

# *YOUTH LEAGUE*

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# AGE GROUP SPECIFICS

## Ball Sizes

- 3U: Size 2
- 5U: Size 3
- 8U: Size 3
- 11U: Size 4

## Equipment

- Soccer Ball
- Soccer Cleats (NOT football or baseball)
- Shin Guards
- Water Bottle
- Black Shorts

## Provided by GCSA Fall Season:

- Jersey, Socks

## Provided by GCSA Spring Season/Camp:

- Shirt

## Recommended Players

- 3U: 4 v 4
- 5U: 5 v 5
- 8U: 7 v 7 Including Goal Keeper
- 11U: 9 v 9 Including Goal Keeper

## Game Time / Duration

- 3U: 4 x 8 Minute Quarters (32 Minutes)
- 5U: 4 x 10 Minute Quarters (40 Minutes)
- 8U: 4 x 12 Minute Quarters (48 Minutes)
- 11U: 2 x 25-30 Minute Halves (60 Minutes)

Quarters: 5 min breaks between

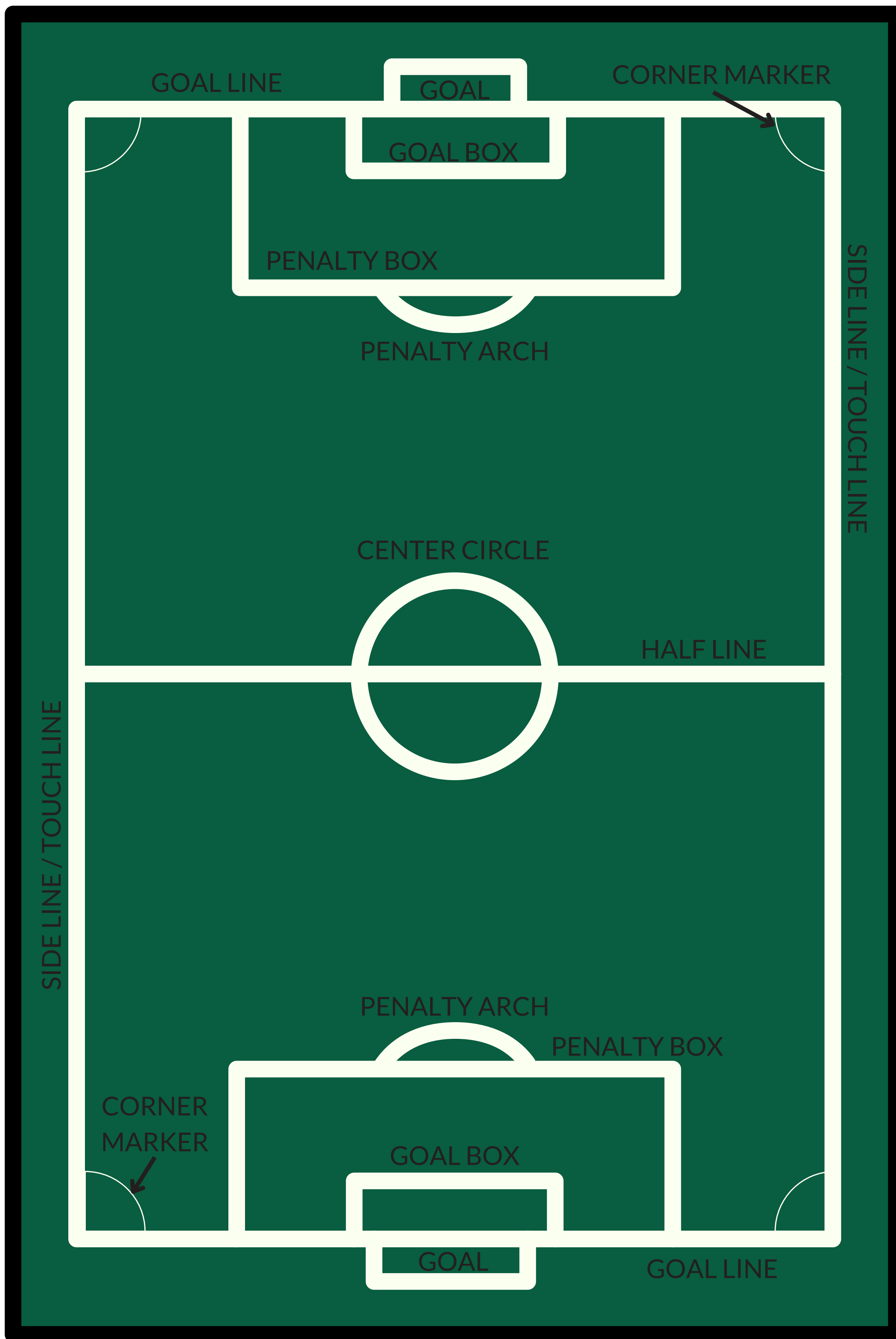
Halves: 10 min break



# AGE GROUP SPECIFICS

Age group	3U	5U	8U	11U
Field Length	tbd	25-35 yrds	35-45 yrds	45-55 yrds
Field Width	tbd	20-25 yrds	25-35 yrds	35-45 yrds
Center circle	1 yrd (optional)	3 yds (optional)	3-5 yds	5 yds
Goal box	No	Optional	Optional	14 yds x 4 yds
Goal size	tbd	4' x 6'	4' x 6'	6' x 12' (recommended)
Penalty box	No	Optional	Optional	22 yds x 9 yds
Penalty mark	No	No	No	8 yds from center goal line
Corner arc	1' (Optional)	2' (optional)	2' (optional)	3'
Ball size	2	3	3	4
Format	4 v 4	5 v 5	7 v 7	9 v 9
Goalkeeper	No	No	Yes	Yes
Roster size	N/A	5-7	6-8	10-14
Game duration	4 x 8 minutes	4 x 10 minutes	4 x 12 minutes	2 x 25-30 minutes
Breaks	5 minutes	5 minutes	5 minutes	10 minutes
Substitutions	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
Keep Score	No	No	No	Yes
Out of bounds	Kick-ins	Kick-ins	Kick-ins or throw-ins	Throw-ins
Offside	No	No	No	Yes
Referee	Coaches	Coaches	Coaches	1 (required) 2 assistants (optional)

# FIELD DIAGRAM



# POSITIONS

## Forwards (F)

- Also known as strikers or attackers
- Main priority is offense
- Spend more time on opponents side of the field

## Midfielders (M)

- Supports both Defenders and Forwards
- Could be outside focused along the length of the field
- Could be center field focused on either defense or offense or both
- Typically runs the most due to supporting both defense and offense

