

Three Bridges Soccer Group



U10 – U12 Playing Rules | Fall 2026

Revision 1.4.1: August 28, 2026

The Three Bridges Soccer Group (TBSG) is fully committed to providing a friendly, positive, supportive atmosphere for all participants.

Coaches are strongly encouraged to read and to understand these rules.

Part 1: Home Teams

Home teams are listed first on the schedule and are responsible for the following:

- A. Contacting the visiting team's coach no later than the Wednesday prior to the match. The home team coach will confirm field location, directions, etc. with the visiting coach, including if there has been a cancellation.
- B. Confirming the conditions of the grounds, proper field markings, nets, and corner flags.
- C. Changing to an alternate-colored jersey or using pinnies when uniform colors are similar. Home teams are encouraged to play in their dark kit. Visiting teams play in their light kit.
- D. Providing a printed, prepared game card to the center referee. Game cards are printed from GotSport.
- E. Retrieving the completed game card from the referee after the game (unless there has been a send-off or a dismissal) and retain the record for the rest of the regular season.
- F. Providing at least three (3) fully inflated game balls of the appropriate size. One ball shall be placed behind each end line, adjacent to the goal.
- G. Where conditions allow, the home team will have preference to which side of the field will be the home side for their team and spectators. Unless agreed to by both teams, the visiting team and spectators must use the opposite side of the field.
Note: When space or safety considerations do not allow for the teams to occupy opposites sides of the field, the home team will designate which side both teams and their spectators will occupy. Spectators are encouraged to sit between their team and the respective end line.

Part 2: Head Coaches for Both Teams

On game day, both coaches are responsible for the following:

- A. All TBSG U10-U12 Coaches shall have an approved TBSG Coach Pass. Each TBSG member club may create their own pass, but all passes will have coach name, team name, current playing season year and a photo of the coach. Coach passes will be presented to the referee at player check in. Additional information regarding the Coach and Players Passes appears in Section C of TBSG Rules & Regulations.
- B. Each coach shall verify the game time, location, and directions to the field by checking the website before the scheduled game.
- C. Both coaches are expected to have the games start on time. Any team delaying the start of a scheduled game by more than fifteen (15) minutes without sanction of the proper authority shall forfeit the game by a score of 1-0.



- D. Coaches shall behave respectfully towards the game officials, the opposing coaches, visiting players, and their families.
- E. Coaches shall be responsible for the behavior of their teams and spectators. Please refer to each respective club's Code of Conduct.

Note: The referee may stop the game to warn coaches and, if necessary, may terminate the game if the problem persists. Coaches may be dismissed by the referee without warning by showing the coach a RED CARD. If a coach is dismissed, the game may continue only if there is an official (registered, approved) assistant coach or other approved coach to continue coaching. If no official coaches are available, the game will be terminated and be scored as a forfeiture. Final disposition of dismissed coaches will be determined by the Penalties and Discipline Committee (PAD). In the event of a sendoff or dismissal, coaches shall notify their respective Club Manager/President within twenty-four (24) hours.

- F. The team official shall report the final game score within 48 hours to the scheduling website.
- G. Coaching shall only be allowed from within the technical area, that is, the area bounded by lines tangent to the center circle, perpendicular to the touchline. Instructing players is only to be done by official (listed on the official team roster or in possession of a valid coach pass) coaches. Coaches are not allowed to coach from behind the goal line. During active gameplay, only registered coaches are allowed in the bench area. Coaches shall stay at least 3 feet from the touchline to allow the assistant referee a clear view down the field.
- H. A player injury occurring during a match will be reported to their respective club management. Should a coach be required to retrieve a player following an injury or suspected injury, that player shall sit out from game play until the player condition can be assessed.
- I. Coaches may not use voice amplification devices during the match.
- J. No artificial noise making devices (e.g., canned air horns) are allowed, except for medically prescribed vocal enhancers. Those using the device may be asked to leave the field by the referee or head coach. Cowbells are encouraged. Sad trombone sounds are discouraged.
- K. Coaches must respect and accept a referee's decision regarding injuries, including concussions.
- L. Coaches are responsible for their team's trash – please pick up after your team and spectators.
- M. Coaches and referees are encouraged to meet immediately prior to each game to discuss expectations and to specify special ground rules mandated by field conditions at the time of the game, should they be required.
- N. Coaches shall comply with concussion protocols.

