



## **b. Equipment & Field Specifications by Division**

### **i. 3v3 game format (Ages 4-6)**

- Size of Ball: Size 3
- 25-35 yards (length)
- 15-25 yards (width)
- Goals should be no larger than 4 feet (height) x 6 feet (width)
- Corner flags are not needed, cones can be used

### **ii. 4v4 game format (Ages 7-8):**

- Size of Ball: Size 3
- 25-35 yards (length)
- 15-25 yards (width)
- Goals should be no larger than 4 feet (height) x 6 feet (width)
- Corner flags are not needed, cones can be used

### **iii. 7v7 game format (Ages 9-12):**

- Size of Ball: Size 4
- 55-65 yards (length)
- 35-45 yards (width)
- Goals should be no larger than 6.5 feet (height) x 18.5 feet (width)
- A 6.5 feet (height) x 12 feet (width) goal is recommended based on the age and ability of the players

### **iv. 9v9 game format (Ages 13-14):**

- Size of Ball: Size 4 recommended, size 5 optional
- 70-80 yards (length)
- 45-55 yards (width)
- Goals should be no larger than 7 feet (height) x 21 feet (width)
- A 6.5 feet (height) x 18.5 feet (width) goal is recommended based on the age and ability of the players

### **v. 11v11 game format:**

- Size of Ball: Size 4 recommended, size 5 optional
- 100-130 yards (length)
- 50-100 yards (width)
- Goals should be no larger than 8 feet (height) x 24 feet (width)



### c. Game Format & Structure

#### i. Small-Sided Games

- Small-sided games are part of U.S. Soccer Player Development Initiatives to provide an age-appropriate environment for players. Standards below are aligned with physiological needs of players based on year of birth.

#### ii. Game Format by Age Group

- League operators shall offer the following game formats per age:

Age Group	Recommended Game Format	Players on the Field
4-6 Years Old	3 vs 3	3 field players, no goalkeeper
7-8 Years Old	4 vs 4	4 field players, no goalkeeper
9-10 Years Old	7 vs 7	6 field players and 1 goalkeeper
11-12 Years Old	7 vs 7 (9v9 permitted)	6 field players and 1 goalkeeper
13-14 Years Old	9 vs 9 (11v11 permitted)	8 field players and 1 goalkeeper

#### iii. Game Length

Age Group	Time Periods	Period Length	Breaks	Added Time
Ages 4-6 (3v3 Format)	4 quarters	No more than 10-minute quarters	5-minute breaks between quarters	No added time
Ages 7-8 (4v4 Format)	4 quarters	No more than 10-minute quarters	5-minute breaks between quarters	No added time
Ages 9-12 (7v7 Format)	2 halves	25-minute halves	10-minute halftime	No added time
Ages 13-14 (9v9 Format)	2 halves	30-minute halves	10-minute halftime	No added time
(11v11 Format)	2 halves	35-minute halves	10-minute halftime	Stoppage time added



#### **d. Substitutions**

- Substitutions are unlimited and can occur at any stoppage of the game.
- Head Injury Substitution: All substitutions relating to head injury shall be handled in compliance with the Concussion Protocol outlined in the MLS GO handbook.

#### **e. Developmental Standards**

##### **i. Concussion Initiative**

- Heading of the ball is banned for all players 11 years old and younger.
- Consistent with U.S. Concussion Initiative, if a player is suspected to have a head injury the referee (coaches and parents in 3v3 and 4v4 game format) is instructed to stop play to allow for treatment/evaluation as needed.
- If the player leaves the field of play for additional evaluation, a substitution can be made in that moment.
- The player with the suspected head injury may not return to the game unless a Health Care Professional (HCP) or Certified Athletic Trainer (CAT) has cleared the player.
- Any coach or parent insisting on returning the player to the game without approved clearance will result in the referee ending the game.
- If a player heads the ball in a game, whether deliberately or accidentally, an indirect free kick should be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense.
- If a header occurs within the goal area, the indirect free kick should be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the nearest point to where the infringement occurred.
- In a controlled and individual environment (where heading is an isolated skill being taught away from any form of opposition or other aspects of the game), the use of lightweight balls (foam, balloon, etc.) would be acceptable for teaching heading technique.

##### **ii. Build-Out Line**

- The purpose of the build-out line is to allow players more time and space with the ball at their feet near their own goal (to build out of the back in a less pressured setting). MLS GO recommends a build-out line be used for 3v3, 4v4, and 7v7 game formats.



