, non-player personnel, and of teammates who receive a yellow card. Players shall serve Time Penalties seated, until the expiration of the penalty, and until released by the referee.

17. Delayed Penalty:

- a.** instances where the referee would issue a Blue Card or a Yellow Card, but for the Advantage Rule, he may acknowledge the offense by holding the Card above his head until the earlier to occur of the following:
 - i. Opponent's Possession: The team of the offending player gains control of the ball;
 - ii. Stoppage: The referee stops play for any reason.
- b.** After play is next stopped, the offense is recorded and assessed, as customary. In the event of a power play goal, the Time Penalty is not served and the provisions above regarding early release from the Penalty Area remain applicable.

18. Advantage Rule:

- a.** The referee allows play to continue, notwithstanding the commission of an offense, when the team against which it has been committed will benefit from an existing offensive advantage.

19. Free kicks:

- a.** The ball must be placed at the point on infraction. *Except when:*

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- i. Within Own Penalty Arch: from any spot therein.
 - ii. Within Opponent's Penalty Arch: at the Free Kick Mark ("Top of the Arch").
 - iii. Delayed Penalty: (i) according to the ensuing stoppage, as normally administered, or (ii) in case the defending team obtains possession of the ball during play, at the spot of the original offense.
 - iv. Kick-In: from the point on the Touch Line nearest where the ball crossed over the Perimeter Wall.
 - v. Three-Line Violation: from the offending team's Restart Mark.
 - vi. Superstructure Violation: from the Restart Mark nearer to where the ball was last played.
- b.** Opposing players must at least 15 feet from the spot of the kick. If the spot is within 15 feet of their goal, along the goal line.
- c.** The ball must not be rolling.
- d.** The ball must clearly move.
- 20. Penalty Kicks:**
- a.** A Penalty Kick is awarded for the following Fouls committed by a defender in his or her defensive half of the field;
 - i. A Foul within the Penalty Arch or Goal for which he receives a Time Penalty;
 - ii. A Foul from behind against an attacking player, having control of the ball and one or no defensive players between himself and the Goal; and
 - iii. Any Foul where he or she is the last player on the team between the attacking player with the ball and the Goal.
 - b.** Any player may take the Penalty Kick;
 - i. All players of both the attacking team and the defending team stand on or behind the restraining line nearest the attacking goal;
 - ii. The ball is placed at the Free-Kick Mark nearer the attacking goal;
 - iii. The Goalkeeper has both feet on his goal line, facing the kicker, until the ball is in play; and
 - iv. After the Penalty kick is taken, the play is immediately ruled dead after the PK is scored, missed or saved by the Goalkeeper.
 - v. If a penalty kick is awarded and time runs out in either half, the penalty kick is taken between only the kicker and the goalkeeper. All players except for the kicker and goalkeeper are precluded from active involvement and there can be no opportunity for the kicker to score from any rebound.
- 21. Goalkeeper(s):**
- a.** May not touch the ball with their hands when a teammate has last kicked it. except that he may handle a ball which a teammate passes to him by the head, chest, or knee and without "trickery" (the use of a wall or foot to flick the ball to a head, chest, or knee before making the pass);
 - b.** Bring the ball from outside of the Penalty Arch to his hand within it, or receiving the ball again after a Goalkeeper Distribution without the ball's having first touched another player;