## Defenders (D)

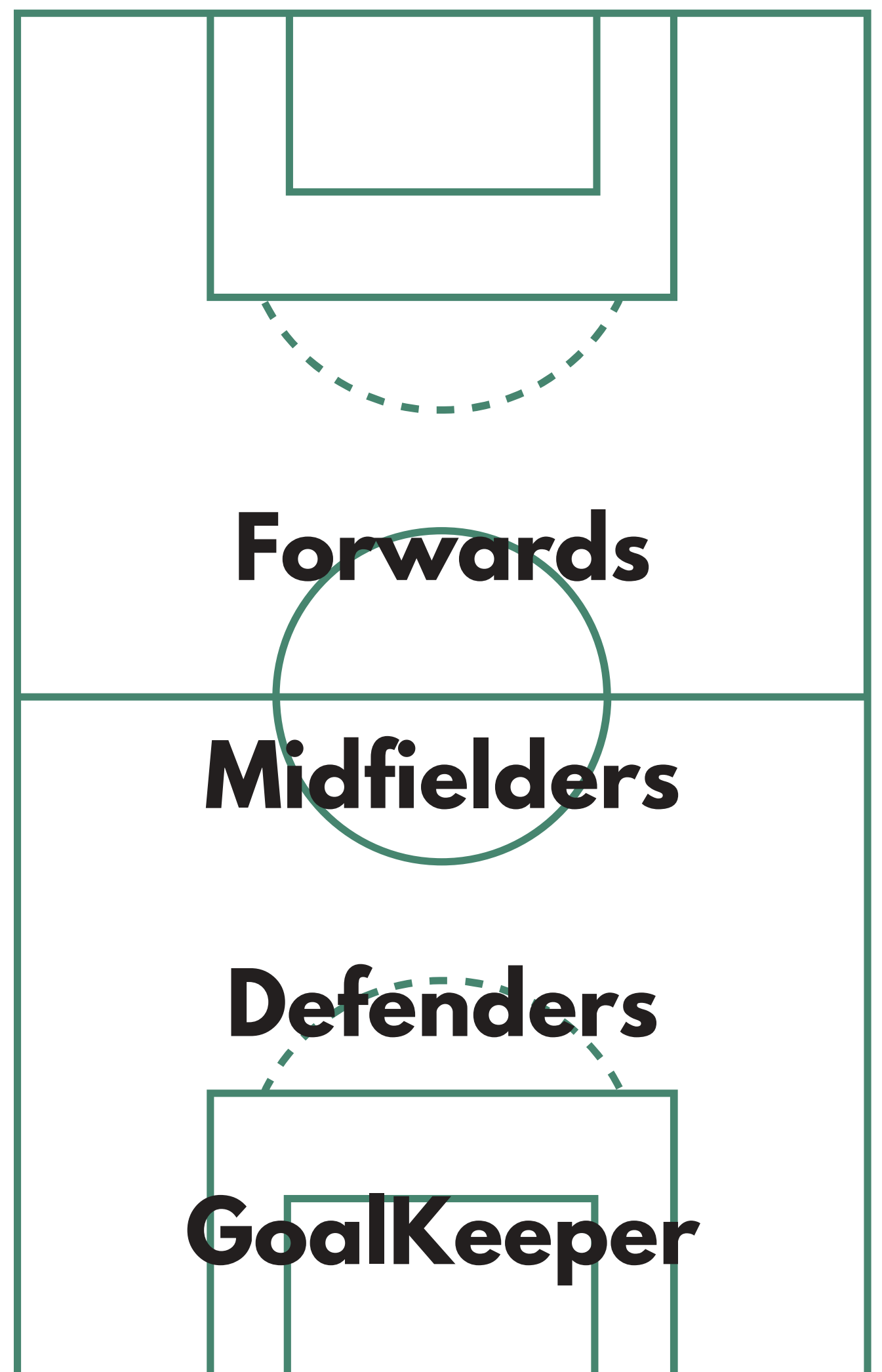
- Protects the goal area known as fullbacks
- Work closely with Goalkeeper to maintain coverage
- Work closely with center defensive midfielders to move the ball up the field
- May assist goal keeper with goal kicks

## Goalkeeper (GK)

- Also known as Keeper or Goalie
- Can use hands to scoop up, smack down, catch or otherwise divert the ball from entering the goal
- Can ONLY use hands INSIDE the penalty box
- Typically responsible for goal kicks
- Often wears protective gloves / long sleeve jerseys

## Formations

- Depending on the number of players on the field coaches will arrange their players in different formations. These may sound like "3-2-1" for a 7 player team with 1 in the goal.



# 1. NO HANDS

The rule for a hand ball includes using any part of the body from the tips of the fingers to the shoulder.

- The proper way to look at this soccer rule is that a player cannot “handle” the ball. A ball that is kicked and hits a player’s hand or arm is not a hand ball.
- This means that the referee must use his or her own judgment to some extent in determining whether or not a hand ball is accidental contact or a purposeful attempt to gain an advantage.

Put another way, the referee must determine if the play was

- Ball to Hand (legal) or
- Hand to Ball (illegal)

Believe it or not, there is also a situation in which the goalie cannot use his/her hands.