Part 3: Both Teams – Players

- A. **ROSTER SIZE:** In accordance with TBSG regulations, a U10 team roster is limited to no more than 13 players, and a U12 team roster is limited to no more than 15 players. No more than those numbers shall be present on the sideline during a match.
- B. **PLAYER PASS/ROSTER:** TBSG teams can use either player passes or rosters/game cards for game check-in. All rostered players shall be identifiable by a photo printed on either the passes or roster sheet. Players not properly rostered with an accompanying photograph shall not be permitted to play.

TBSG member club coaches shall present the referee with an approved photo roster (or player passes with player photo) and a game card which includes pre-printed player names to the referee at check in, and the referee will check players in using the game card and roster.

- C. **GUEST PLAYERS:** A TBSG team may have guest players who play on other teams within their host club. No more than three guest players be rostered. Those guest players shall only be used to supplement the roster IF AND WHEN the team would not be able to field a team (i.e., in a U10 or U12 game, providing not more than one substitute). The team with the guest players shall advise the referee and the opposing team's coach of those players being present. The guest players shall be added to the roster by the host club



registrar.

There is no limitation on the number of games a player may participate in as a guest on another team within their host club. There is no limitation on the number of games a team may have guest players provided that the one-substitute rule is not exceeded.

- D. **UNROSTERED PLAYERS:** A player whose name does not appear on the player pass and the game card may NOT play in the game. Any attempt to insert an ineligible player into the game will result in the head coach being suspended for the remainder of the season. The game will not be conducted if the player passes are not presented to the referee. See TBSG regulations, Section C, paragraph 3 for more information.
- E. **UNIFORMS:** All player uniforms must have TBSG approval. Three Bridges Soccer Group affiliate club uniforms shall have the club name or logo and may not have any other logo other than the club logo. When teams from the same club are playing each other, the home team may wear their Club's dark jersey (home jersey) or may wear pinnies. All jerseys shall be numbered. Duplicate jersey numbers are permitted.
- F. **GOALKEEPERS:** Goalkeeper kits shall be distinct from either team's uniforms. Goalkeeper kits may not have any other logo other than the club logo displayed. A goalkeeper shall be allowed to wear a pinnie of contrasting color that distinguishes that player from their club uniform and that of the visiting team.
- G. **SHIN GUARDS:** All players are required to wear shin guards. Shin guards must be completely covered by the sock.
- H. **SOCKS:** Players are encouraged to wear the socks associated with the respective Club's uniform. Socks of any color, however, are acceptable provided they cover the player's shin guard in its entirety.
- I. **FOOTWEAR:** Any style soccer shoe is acceptable unless otherwise deemed unsafe by the referee, this includes sneakers and tennis shoes, as permitted by the referee. Shoes with toe cleats (on the leading edge of the boot) or metal cleats are unacceptable and will not be allowed.
- J. **JEWELRY:** No jewelry (including but not limited to earrings, necklaces, watches, hair pins, etc.) or hard casts or a hard brace may be worn by any player on the field; exceptions are provided for religious items (e.g., soft bracelet). Allowed items must be covered by tape or pre-wrap.
- H. **FINGERNAILS:** Players with long, artificial nails must either remove the nails prior to the game or wear soft gloves to avoid injuring other players.
- I. **PLAY TIME:** All players should play at least half of the game. Only if the player's coach notifies the referee and the opposing coach prior to the start of a scheduled game that a player (identified by jersey number) will exceptions be allowed.
- J. **RESPECT:** Players shall be respectful and courteous to the game officials, opponents, their team, and themselves. Players shall subject to dismissal in the event of unruly behavior. Coaches bear the responsibility for maintaining control of the team behavior.
- K. **SUBSTITUTIONS:** Substitutions can be made at any game stoppage (at the discretion of the referee). For the safety of the players on the field and on the side lines, substitute players shall remain three feet back from the touchline and shall not enter the field of play until the referee approves the substitution.
- L. **HATS AND GLASSES:** In very limited circumstances, a field player may use a soft hat (e.g., a bucket hat with no rigid or semi-rigid reinforcement). Permission for use is provided by TBSG club managers. No baseball caps are allowed to be used by players on the field or in the goal. Glasses may be worn only if required for player safety (i.e., prescription).

