

Rule Changes:

1. Goal Kicks can be taken from anywhere within the Penalty Box and defensive team must retreat to their half of the field.
2. Institute Law FIFA Law 11- Off-sides

Why Institute these changes?

We believe applying changes to these two rules/laws will create a much better environment for the children to develop while enhancing their enjoyment of the game.

Rule Change #1- Goal Kicks can be taken from anywhere within the Penalty Box and defensive team must retreat to their half of the field.



Diagram 1



Diagram 2

As currently constituted (Diagram 1), the most dangerous opportunity in a 6v6 game to concede a goal is on your own goal kick. This couldn't have been the intention of the rule makers when the laws of the game were implemented. We have decided to implement a rule unique to 6v6 soccer that the opposition needs to retreat back to their own half of the field when a goal kick is taken.

The reasoning behind this is threefold:

1. To prevent teams from flooding the area around the penalty box in an effort to press the opponent in hopes of scoring goals off of a young player's inability to knock a ball over distance.
2. By introducing a restraining line (half-field/Diagram 2) it should encourage teams to "build out of the back". Allowing for a margin of error since the opposition isn't immediately on top of the player receiving the ball should enhance that players confidence to make a productive decision with the ball and enhance his/her overall development down the road.
3. By moving the ball further forward (anywhere inside the penalty box/ Diagram 2), both teams potential level of development is increased. It will force the opposition to travel a greater distance once they gain possession to score a goal while at the same time give the team who took the goal kick the opportunity to "recover" or "transition" once they've conceded possession.

Rule Change #2- Institute FIFA Law 11- Off-sides

Rule 11- A player is in an **off-side position** if he/she is nearer to his/her opponents' goal line than both the ball and the second to last opponent. (In almost all cases the opposition goal keeper will be one of the two opponents keeping a player on-side)

A player is not in an off-side position if:

- S/He is in his own half of the field of play
- S/He is level with the second to last opponent
- S/He is level with the last two opponents

Off-side Offence/Violation- A player in an off-side position is only penalized if, at the moment the ball touches or is played by one of his team, he is, in the opinion of the referee, involved in active play by:

- Interfering with play
- Interfering with an opponent
- Gaining an advantage by being in that position

No Off-side Offence/Violation- The off-side law is not applicable when a player receives the ball from:

- A goal kick
- A throw-in
- A corner kick

If a player is deemed to be off-sides by the referee the opposing team is rewarded an indirect free kick from the place where the violation occurred.

With regards to the law of off-sides, our **concern doesn't lie with the player that is a few yards off-sides**, but that without enforcing Law 11 it is impossible to eliminate the tendency of some coaches (that are result, not developmentally oriented) to place a goal hanger that is 20 yards off-side. This "poacher" has a dramatic impact on the overall experience and development of youth players.

Diagram 1 “The Poacher”



In Diagram 1 we see the common sight of the goal hanger/poacher. This player is disconnected from his/her teammates and very rarely has the opportunity to make decisions on the ball that will further their development long term. They may score a goal or two over the course of the match simply due to being the player closest to the opposition’s goal, but they spend most of the match waiting for a ball to slip behind the backline to pounce upon and score a goal. This player may excel at the under 10 level, but will have been stifled in his/her development long term since they have learned almost none of the skills required to play the game as the rules progress at the 8v8 level.

One other item to recognize in the diagram 1 is red’s “ball oriented” defending. This defensive shape is ideal for player development in that the players have moved as a group to “stay connected” and “take space” as a unit. They are in great position to support one another when they regain possession. Regretfully, the presence of the poacher due to the lack of Law 11 causes most teams to defend as pictured in Diagram 2.

Diagram 2 “Defending the Poacher”



One of the most important development considerations for young players is learning spacial awareness (not necessarily positions) in relation to the ball, their teammates, and the opposition. The absence of Law 11 can often lead to man to man marking all over the field (pictured in Diagram 2). As a result, this has the negative impact of becoming too stretched defensively all over the field. Not only does this dramatically impact the concept of a covering 2nd defender, but it also creates a situation where players become too disconnected from one another to offer proper support when in possession of the ball.

Zero Tolerance:

With the introduction of Law 11 to the 6v6 format, we will need to be even more diligent in our support of the Zero Tolerance Rule. The referee is often the only neutral participant in the event. They are often young and inexperienced, but they provide a necessary service to our clubs and the league. Mistakes will be made and decisions we don't agree with will take place, but as coaches (and parents) we need to respect the referee's decisions and, as my college coach used to say, "Get on with it". The BAYS league has a **Zero Tolerance Rule** that states:

No one, except the players, is to speak to the referee during or after the game. Exceptions: Coaches may ask questions before the game, call for substitutions and point out emergencies during the game, or respond to the referee if addressed.

*Absolutely no disputing calls, during or after the game, no remarks to the referee to watch certain players or attend to rough play. **NO YELLING** at the referee, **EVER**, and no criticism, sarcasm, harassment, intimidation, or feedback of any kind during or after the game.*

Conclusion:

As the rules of the 6v6 game format are currently constituted, teams that attempt to play a game in which players move about the field in a connected fashion are often punished by teams that are result oriented. Our deepest concern is for the volunteer coach that has "bought in" and supports our clubs mission of development, but continually receives pressure from parents that see other teams hanging the forward high or keeping the defense deep to beat their sons' and daughters teams. Even the best of our coaches can often cave to the pressure of not rotating players and possibly change the formation to "win a game". Kids although developing well individually and collectively can become frustrated and discouraged since adults often can't see beyond the result. We firmly believe that with the introduction of the off-side law (really eliminating the poacher), along with the revised goal kick, being implemented the impact will be tremendously positive.

For the betterment of the game and the children's development we have decided to take the progressive steps of adding these two rule changes to the 6v6 game segment in Lexington.