- This is sometimes called the back-pass rule. Goalkeepers cannot pick up a pass that came directly from one of their teammates. In this case, the goalkeeper must use their feet.
- Infraction of this soccer rule will result in an indirect kick from the point of the infraction.
- Goal Keepers also cannot use their hands outside of the penalty box.



# 2. START & RESTART

A kick-off is the way a soccer game is started or restarted:

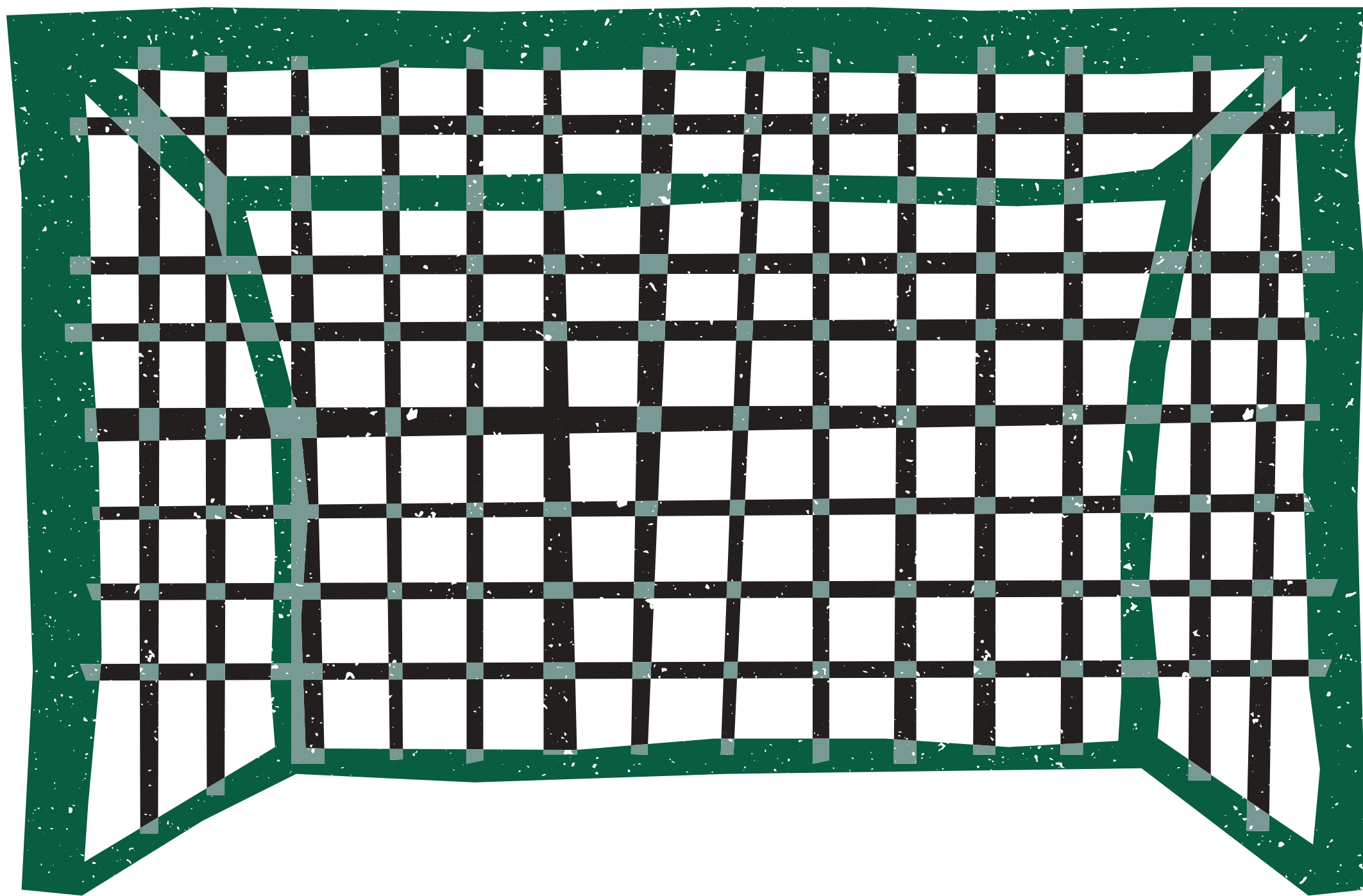
- at the start of a game
- after a goal has been scored
- at the start of the second half (or each quarter in younger ages)
- at the start of each period of extra time, if used