Part 4: Spectators and the Spectator Line

- A. Spectators shall behave respectfully towards the game officials, the opposing coaches, visiting players, their families, and to one another.
- B. Coaches are responsible for controlling their respective spectators.
- C. Coaches are subject to discipline by their respective club management and dismissal by the referee should spectators become unruly.



- D. As noted, the visiting team shall occupy the side opposite the host team. Spectators shall sit on the same side as their team. Spectators shall not sit between the teams.
- E. Coaches will ask their families and spectators to occupy the space to the left of the mid-line to reduce potential conflicts with the assistant referees.
- F. The Referee is within her or his authority to request player families and spectators to reduce distractions and disruptions. The Referee may request that the Coach remove a parent or spectator from the sideline.
- G. TBSG will not tolerate abusive language or behavior directed at or towards the referees. Spectators are not to interact with the referees.
- H. For the safety of the players, all spectators should be behind the spectator line which will be a minimum of ten (10) feet back from the touch line and run from penalty area to penalty area. Some fields may not have this line marked. If a spectator line is not marked, all spectators still should be ten (10) feet back from the touch line. All EZ-up tents, benches, umbrellas, coolers, and chairs must be back the full ten (10) feet as well. The referee can request that spectators be at least ten (10) feet from the touch line, and the coaches may be asked to assist in enforcing the line.
- O. No coach, parent, or spectator shall be behind the goal area of either team. The referee may pause the match and request either directly, or by way of a coach, that the parent or spectator relocate to a different location.

Anyone, who is not a registered coach of the team, instructing a player may be asked to leave the field by the referee or the team's head coach.

Part 5: Sportsmanship Rule

(Please note that this rule applies to U10 –U12 teams within TBSG.)

Three Bridges Soccer Group believes that it is important to maintain good sportsmanship during games that turn out to be lopsided. Despite our effort to seed teams fairly in appropriate divisions, there are always instances where one team is far superior to another. Although there are valuable life lessons inherent in losing, and losing gracefully, there is a difference between losing a close fought contest and being blown out by a far better team. In the latter types of losses, the hurt feelings tend to hinder the ability to absorb the life lessons involved in losing.

To promote respect and good sportsmanship, as well as to keep the atmosphere fun and friendly, the acceptable winning margin is a goal differential of six (6). Each affiliate club will instruct their coaches prior to the season of the sportsmanship rule.

Game play in Division 1 of each group (i.e., U10, U12) shall not be subject to the 6-point maximum point differential disciplinary actions. The exemptions is provided to relax constraints in a subtle recognition of competitive focus, but the principle of maintaining good sportsmanship within the context of point differentials remains a preferred best practice in youth development.

