



EASTERN REGION JUNIOR SOCCER ASSOCIATION
(ERJSA)

Game Day Rules

Club and Coach Resource

January 2025

Table of Contents

BACKGROUND AND PHILOSOPHY	3
WHAT WE VALUE	3
GAME LEADERS.....	4
AGE GROUP SUMMARY	5
Ground Markings.....	5
RULES THAT APPLY TO ALL AGE GROUPS	6
ERJSA U5-U7 GROUND MARKINGS AND GAME RULES.....	7
Start of play and after a goal is scored.....	7
Ball crossing the sideline.....	7
Ball crossing the endline (goal line)	7
Offside	7
Fouls and misconduct.....	7
Ground Markings.....	8
ERJSA U8-U9 GROUND MARKINGS AND GAME RULES.....	9
Start of play and after a goal is scored.....	9
Ball crossing the sideline.....	9
Ball crossing the endline (goal line)	9
Goalkeeper.....	9
Offside	10
Fouls and misconduct.....	10
Ground Markings.....	10
ERJSA U10-U11 GROUND MARKINGS AND GAME RULES.....	11
Start of play and after a goal is scored.....	11
Ball crossing the sideline.....	11
Ball crossing the endline (goal line)	11
Goalkeeper.....	11
Offside	12
Fouls and misconduct.....	12
Ground Markings.....	12
ERJSA U12 GROUND MARKINGS AND GAME RULES	13
APPENDIX 1 - GROUND MARKINGS U5-U7	14
APPENDIX 2 - GROUND MARKINGS U8-U9	15
APPENDIX 3 - GROUND MARKINGS U10-U12	16

BACKGROUND AND PHILOSOPHY

The Eastern Region Junior Soccer Association (ERJSA) is an independent sports association that has evolved from school-based clubs and competitions. ERJSA is a volunteer run organising body that typically arranges a 14-round participation-based winter soccer season with the support of its member clubs for children aged 4 to 12.

To register, players must register with our clubs directly. Any child from any locality can play for one of our clubs if space is available. Most clubs in our competition are independently run incorporated bodies that maintain close ties to one or more schools in their geographic location, all of which are currently located on the eastern shore in Hobart, Tasmania.

By application, ERJSA also remains open to new clubs or schools that wish to join our competition. ERJSA runs regular committee meetings each year and requires clubs to send a representative to participate in the conversation and decision-making process.

We have observed that most sporting bodies mostly only cater for the top percentages of children with programs that are aimed at being the best that can be. Our focus is instead to create a social environment open to children of all abilities. Time has shown us that the most common obstacles for children wanting to play team sports include overly competitive environments, too much pressure being placed on volunteers, mismatched expectations, and children who are just a little more switched on for their age, or are simply fast, create inequitable situations that lead to reduced participation and increased disharmony around grounds.

We adopt the approach that even on game day, we are all learning and must work together. Many of our clubs are not able to train during the week and in many cases the children (and sometimes coaches) are still learning the rules on game day.

Therefore our philosophy is not to train the best of the best, but to adapt the national rules to allow for ongoing learning. In doing so we aim to create an environment where players, game leaders, coaches, managers, and spectators all feel safe, have an enjoyable time, and do not take it too seriously, all while attempting to manage the games and leagues for some healthy competition.

The small changes we make have shown that players get more kicks, they start passing more, they are better able to make better decisions with less pressure, they start to function better as a team, while progressively learning the rules across the age groups in a way that will set them up for future success should they continue into more competitive environments.

Our environment is not perfect, and it never will be, but we are proud of the work and adjustments we have made over the last several years where we have seen significantly increased participation with great atmospheres around our games.

WHAT WE VALUE

Our primary focus is on building a fun inclusive environment where children of all abilities can come together to play with their friends and have fun playing a team sport.

- be Friendly
- be Understanding
- create a Nurturing learning environment

GAME LEADERS

One game leader controls each half. The other coach may remain on the ground to help organise in U5-U7. In U8-U9 we support this during the initial games of the season with the aim that after a few games only one game leader will then remain on the ground. Coaches may swap the game leader role at half time.

The game leader can be a club official, parent, older child/player, or beginner referee and should always be enthusiastic and approachable but importantly they must be under the supervision of a responsible person (WWVP registered) that is registered by the club for the team that they belong to.

The key roles of the Game Leader is to keep the game moving fluently, limiting stoppages, and assisting players with match re-starts. Importantly, they must make every effort to create an environment where all players have fun and are learning the game with maximum involvement.