Normally the referee will blow their whistle to indicate they are ready for the kickoff.

- The ball is placed in the center of the field.
- All players must be in their own half of the field and the opponents of the team taking the kick-off must be at least 10 yards from the ball. This distance is indicated by the center circle on the field and will vary some with age.

The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves forward.

- See Rule 3 - Two Touch for more info. on kick offs



# 3. TWO TOUCHES

A player cannot touch the ball twice in a row when putting the ball in play.

- You will see this called many times in youth soccer. It applies everywhere.
- You will see it frequently on kick-offs, corner kicks, or direct and indirect kicks.
- If a kid barely hits the ball and decides to take another swipe at it, that is a two-touch violation.

This also applies to throw-ins.

- A kid cannot throw the ball in and then kick it.

The only exception to this rule is on a drop ball restart.





# 4. THROW INS

A throw-in is taken when the ball crosses a sideline and leaves the field.

- The two basic soccer rules for a proper throw-in are to have both feet on the ground and to throw the ball with both hands over the head.
- To clarify, both feet must be on the ground when the ball is thrown.
- The player can hop, run, or do cartwheels up to the point where the ball is released but not when the ball is released.
- Dragging the toes of one foot is considered **legal**.



# 5. CORNER & GOAL KICKS

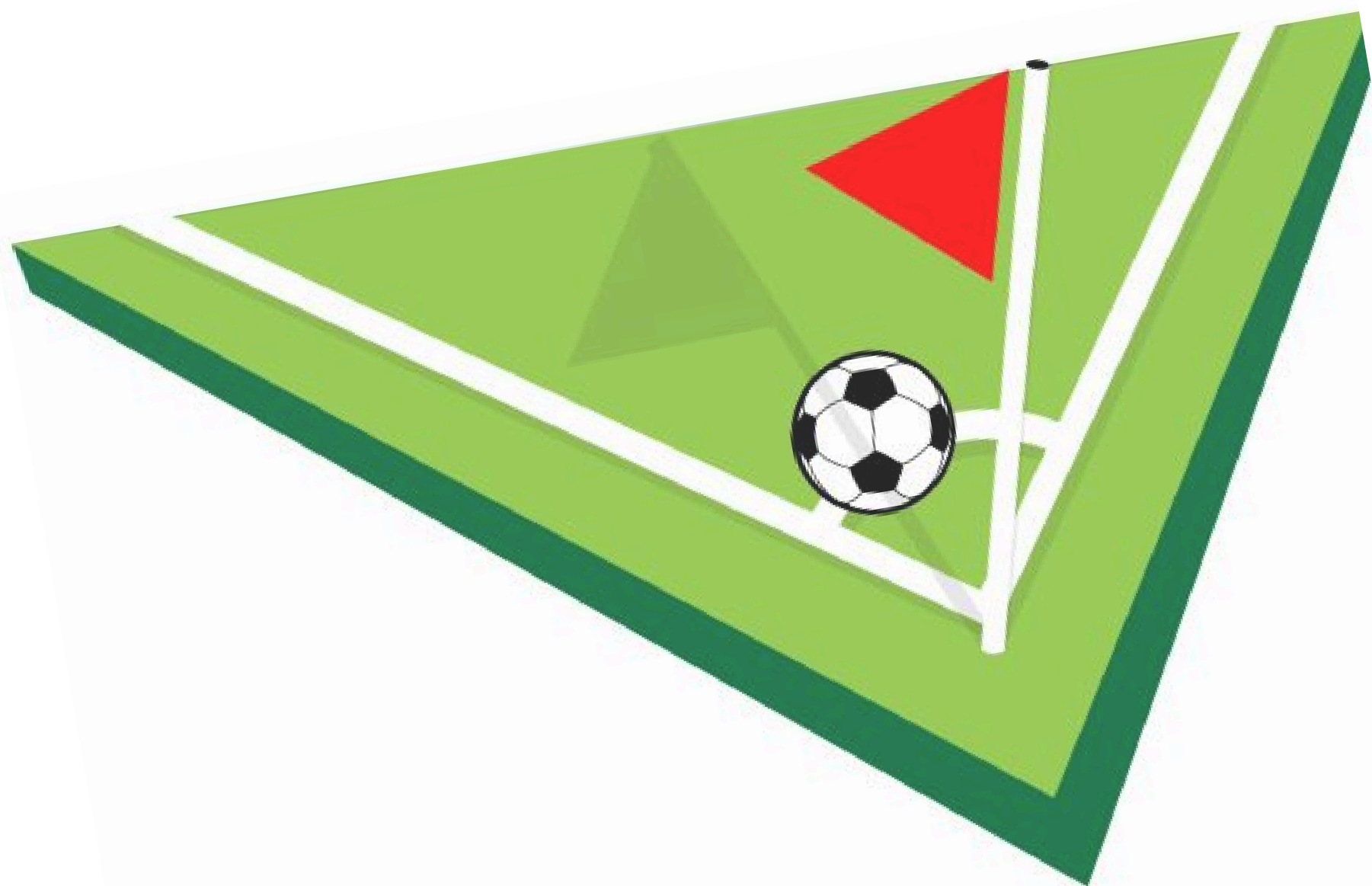
A corner kick or goal kick is taken when the ball leaves the field across a goal line, you know, either end of the field with a goal.

- If the offensive team kicks it out, play is restarted with a goal kick.
- If the defensive team kicks it out, play is restarted with a corner kick.

The **goal kick** is taken from anywhere inside the “goalie box” as it is affectionately called.

- It can be taken by any player, not just the goalkeeper.
- You may be confused at times in youth soccer games to see a goal kick retaken.
- This is because the FIFA soccer rules state that the ball is not back “in play” until it leaves the penalty area, the large box outside of the “goalie box” (see diagram if needed).
- If either team touches the ball before it leaves the penalty area the kick must be retaken.
- If the ball is not kicked well enough to leave the area, the kick must be retaken.

The **corner kick** is taken from – yes, you guessed it – the corner nearest to where the ball left the field.



# 6. DIRECT & INDIRECT FREE KICKS

Direct and indirect kicks are two primary ways that play is restarted after the referee stops play for an infraction.

- For both of these the ball must be stationary before it is kicked and the opposing players should be a minimum of 10 yards away.
- The 10 yard allowance is often reduced for the smaller age groups and is left up to the discretion of the referee.

The simple difference between the two is this:

