**Unity Youth Soccer Rules**

**The Field**

Soccer is played by two teams on a rectangular field approximately the size of a football field. Smaller fields may be used for younger players. The game is played in two halves of equal length. The length of each half is determined by the age of the children playing.

**Player Equipment**

* Teams will be provided with jersey tops. Please, wear neutral short colors. Shin guards are required during all practices and games and are the responsibility of the participant. Jewelry may not be worn during games or practices.
* Soccer balls will be provided: U4=Size 3 U6=Size 3 U8=Size 4 U10/12=Size 5

**The Team**

Each team will field no more than 5 players during game play, one of whom must be the goalkeeper. As long as each team has the same number of players on the field and the coaches agree, the number of players can be adjusted.

**Positions**

* Goalkeeper - The goalkeeper is responsible for guarding his or her team’s goal and preventing the other team from scoring and can throw or punt the ball. Goalkeepers may not pass the midfield line. If this takes place the opposing goalkeeper will be granted possession of the ball and no goal will be granted.
* Defenders - The defender’s primary duty is to prevent the opponent from making a good shot at the goal. This player also works to gain possession of the ball and pass it to a teammate for an attack.
* Midfielders - The midfielder plays a "transitional" game from defense to offense and vice versa. Usually, the midfielder is the most active player on the field and key to maintaining team continuity.
* Forwards (or Strikers) - The forward’s primary responsibilities are to score and assist the midfield in shifting play from defense to offense.

It’s important to keep in mind that any player on a team may score a goal, regardless of position.

**Game Play**

Referees: Coaches are responsible for officiating games and his/her decisions regarding facts connected with play are final. No scores are collected.

Time

* U4: Two eight-minute halves with a five-minute halftime.
* U6: Two ten-minute halves with a five-minute halftime.
* U9 & U12: Two twelve-minute halves with a five-minute halftime.

Substitutions: Teams may sub at will while always trying to ensure equal playing time.

Kickoff:

* The home team (left column on the schedule) receives the kick-off.
* To start the game or the second half, and after each goal, a kickoff is taken from the center circle.
* Each team must stay on its own half of the field and the defending players must be at least 10 feet from the ball during kick-off.
* After a goal is scored, the team that made the goal will kickoff to the other team.
* The visiting team will receive the kick-off in the 2nd half.

Tie Game: In the event of a tie between two teams after the game is complete, the game will be declared a tie.

Offsides: There are no offsides.

Throw-In

* After the ball has completely crossed the side boundary lines–called touch lines–a throw-in is awarded against the team that last touched the ball. The throw-in is taken from where the ball left the field and must be thrown with two hands from behind and over the head, while both feet are on the ground on or behind the touch line.

Free Direct Kicks:

**An unopposed direct kick taken by a player to restart play after an opposition player commits a foul. A player must take a free direct kick from the exact location where the foul occurred, and the play does not restart until the ball clearly moves. All other players during a free direct kick must start at least 10 feet from the location of the ball.**

Corner Kick:

This kick is taken by the attacking team each time the ball is kicked by the defense over its own goal line without a goal being scored. The ball is placed within the three-foot arc in the corner of the field (nearest to where the ball went out of play) and kicked into play by the attacking team.

Free Kicks/Dead Ball Situations:

All opponents must be at least 5 yards from the ball until it is in play. Penalty kicks- If a foul occurs in the penalty area, a penalty kick will be rewarded and placed on the penalty mark. All other players must be outside the penalty area behind the penalty mark.

Heading:

Heading is unique to the game of soccer. When a ball is too high to kick, players "head" the ball to pass to a teammate or score a goal. This skill is not allowed due to the risk of concussion.

Fouls:

The following fouls will result in a direct free kick and from which a goal may be directly scored against the opponents.

* Kicking or attempting to kick an opponent.
* Pushing an opponent.
* Tripping or attempting to trip an opponent.
* Tackling an opponent and making contact with the opponent before the ball.
* Handling the ball deliberately (except for the goalkeepers within their own penalty areas).
* Preventing the Goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his/her hands.
* Goalkeeper Offenses
* Touches the ball again with their hands after it has been released from his possession and before it has touched another player.
* Touches the ball with their hands when the ball is deliberately kicked to the goalkeeper by a teammate.
* Touches the ball with their hands after receiving it directly from a throw-in taken by a teammate.