We do not encourage over coaching however we request coaches remain aware of their responsibilities and remind players of key rules while slowing the game when needed to allow players to appropriately drop back and form a defense in line with the different age group rules.

Most importantly, remember the children are learning the game – be flexible and patient.

The Game Leader should:

- Read these rules and guidelines.
- Have a copy to hand if needed to clarify any confusion.
- Understand the differences for each age group.
- Exercise discretion when fouls occur by accident or reflex.
- Allow throw ins to be taken again in the event of a foul throw after a quick demonstration.
- Encourage all children to have fun and different children to take re-starts of play.
- Ensure the correct number of players are on the field.
- Discourage players from permanently over-guarding the goal.
- Check all players are wearing shin guards on the inside of their socks.
- Conduct a ground inspection before the game to ensure that it is safe to play on.
- Encourage children to dribble or pass to team mates rather than kick the ball long.
- Ensure team officials and parents create a safe, enjoyable, and positive playing environment for the children.
- If it cannot be determined who last played the ball before it went out of play, play defender advantage.
- Encourage children to be involved in all aspects of the game, attacking and defending.
- Award free kicks as appropriate to help children learn the rules and consequences of committing fouls.
- Explain the rules to players and why a free kick has been awarded.
- 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.

Examples of fouls and misconduct are:

- Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent.
- Trips or attempts to trip an opponent.
- Jumps at an opponent.
- Charges at an opponent.
- Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent.
- Pushes an opponent.
- Tackles an opponent from behind to gain possession of the ball.
- Unfair contact with an opponent before touching the ball.
- Holds an opponent.
- Spits at an opponent.
- Handles the ball deliberately.
- Swearing of any kind.
- Any denigrating comment to another player including those related to appearance, gender, race, ability, or sledging of any kind.
- Plays in a dangerous manner.
- Unfairly impeding the progress of a player.

Game leaders are encouraged to undertake a free MiniRoos course typically offered at the start of the season by Football Tasmania in addition to the Game Day course run by ERJSA.

AGE GROUP SUMMARY

Our game day rules are an adjusted format that are based on the official Miniroos National Playing Formats and Rules. This is background for your information only and you should NOT refer to the Miniroos rules for ERJSA game day.

	U5-U7	U8-U9	U10-12
Number of players	4 players per team on ground (no goalkeeper) Maximum 7 players per team (3 subs)	7 players per team (including a goalkeeper) Maximum 11 players per team (4 subs)	9 players per team (including a goalkeeper) Maximum 14 players per team (5 subs)
Field of play (approximate)	Length: 30m Width: 20m	Length: 40-50m Width: 30-40m	Length: 60-70m Width: 40-50m
Penalty area (approximate)	No penalty area	5m deep x 12m wide	10m deep x 20m wide
Goal size (approximate)	2m wide x 1m high	3m wide x 2m high	5m wide x 2m high
Ball size	Size 3	Size 3	Size 4
Game duration	2 x 15-minute halves (5-minute half time break)	2 x 20-minute halves (5-minute half time break)	2 x 25-minute halves (5-minute half time break)

Ground Markings

See Appendix 1, 2, and 3.

RULES THAT APPLY TO ALL AGE GROUPS

- Onside/Offside
 - Attackers must always be in line with the last defender (onside) unless they have the ball at their feet or are running onto a through ball. All coaches have a duty to watch for this, work together, and immediately call players back.
 - When coaches and the game leaders monitor teams appropriately, players will be called to move back in line with the last defender and therefore should never be in offside positions.
 - Play should not be stopped if a player is offside nor should a free kick be given, except in U12's as detailed in the relevant section.
 - We prefer not to use the terms offside and onside with children, simply explain 'be in line with the last defender'. Offside is a technical rule that most adults do not properly comprehend, and therefore we simplify this for better effect.
 - If a player is standing in their own defensive half of a ground, they are always considered to be onside.
 - Coaches should never train their team to 'test' the defence or the game leader by pushing the boundaries of where the last defender is.
 - It is important to remember that all our game leaders and coaches are volunteers, and they need to be supported when out in the middle of a ground by the coaches on the sidelines who can see things they cannot, whilst also supporting the game leader's decision, even when they get it wrong.
- Substitutions
 - Players may be rotated on and off the field at any time when a ball goes out of play or there is another stoppage that occurs.
 - Equal playing time should be provided to children regardless of age, gender, and/or ability.
- No slide tackles are allowed.
- Players may not stand inside the goals or block them.
- Match results are not recorded.
- 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, a goal is scored when the ball passes between the cones without touching them, below shoulder height of the player.
- Shin guards must be worn underneath socks by all players without exception.
- Concussion - any player suspected of suffering from concussion should be examined by a medical practitioner before returning to play. As a general rule; 'If in doubt, sit it out'.
- Swearing by players is not allowed. Game leaders should exercise discretion in situ, however as a general rule, swearing because of being hurt should result in a warning, with any further offence or deliberate swearing being reflected by sending the player off for 5 minutes on the bench.