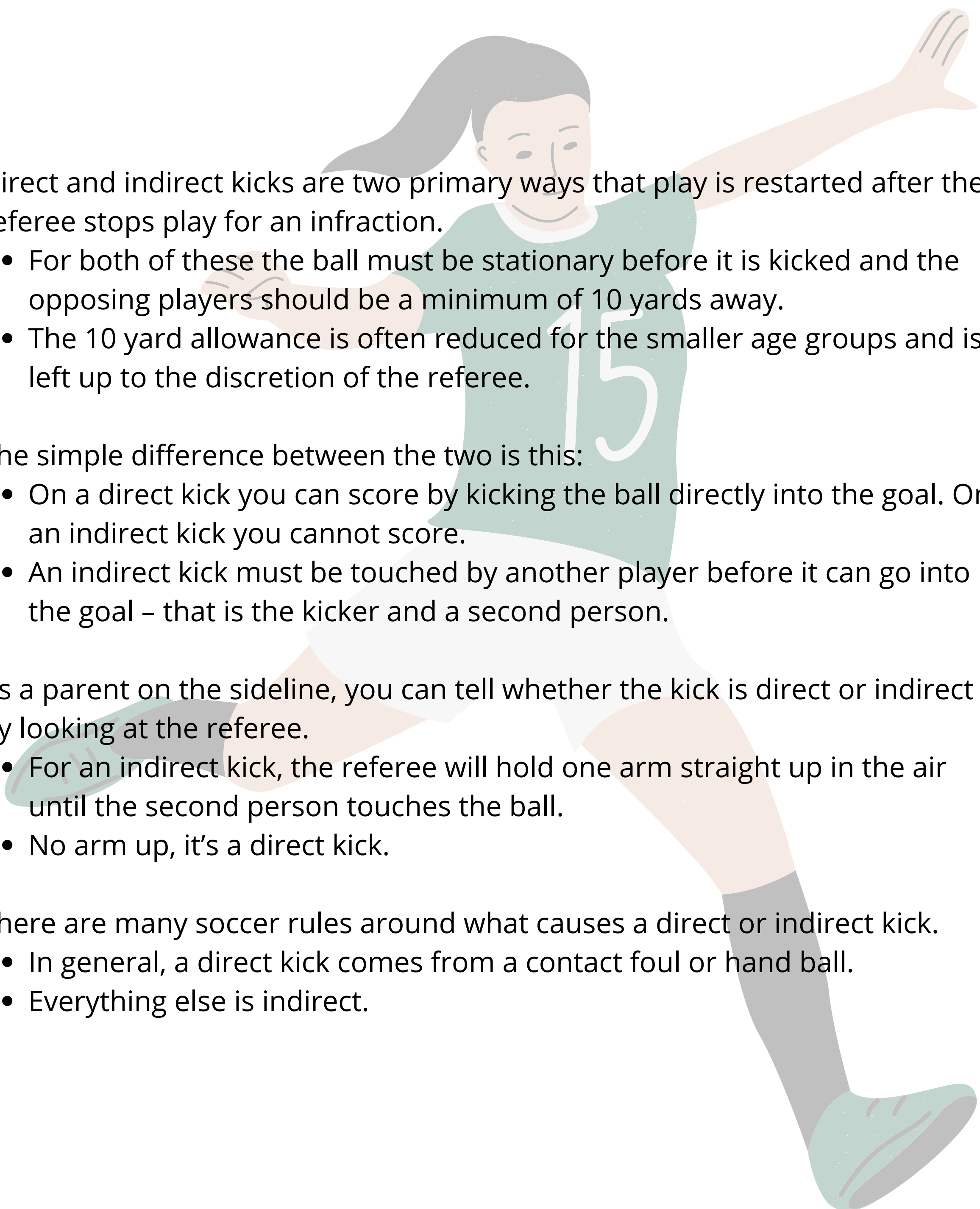
- On a direct kick you can score by kicking the ball directly into the goal. On an indirect kick you cannot score.
- An indirect kick must be touched by another player before it can go into the goal – that is the kicker and a second person.

As a parent on the sideline, you can tell whether the kick is direct or indirect by looking at the referee.