Teams that exceed that acceptable goal differential of six (6) will be subject to the following disciplinary action:

- A. **First Offense in the Current Season:** The head coach and assistant coach will be notified of the scoring offense by their club president or designee via email. This warning will be documented in writing and communicated to the TBSG leadership team. The game result will be reported as a WIN, but the offending team score shall be marked with an asterisk (*). The asterisk will indicate that the team may not have been seeded properly in the pre-season.
The coach and assistant coach will provide a summary report of the game and a plan to prevent a repeat offense to the club president. The report and plan shall be received by the Thursday before the next game.
- B. **Second Offense in the Current Season:** In the event of a second offense, the head coach and assistant coach will be notified of the scoring offense by their club president or designee. This warning will be documented in writing and communicated to the TBSG leadership team. the game result will be reported as a WIN (1-0) and the match denoted by an asterisk.



The coach and the assistant coach will participate in an in-person meeting (or teleconference) with a quorum of the PAD committee. At the meeting, the offending team shall provide an explanation for the failure to comply with the plan developed in Paragraph A of this section.

- C. **Third Offense in the Current Season:** The game shall be scored as a FOREFEITURE by the offending team. The head coach and/or assistance coach are subject to an automatic 1 to 2 game suspension following a PAD committee. If the third violation occurs at the last game of the current season, the suspension will be served at the first game of the following season. The TBSG leadership team will review the team's continued participation in league play.

TBSG shall keep track of the violations on a weekly basis throughout the season. TBSG will provide a means to track the action plans to reduce future violations.

Part 6: Referees

- A. Referees are provided by the home team and/or club for all games scheduled on their fields.
- B. Referees should not begin the game until the game card is filled out and certified as correct by each coach.
- C. Referees shall check in players for U10 and U12 by calling out names on the team roster (or player passes) and verifying that the player appears on the game card. Referee will call out the player's name to confirm identity. The referee may ask players for their birthdate during check-in.
- D. If a referee is not present, the visiting coach may elect to play with volunteers from the spectators with the approval of both coaches OR to re-schedule the game.
- E. The replacement referee(s) accepted by both teams' authority cannot be challenged once the game begins.
- F. A U10 game shall be officiated by a minimum of one (1) referees.
- G. A U12 game shall be officiated by a minimum of one (1) and a maximum of three (3) referees.
- H. The referee is the sole authority on the field and her/his judgment as to acceptable field conditions, conduct of the coaches and spectators and any other prerogatives as granted by the Laws of the Game shall not be challenged.
- I. The referee shall sign the game card and require that the coach or manager for each team sign the game card, verifying the information is correct.
- J. The referee shall provide a completed game card at the conclusion of the game to the home team coach.
Note: only if a red card has been issued will the referee keep the game card at the conclusion of the game.
- K. Referees are to follow the US Club Soccer concussion protocol.

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Part 7: The Penalty Kick

- A. For U10, penalty kicks will be taken from ten (10) yards back from the end line.
- B. For U12, penalty kicks will be taken from ten (10) yards back from the end line.
- C. The goalkeeper must not be touching the goals, cross bar, or nets.
- D. The goalkeeper may not move forward until the ball is released.
- E. The goalkeeper must have at least part of one foot on/in line with the goal line when the kick is taken. The keeper may not stand behind the line.

Part 8: The Goal Kick

- A. The ball must be stationary prior to being kicked.
- B. The goalkeeper can kick the ball to return it to play or may choose a player on her/his team to make the kick.
- C. The U10 goal kick can be taken from anywhere in the goal area. See Part 9 for more information.



- D. The U12 goal kick can be taken from anywhere in the goal area (6-yard box). The ball is in play once the kick is taken; it can be played by either team before leaving the penalty area. Opponents must remain outside the penalty area until the ball is in play.

Part 9: Goalkeepers and Safety

- A. Players shall not rush the goalkeeper.
- B. Players shall not interfere with the goalkeeper when the keeper has control of the ball¹.
- C. Players shall not challenge or attempt to remove the ball from the goalkeeper's possession.
- D. The 8 second rule applies. The Referee shall count backwards from 8 when the goalkeeper takes possession of the ball. The Referee shall count down the final five seconds on a raised hand.