ERJSA U5-U7 GROUND MARKINGS AND GAME RULES

U5-U7	
Number of players	4 players per team on ground (no goalkeeper) Maximum 7 players per team (3 subs)
Field of play (approximate)	Length: 30m Width: 20m
Penalty area (approximate)	No penalty area
Goal size (approximate)	2m wide x 1m high
Ball size	Size 3
Game duration	2 x 15-minute halves (5-minute half time break)

Start of play and after a goal is scored

Team that is kicking off, or the team that has had a goal scored against them, start from the middle of the ground. Pass to another player after the whistle has blown.

All opponents must retreat to the line that is 4m in front of their own goal and can move once the ball has been kicked.

Ball crossing the sideline

There is no throw in. A player from the opposing team to the player that touched the ball last before crossing the sideline will place the ball on the line closest to where it went out and pass the ball into play. The kick in does not need to be taken until the opponents drop back, see below.

All opponents must immediately drop back 5m in a line across the ground toward their own goal. Play may resume once this has occurred.

The ball must touch a teammate before a goal can be scored.

Ball crossing the end line (goal line)

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 the ball into play.

All opponents must retreat to the half-way line and can move once the ball has been kicked. The ball must touch a teammate before a goal can be scored.

Offside

Offside goals are counted however please see the Onside/Offside rules that apply to all age groups. If this occurs, coaches and game leaders should immediately take responsibility for allowing this to happen and remind players to not go past the last defender unless they have the ball or they are running towards a ball that has already passed beyond the last defender.

Fouls and misconduct

Indirect free kicks are awarded for all acts of handball or fouls and misconduct. Opponents must be at least 5m away in a line across the ground when the indirect free kick is taken. An indirect free kick is where a goal can be scored ONLY if the ball subsequently touches another 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. Free kicks should be awarded as appropriate.

Ground Markings

See Appendix 1.

ERJSA U8-U9 GROUND MARKINGS AND GAME RULES

U8-U9	
Number of players	7 players per team (including a goalkeeper) Maximum 11 players per team (4 subs)
Field of play (approximate)	Length: 40-50m Width: 30-40m
Penalty area (approximate)	5m deep x 12m wide
Goal size (approximate)	3m wide x 2m high
Ball size	Size 3
Game duration	2 x 20-minute halves (5-minute half time break)

Start of play and after a goal is scored

Team that is kicking off, or the team that has had a goal scored against them, start from the middle of the ground. Pass to another player after the whistle has blown.

All opponents must retreat to be behind the line that is 4m back from the halfway line and can move once the ball has been kicked.

Ball crossing the sideline

A player from the opposing team to the player that touched the ball last before crossing the sideline will take a throw in. The throw in does not need to be taken until the opponents drop back, see below.

All opponents must immediately drop back 5m in a line across the ground toward their own goal. Play may resume once this has occurred.

The ball must touch another player before a goal can be scored.

Ball crossing the end line (goal line)

Defending team last touched the ball – corner kick.

- All opponents must be 5m from the ball until it is kicked.

Attacking team last touched the ball – goal kick.

- The goalkeeper or another player of their team may place the ball anywhere inside the box (penalty area). The ball must be at rest before being kicked.
- All opponents must retreat to the first line past the halfway line inside the defenders half and can move once the ball has been kicked.

Goalkeeper

The goalkeeper is allowed to handle the ball anywhere in the box (penalty area). To restart play after a save or gathering the ball with their hands, the ball must be thrown or rolled from the hands or played from the ground with their feet. The goalkeeper should do this within 6 seconds of the other team dropping back to the appropriate line. The goalkeeper may keep the ball until the other team has dropped back.

The goalkeeper is not allowed to kick or drop kick the ball directly from their hands. The ball is in play the moment the goalkeeper kicks or throws the ball.