### **Ages 4-6 (3v3 Game Format) and Ages 7-8 (4v4 Game Format):**

- The build-out line should be 5-7 yards from the goal line.
- Prior to a goal kick, the opposing team must move behind the build-out line.
- Once the opposing team is behind the build-out line, play can restart.
- After the ball is put into play, the opposing team can cross the build-out line and play resumes as normal.
- Quick restarts: Ideally, the player taking the goal kick will wait to put the ball into play once all opponents are past the build out line. However, the player can put the ball into play sooner, but he or she does so accepting the positioning of the opponents and the consequences of how play resumes.
- If a player from the opposing team crosses the build-out line before the ball is put into play, the goal kick is retaken.

### **Ages 9-12 (7v7 game format):**

- The build-out lines should be equidistant between the penalty area line and halfway line.
- Prior to a goal kick or once the goalkeeper has the ball in his or her hands, the opposing team must move behind the build-out line until the ball is put into play.
- Quick restarts: Ideally, the goalkeeper will wait to put the ball into play once all opponents are past the build out line. However, the goalkeeper can put the ball into play sooner, but he or she does so accepting the positioning of the opponents and the consequences of how play resumes.
- If a player from the opposing team crosses the build-out line before the goalkeeper puts the ball into play and interferes with play, an indirect free kick is given to the goalkeeper's team.
- The build-out line will also be used to denote where offside offenses can be called.

## **f. Laws of the Game & Modified Rules**

### **i. Laws of the Game**

- Unless otherwise provided in the MLS GO Rulebook or Handbook, all games shall be played in accordance with the Laws of the Game enforced at the time of the MLS GO Competition and as promulgated by the International Football Association Board, which can be found [here](#).



ii. Modified Laws of the Game

**Ages 4-6 (3v3 Game Format):**

- Kick-offs, free kicks, throw-ins, goal kicks, and corner kicks are used to start or restart play.
- Kick-ins and/or dribble-ins are recommended as restarts when the ball has gone out over the sidelines.
- If field markings are absent, goal kicks and corner kicks should be taken in the general vicinity of the respective goal or corner.
- If used, all free kicks are indirect.
- Opponents should be 10 feet away from the ball on all restarts.
- No penalty kicks.
- No offside

**Ages 7-8 (4v4 Game Format):**

- Kick-offs, free kicks, throw-ins, goal kicks and corner kicks are used to start or restart play.
- Kick-ins and/or dribble-ins are recommended as restarts when the ball has gone out over the sidelines.
- If field markings are absent, goal kicks and corner kicks should be taken in the general vicinity of the respective goal or corner.
- If used, all free kicks are indirect.
- Opponents should be 10 feet away from the ball on all restarts.
- No penalty kicks.
- No offsides.

**Ages 9-12 (7v7 Game Format):**

- Game may not start or continue if there are less than 5 players on a team.
- No punts or drop kicks are allowed by the goalkeeper.
- All other laws of the game should be followed.

**Ages 13-14 (9v9 Game Format)**

- Game may not start or continue if there are less than 6 players on a team.
- All other laws of the game should be followed.



## **g. Sideline Requirements**

- i. MLS GO recommends no more than two (2) to three (3) coaches are allowed on the bench. Coaches shall not enter the field of play unless requested by the referee.
- ii. The top/left team on the schedule shall be the home team. The bottom/right team on the schedule shall be the visiting team. During games, teams will sit on the same sidelines opposite from parents and bystanders. If standing on the sideline and facing the field, the home team will sit on the left half sideline/bench and the visiting team will sit on the right.
- iii. The bench area is reserved for Players and Coaches only. Any person in the bench area during an MLS GO game must be registered as a coach/volunteer and be in compliance with the documentation requirements under the MLS GO Handbook. At least one (1) person age eighteen (18) or older must be on the bench at all times.

## **h. Referees**

- i. Registered and certified referees are not needed for ages 4-8 (3v3 & 4v4 Game Formats). Coaches are expected to manage the game environment from the touchline using the standards of play outlined in this rulebook.
- ii. For 7v7 game format (ages 9-12) one (1) center referee is required. For 9v9 game format one (1) center referee is required. Where possible, a two (2) man referee system is preferred. MLS GO recommends all referees have a U.S. Soccer Grassroots Referee license.
- iii. Referees should officiate in accordance with the current version of the MLS GO Rulebook. Referees should facilitate a fair, fun, and safe game for the players by enforcing and applying the Laws of the Game. Referees shall officiate keeping player safety as the main priority.
- iv. Referees should exemplify professional appearance. Referees should wear a distinguishable shirt, preferably a referee specific shirt.



### **i. Respect of Officials**

- i. Referee's Decisions: No Protests may be made about the referee's decisions regarding facts connected with play; such decisions are final.

### **j. Pre-game Rules**

- ii. A minimum of fifteen (15) minutes of warm-up time should be allowed on the playing field. If less than fifteen (15) minutes is permitted, there should be adequate warmup space outside of the playing field.

### **k. Post-game Rules**

- i. Coaches are expected to create and promote good sportsmanship. At the conclusion of each match, players and coaches will shake hands and thank the referee.