Part 10: The Build Out Line² (applicable to U10 ONLY)

For the U10 (7v7) game, the field markings will include build-out lines to promote individual skills and facilitate game flow by allowing play of the ball out of the back in an unpressured setting.

The spirit of the build-out line is to promote the development of player skills. A goalkeeper lobbing the ball from the penalty area over her/his teammates to the midline or beyond goes against the spirit of the game play modification. Coaches are encouraged to instruct their players of this and remind their goalkeepers to pass or throw the ball to players on her/his half of the field.

- A. The build out line is perpendicular to the touch lines and is located halfway from the top of the penalty area and the midline of each half of the field.
Ideally, the build-out line is marked in a color different from the primary field markings (e.g., orange paint for build out, white paint for traditional markings).
- B. When the goalkeeper has the ball, either during play or from a goal kick, the opposing team must move behind the closest build out line.
- C. In accordance with USSF, the ball may be kicked (i.e., passed) or thrown by the goalkeeper to return the ball to play.

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For more information regarding U10 and the Build Out Line, see MECHANICS OF PLAY

MECHANICS OF PLAY: (applicable to U10 game play only)

- **As soon as the goalkeeper has the ball, she or he has a choice:** hold the ball and wait for the opposing team to retreat behind the closer build out line, or release the ball by throwing it, rolling it, or placing it on the ground and passing it. Punting or drop kicking is not allowed. Lobbing the ball across the midline is not allowed.
- **IF the goalkeeper punts, drop kicks, or lobs or throws the ball across the mid-line, the opposing team is** awarded an indirect free kick at the spot of the infraction. If the infraction occurs in the goal area, the ball is

1 While the ball is in the possession of the goalkeeper, it cannot be played by an opponent. Any attempt to do so may be punished by a direct free kick. "In the possession of the goalkeeper" is defined as the goalkeeper having the ball trapped between one hand and a surface (which may include the other hand, the ground, a goalpost, or the keeper's own body). Similarly, the goalkeeper is in possession of the ball if the goalkeeper is holding the ball with two hands.

2 The build out line is used to promote playing the ball out of the back in an unpressured setting. When the goalkeeper has the ball, either during play or from a goal kick, the opposing team must move behind the build out line. At any time, the goalkeeper may pass, throw or roll the ball to a teammate, but the goalkeeper does so accepting the positioning of the opponents and the consequences of how play resumes.

Punts, drop-kicks, or lobs or throws that have a first bounce across the midline are not allowed as this would defeat the purpose of the build out line and reduces the opportunity to play out of the defending third in an unpressured setting.

US Soccer Federation identifies build out line for offside. See

<https://www.ussoccer.com/stories/2017/08/five-things-to-know-how-smallsided-standards-will-change-youth-soccer>



moved parallel to the goal line until just outside the goal area (i.e., one ball diameter). The indirect kick is taken from there.

- **IF the goalkeeper** chooses to immediately release the ball, the opposing team may attack as soon as the ball is released, even if the ball is in the penalty area.

Part 11: Offside

Offside will be applied to all U10 and U12 games.

- A. **U10** – Offside: Conform to US Soccer Federation. The build out line denotes where an offside offense may begin to be penalized. Players are not penalized for offside between the midline and the defending team build out line.
- B. **U12** – Offside: Conforms to FIFA/IFAB.

Part 12: Game Start and Length of Games

- A. Coin toss will be used by the referee to determine starting conditions of a game. The visiting team will call the coin toss in the air; if the coin toss is won, the visiting team chooses the direction of attack or possession.
- B. Games will be played in two halves with a rest period between halves. Under certain weather conditions (e.g., high heat) the referee has the authority to allow for additional time as deemed appropriate or to provide the athletes with a water break in each half. The referee may choose to extend the half by that length of time or allow the clock to continue.
- C. Possession at the start of the second half is given to the other team.
- D. The U10 games are composed of two (2), twenty-five (25) minute halves.
- E. The U12 games are composed of two (2), thirty (30) minute halves.
- F. The half-time break shall not be shorter than five (5) minutes and no longer than ten (10) minutes.
- G. The referee has the discretion to add time to the clock to account for play time lost to player substitutions, injuries, etc.
- H. Any team delaying the start of a scheduled game more than fifteen (15) minutes, without sanction of the proper authority³, shall forfeit the game to the opponent by the score of 1 - 0.