If the goalkeeper has a hand on the ball, it is in their possession. Players should not attempt to kick a ball out of the goalkeepers hands. If this occurs a free kick should be awarded to the keeper and a warning given to the player committing the foul.

Offside

Offside goals are counted however please see the Onside/Offside rules that apply to all age groups. If this occurs, coaches and game leaders should immediately take responsibility for allowing this to happen and remind players to not go past the last defender unless they have the ball, or they are running towards a ball that has already passed beyond the last defender.

Fouls and misconduct

Indirect free kicks are awarded for all acts of handball or fouls and misconduct. Opponents must be at least 5m away in a line across the ground when the indirect free kick is taken. An indirect free kick is where a goal can be scored ONLY if the ball subsequently touches another player before it enters the goal.

For deliberate or serious acts of handball or fouls and misconduct that occur within the keepers box (penalty area), a penalty kick is awarded from an 8m penalty mark with only a goalkeeper in position. Game leaders should step out 8 long strides and should not rely on any ground marking that designates this position. All other players must be outside the penalty area and be at least 5m behind the penalty mark.

Ground Markings

See Appendix 2.

ERJSA U10-U11 GROUND MARKINGS AND GAME RULES

U10-11	
Number of players	9 players per team (including a goalkeeper)
Field of play (approximate)	Maximum 14 players per team (5 subs)
Penalty area (approximate)	Length: 60-70m
Goal size (approximate)	Width: 40-50m
Ball size	10m deep x 20m wide
Game duration	2 x 25-minute halves (5-minute half time break)

Start of play and after a goal is scored

Team that is kicking off, or the team that has had a goal scored against them, start from the middle of the ground. Pass to another player after the whistle has blown.

All opponents must be in their own half of the ground and outside of the centre circle and can move once the ball has been kicked.

Ball crossing the sideline

A player from the opposing team to the player that touched the ball last before crossing the sideline will take a throw in. The throw in can be immediately taken.

All opponents must drop back 5m (semi-circle) around where the throw in will be taken. If they fail to do this and interfere with a quick throw in, the throw in may be taken again.

The ball must touch another player before a goal can be scored.

Ball crossing the end line (goal line)

Defending team last touched the ball – corner kick.

- All opponents must be 5m from the ball until it is kicked.

Attacking team last touched the ball – goal kick.

- The goalkeeper or another player of their team may place the ball anywhere inside the box (penalty area). The ball must be at rest before being kicked.
- All opponents must be 10m back from the penalty area and play should not resume until this occurs.

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 ball must be thrown or rolled from the hands or played from the ground with their feet. The goalkeeper should do this within 6 seconds of the other team dropping back 10m outside of the penalty area. The goalkeeper may keep the ball until the other team has dropped back.

The goalkeeper is not allowed to kick or drop kick the ball directly from their hands. The ball is in play the moment the goalkeeper kicks or throws the ball.

If the goalkeeper has a hand on the ball, it is in their possession. Players should not attempt to kick a ball out of the goalkeepers hands. If this occurs a free kick should be awarded to the keeper and a warning given to the player committing the foul.

Offside

Offside goals are counted however please see the Onside/Offside rules that apply to all age groups. If this occurs, coaches and game leaders should immediately take responsibility for allowing this to happen and remind players to not go past the last defender unless they have the ball or they are running towards a ball that has already passed beyond the last defender.

Fouls and misconduct

Indirect free kicks are awarded for all acts of handball or fouls and misconduct. Opponents must be at least 5m away in a line across the ground when the indirect free kick is taken. An indirect free kick is where a goal can be scored ONLY if the ball subsequently touches another player before it enters the goal.

For deliberate or serious acts of handball or fouls and misconduct that occur within the keepers box (penalty area), a penalty kick is awarded from an 8m penalty mark with only a goalkeeper in position. Game leaders should step out 8 long strides and should not rely on any ground marking that designates this position. All other players must be outside the penalty area and be at least 5m behind the penalty mark.

Ground Markings

See Appendix 3.

