

MJSL Rules of Play (Rec Division)

While the rules of soccer are simple relative to American football or baseball, it will take a while to learn them. At the younger ages we play small-sided, modified rules. The rules become more adult-like as the age level increases.

Division specific

K-1

- Ball size 3
- 4 versus 4, no goalie
- Field size 20 x 25
- Kick ins instead of throw ins
- No score keeping or standings

Minors

- Ball Size 4
- 7 versus 7
- Field size 40 x 70

Intermediates

- Ball size 4
- 8 versus 8
- Field size 40 x 70

Majors

- Ball size 5
- 8 versus 8
- Field size 50 x 80

Starting play

Opponents must be 3-10 yards (depending on field size) from the center mark while the kick-off is in progress. The center circle is the defining distance. The ball must be kicked into the opponent's half of the field and must move noticeably before it can be kicked again. The initial kicker may not kick the ball a second time until another player of either team has touched it.

Out of bounds (via the sidelines)

The ball is out of play when it has wholly crossed the ball sideline (aka touch line) whether on the ground or in the air. The last team that touched the ball loses possession and a player on the other team takes a throw in (K-1: kick in).

Throw-ins (not applicable for K-1)

Both feet must touch the ground during the entire throw-in. Both hands must be used to throw the ball in. The ball must start from behind the player's head and pass over it. At the moment of delivering the ball, the thrower has part of each foot either on the sideline or on the ground outside (behind) the sideline. The player throwing the ball in cannot play the ball until it has been played or touched by another player of either team.

Corner kick

A corner kick restarts the game after the ball entirely crosses the goal line (outside the goal posts) and is last touched by a defender. The ball must be placed inside the corner arc. The kicker may not kick the ball a second time until another player of either team has touched it. Opponents must be 10 yards away from the ball until play begins.

Goal Kicks - A goal kick restarts the game after the ball entirely crosses the goal line (outside the goal posts) and is last touched by an attacker.

Minors

- Goal kicks are taken from the edge of the penalty area (large box).
- Opponents remain more than 10 yards away until the ball is in play.
- The kicker does not play the ball a second time until it has touched another player.

Intermediate, Majors

- Goal kicks are taken from the edge of the goal area (small box).
- Opponents remain outside the penalty area until the ball is in play.
- The kicker does not play the ball a second time until it has touched another player.
- The ball is in play when it is kicked directly beyond the penalty area.

Goals

The entire ball must cross the goal line between the goal posts and under the cross bar.

Goalie Play

- Goalies can use their hands only within the marked penalty area.
- Goalies are not allowed to use their hands when a teammate deliberately kicks the ball to them. Goalies may use their hands if the ball was passed with some other body part than the foot (head, chest, etc.), or if it last touched a teammate's foot but was not deliberately played back to the goalie.
- After a save, goalies may punt or throw the ball from the top of the penalty area. Goalie throws do not have to follow the rules for Throw Ins.

Offside

The offside rule is meant to prevent "goal hanging" and maintain the flow of the game. It states that no offensive player should be closer to the goal than the ball and the last two players from the defending team, one of whom is usually the goalie. Offside is a very complex event. There are 22 diagrams in the FIFA rulebook explaining offside.

- In the K&1 division we do not teach or enforce the offside rule
- In the Minors division we prefer to keep the game moving and educate the players about the offside rule, rather than enforce it tightly. However, referees are instructed to call offsides anytime players deliberately wait in their offensive half of the field while the ball is in their defensive half or violation of the offside rule leads to a goal
- In the Intermediate and Major divisions we attempt to call offside as it is written in the rule book
- There are no offsides in corner kick, goal kick and throw-in situations.

Penalties

Indirect free kicks

When an indirect kick is taken the ball has to touch a second player, not necessarily a teammate, before going into the goal. During indirect kicks the ref raises his arm above his head, and he maintains his arm in that position until the kick has been taken, and the ball has touched another player or goes out of play. The defending team may position players between the kicker and the goal as long as the players are five yards away from the kicker.

Indirect free kicks are awarded for a number of offenses including:

- Player plays in a dangerous manner or impedes the progress of an opponent
- Goalie takes more than six seconds while controlling the ball with the hand before releasing it
- Goalie touches the ball with the hand after having received it directly from a throw-in by a teammate
- Goalie touches the ball by hand after the ball has deliberately been kicked back by a teammate.

Direct free kicks

When a direct kick is taken the ball does not need to touch a second player. The defending team may position players between the kicker and the goal as long as the players are ten yards away from the kicker.

Direct free kicks are awarded for a number of offenses including:

- Player kicks, charges or trips an opponent
- Player tackles an opponent, making contact with them before touching the ball
- Player touches the ball deliberately by hand (except for goalies inside their own penalty area) and/or player handling of the ball affects the game. (A hand ball that was accidental and does not affect the game may not be called. e.g. the ball is kicked into the players hand, bounces off and play continues in the middle of the field)

Penalty kicks are given for direct kick fouls inside the penalty area including touching the ball with the hands. The defending team may not position players between the kicker and the goal. Neither team may have players (beside the goalie) in the penalty area during the kick. Once the kick is taken the ball is in play and players may enter the box.

When a player commits a serious foul (resulting in injury to the opponent), where there appears to be recklessness and/or intent, he or she will be warned about it by the referee, who will then advise the coach that a second occurrence (same criteria) will result in that player having to be substituted for, and not be able to return to the game.

Substitutions

In MJSL Recreation League play substitutions take place only at the end of a quarter or the half. The referee may allow a team to substitute at other times in special situations, such as when the temperature is high or a player is hurt.

Game lengths

- ❑ K-1 - Combined practice/skirmishes/game hour
- ❑ Minors - First half of season practice with professional trainers, followed by one 26 minute game with a brief stoppage for substitutions at each 6 ½ minute mark. Second half of the season two 26 minute halves with a brief (running time) stoppage for substitutions at each 6 ½ minute mark and a 5 minute half time break.
- ❑ Intermediates, Majors - Two 25 minute halves with a brief (running time) stoppage for substitutions at the 12 1/2 minute mark and a 5 minute half time break
- ❑ Coaches are responsible for beginning games on time, to ensure a full game. **All games MUST be over at the sound of the horn at the end of each Division's time period.** All games still in play at that time will end at the sound of the horn, regardless of when the game started.

More about Soccer

Libraries, book stores, soccer stores, and some of the local sports organizations have books and video tapes that will help you learn more about the game and coaching. MJSL will offer coaching clinics. Other neighboring communities offer them as well.

Watching games

Watching games is fun and great way for younger players to learn more about the game. Since all divisions play at Harbor Island each Saturday it is easy for younger players to watch older division games before or after their own games. The MJSL Travel teams can often be found playing at Harbor Island on Sundays during the spring and fall. Rye Neck and Mamaroneck High Schools also have competitive teams. Finally, you can attend games played at the upper age levels, high schools, college/universities, men's and women's leagues, and professional leagues. You can sometimes find college schedules for men' and women's games on these local schools' web sites.

Websites - There is a wealth of soccer information on the Internet. Here are links to three sites:

- ❑ Westchester Youth Soccer League site (this is the league our travel teams play in)
<http://www.wyslsoccer.org>
- ❑ Mamaroneck Junior Soccer League site: <http://www.mjsl.org>