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Part 13: Minimum Players Per Team In Order to Begin The Game

- A. U10 is played 7v7 (1 goalkeeper plus 6 field players). U10 will play with a minimum of five (5) players.
- B. U12 is played 9v9 (1 goalkeeper plus 8 field players). U12 will play with a minimum of six (6) players.

Part 14: Heading and Slide Tackling

There will be NO heading or slide tackling for age groups U10 and U12. When a player deliberately heads or slide tackles the ball in a game, an indirect free kick shall be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense. If the deliberate header or tackle occurs within the penalty area, the indirect free kick shall be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred. Nothing precludes the referee from issuing a caution (yellow card) to the offender.

- A. **First Offense** – The offending player will be issued a warning. Warning may be verbal; depending upon the intensity of play, the Referee may also choose to send the player off the field for one round of play.
- B. **Second Offense** – The referee will remove that player for the remaining portion of the game.

3 The assigned center referee is a proper authority who can grant a delay.



Part 15: Head Injuries and Concussions; Other Injuries

All Clubs, coaches, and teams must observe the USSF concussion policy. If a player has a head injury and the referee deems that the player should NOT continue, then that player shall not return until they have received medical clearance. The referee MUST fill out an incident report if they remove a player from the game due to concussion protocol.

If a player suffers an injury during game play and requires an escort off the field, the coach may not step onto the field without first being called upon by the Referee. A player escorted off the field shall stay off the field for at least one round of play before being allowed to return.

Part 16: Dogs

No dogs are allowed near the PLAYING field at games. Dogs cannot be on the side lines. Parents will be asked by either the coach or the referee to leave the playing area which includes where spectators are.

Part 17: Drugs and Alcohol

Alcoholic beverages and illegal or illicit drugs are prohibited at any time before, during, and after the game.

Part 18: Sanitation

Clubs shall coordinate with their respective play field providers for restroom facilities. Access to restroom facilities is recommended.



REVISION HISTORY	SUMMARY
R0: 2022-07-03	Rules established.
R1: 2023-03-28	Clean-up text and spelling errors, conflicts within rules.
R1.1: 2023-08-22	Clarified U10 play mechanics, policy on headers and slide tackles, player passes/rosters, and spectators.
R1.2: 2024-07-11	Coordinated TBSG Rules and Regulations with Playing Rules.
R1.3: 2025-08-25	<u>Updated section regarding goalkeepers and safety. New items for 2025 appear in UNDERLINED FONT.</u> Removed redundancy in footnote regarding Build-out Line.
R1.4: 2026-08-27	<u>New items for 2026 appear in UNDERLINED FONT.</u> Major update to sportsmanship rule for Division 1 teams. Incorporated concussion protocols for player. Minor clarifications and realignments of various rules to avoid conflicting requirements.
R1.4.1: 2026-08-28	<u>New items for 2026 appear in UNDERLINED FONT.</u> Revision to rationale for point differential.



Three Bridges Soccer Group

APPROVALS

Fair Oaks Soccer Club <i>signature</i> <i>name</i>	Rancho Cordova Soccer Club <i>signature</i> <i>name</i>
Capital Valley Futbol Club <i>signature</i> <i>name</i>	Del Campo Youth Soccer Association <i>signature</i> <i>name</i>
El Dorado Hills Soccer Club <i>signature</i> <i>name</i>	Orangevale Youth Soccer Club <i>signature</i> <i>name</i>