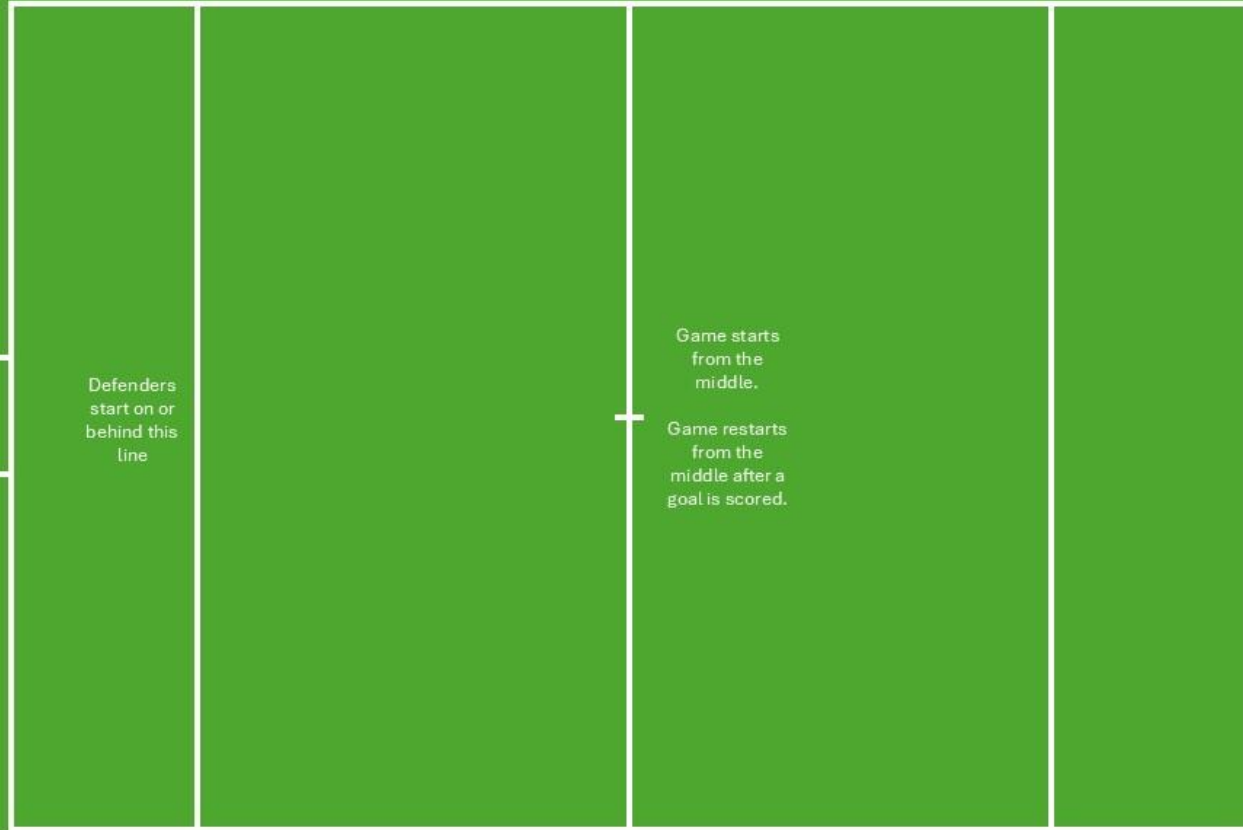
ERJSA U12 GROUND MARKINGS AND GAME RULES

See rules for U10-11 with one exception, offside goals are no longer counted in the U12 age group. Play may be stopped, and a free kick given to the defending team when a player receives a ball and is offside. The game leader may also allow play to continue and call out 'play it back' rather than stopping the game. If this occurs and the player who was offside passes the ball back to a player who is onside, then play continues.

APPENDIX 1 - GROUND MARKINGS U5-U7



Ground Markings U5-U7



When the ball goes over the back line it is always a defender's kick back in.

All attackers must retreat to the halfway line and the kick does not need to be taken until they do.