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- c. May not control the ball with his/her hand inside of his Penalty Arch for over five (5) seconds.
 - d. Are allowed to use their hands and arms to play the ball within the penalty area only.
 - e. NISL will not use the over and back rule, that is, a goalkeeper may receive at his or her feet a pass back from a teammate at any time. As noted above, slide tackles are prohibited.
- 22. In and out play:**
- a. If a ball which crosses an end perimeter wall was last touched by an attacking player, play restarts with a Goalkeeper Distribution.
 - b. If lasted touched by a defensive player, it will be a corner kick.
- 23. Three-Line Violation**
- a. A Three-Line Violation occurs when any player propels the ball in the air across the two Red Lines and the Halfway Line toward the opponent's Goal without touching the Perimeter Wall, another player, or a referee on the field of play.
- 24. Heading the ball:**
- a. Consistent with U.S. Youth Soccer mandates, heading is prohibited for players participating in age groups U10 and under. For ages U12 and above, there is no restriction on heading.
 - i. If a player in a U10 or younger match deliberately touches the ball with the player's head during a match, the opposing side will be awarded a direct free kick, with the conduct of the kick in accordance with Rule 7 above, that is, from the spot of the infraction unless the infraction occurs inside the player's own penalty area, in which event the kick will be taken from the Free Kick Mark (the Top of the Arch).
 - ii. If a player in a U10 or younger match unintentionally touches the ball with the player's head during a match, the referee will stop play and restart play with a indirect dropped ball to the opposing team. The dropped ball will be held at the spot of the infraction unless the infraction occurs inside the player's own penalty area, in which event the dropped ball will be taken from the Free Kick Mark (the Top of the Arch).
- 25. Early Termination of a Match:**
- a. A match is deemed complete if at least one full half has been played.
 - b. If a game is terminated early by the referee due to unruly fan, coach, or player behavior, or if a team cannot field the minimum number of players required to continue, the following steps will be used to determine the outcome:
 - i. The offending team, whether ahead, tied, or behind, receives a loss, and the opponent (non-offending team) is awarded a win;
 - ii. If the referee ends the match based on the unruly or offensive behavior of both teams, both teams receive a loss.

Parents, Coaches, & Commissioner's

- 1. NERRC staff shall oversee the day-to-day administration of the league. Formal questions concerning league administration may be addressed to NERRC's Community Supervisor,

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currently, Laura Swinson at lswinson@baltimorecountymd.gov. Representatives from each of participating councils, acting as a group (collectively, the “League Board”), shall provide overall guidance for the league. From time to time, the League Board may delegate its authority to act to an executive committee consisting of not fewer than three representatives.

2. NERRC Facility rules:
 - a. Off of the field, both ball playing and running are prohibited
 - b. All Children must be supervised
 - c. Smoking is prohibited in the building
 - d. Noise makers (e.g., air horns, cowbells, whistles, et.) are prohibited in the facility
 - e. Alcoholic beverages are strictly prohibited inside and, on the facility, grounds outside of the facility.
3. Inclement Weather:
 - a. Every attempt will be made to provide advance notice for games canceled due to inclement weather. The following protocols will apply.
 - b. Weekdays – All activities scheduled for the afternoon and evening will be cancelled if Baltimore County Public Schools are closed for the day or before regular dismissal time.
 - c. Weekends and Holidays – In the event of a severe weather event, programs will be cancelled whenever the snow emergency plan is in effect for Baltimore County. Please check the Baltimore County Government Website <http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov> for the "snow emergency plan" notice.
 - d. Re-opening: If a closing occurred on a weekend or holiday, recreation programs may re-open provided that
 - i. (i) the snow emergency plan has been lifted, AND
 - ii. (ii) the local full-time recreation and park staff has received approval to re-open the site.
 - e. NERRC staff will endeavor to post information concerning the status of the facility on the NERRC indoor soccer league web site. Participants may also contact the NERRC office at 410-887-5374 to determine the status of the facility
4. Code Of conduct:
 - a. By their registration for play in the league or by their attendance at youth sporting events at NERRC, Coaches, Parents, Guardians, and Adults otherwise attending NERRC youth sporting events agree that they will uphold the highest standards of behavior and agree specifically as follows:
 - i. I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches, and officials at every game, practice, or other youth sports event.
 - ii. I will place the emotional and physical well being of the children ahead of a personal desire to win.
 - iii. I will insist that my child play in a safe and healthy environment.
 - iv. I will support coaches and officials working with my child, in order to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.
 - v. I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol, and will refrain from their use at all youth sports events.

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- vi. I will remember that the game is for youth, not for adults.
- vii. I will do my very best to make youth sports fun for my child.
- viii. I will ask my child to treat other players, coaches, fans, and officials, with respect regardless of race, sex, creed, or ability.