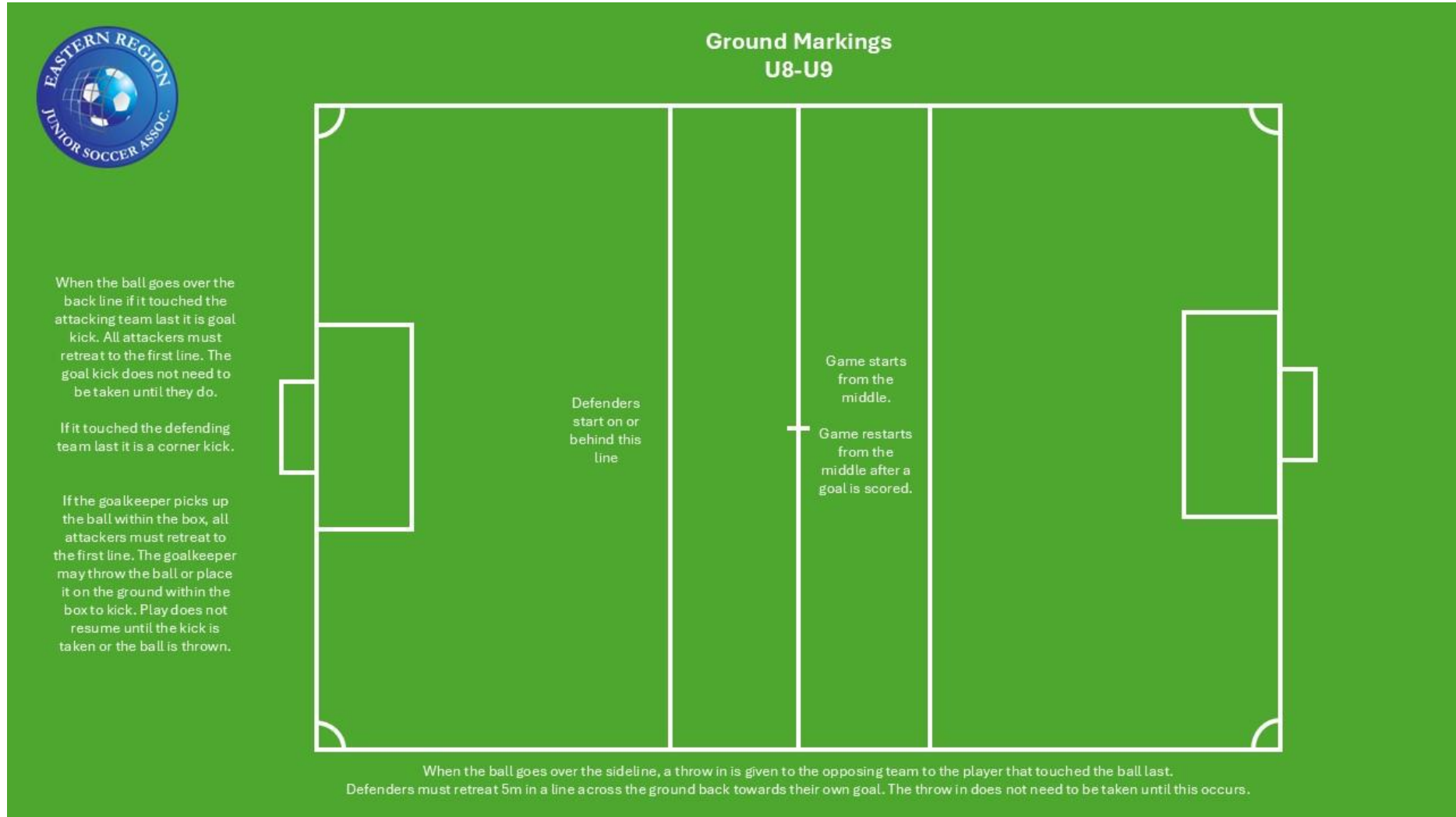
Defenders start on or behind this line

Game starts from the middle.

Game restarts from the middle after a goal is scored.

When the ball goes over the sideline, a kick in is given to the opposing team to the player that touched the ball last. Players may not dribble the ball back in. Defenders must retreat 5m in a line across the ground back towards their own goal. The throw in does not need to be taken until this occurs.

APPENDIX 2 - GROUND MARKINGS U8-U9



APPENDIX 3 - GROUND MARKINGS U10-U12

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Ground Markings U10-U12

When the ball goes over the back line, if it touched the attacking team last, it is a goal kick. All attackers must retreat 10m. The goal kick does not need to be taken until they do.

If it touched the defending team last, it is a corner kick.

If the goalkeeper picks up the ball within the box, all attackers must retreat 10m. The goalkeeper may throw the ball or place it on the ground within the box to kick. Play resumes the moment the ball is thrown or placed on the ground.

Defenders start outside the circle inside their own half of the ground up to the halfway line.

Game starts from the middle.

Game restarts from the middle after a goal is scored.

When the ball goes over the sideline, a throw in is given to the opposing team to the player that touched the ball last. The defending must retreat 5m back from the throw. This may be in a semi circle and does not need to be towards their own goal.