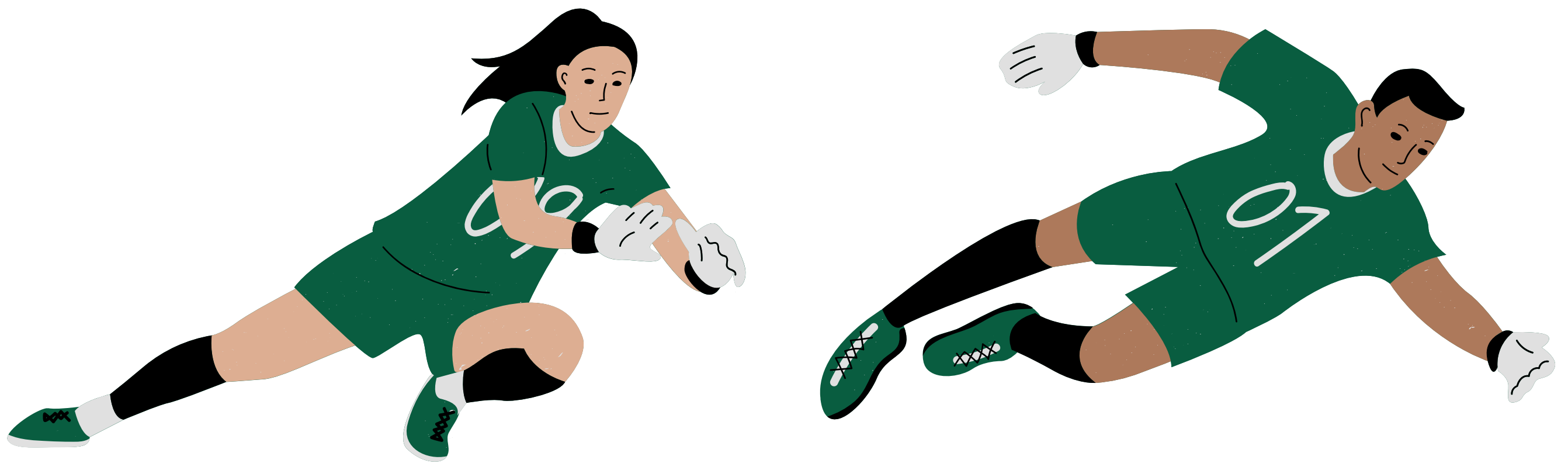
- For an indirect kick, the referee will hold one arm straight up in the air until the second person touches the ball.
- No arm up, it's a direct kick.

There are many soccer rules around what causes a direct or indirect kick.

- In general, a direct kick comes from a contact foul or hand ball.
- Everything else is indirect.



# 7. PENALTY KICKS



A penalty kick results from a contact foul or hand ball by the defending team within the penalty area – the large box on either end of the field.

- The ball is placed on the penalty spot or mark, front of the center of the goal. See field diagram.
- All players must remain outside the penalty area and the penalty arc until the ball is kicked.
- The goalkeeper must have both feet on the goal line until the ball is kicked.

If after the ball is kicked, it rebounds off of the **keeper** and stays on the field, the ball is “live” and anyone can play it.

If after the ball is kicked, it rebounds off of the **goal** and stays on the field, the ball is “live” and anyone can play it with the exception of the person who just kicked the ball.

- If the ball rebounds off of the goal and back into play, the person who kicked the ball cannot play it until the ball is touched by another player – otherwise he/she will be called for two touches.

# 8. FOULS & PUNISHMENTS

The common rule of thumb on fouls is “If it looks like a foul, it probably is.”

- Too true. A player cannot kick, trip, jump at, charge, strike, push, hold, or spit at an opponent.

So what’s the problem?

- Soccer can be a physical, contact sport when two opposing players both want the soccer ball and no parent or grandparent likes it when little Susie loses the ball and ends up on the ground! “Foul!” cries the parent. “Little Susie was pushed!”

What you need to know as a parent is that bumping or going shoulder-to-shoulder while competing for a ball is not a foul until the hands or elbows come up.

- This is a bit of a judgment call and not all referees will call it the same way.
- Some soccer rules are actually not black-and-white.
- Remember though, **the referee is ALWAYS right.**



The normal consequence of a foul is a direct kick for the opposing team.

- However, depending on the type of foul and severity, the player “dishing it out” may be punished.

Punishment is given in soccer with yellow and red cards. The FIFA soccer rules give the guidelines for when to give a yellow card to a player and when to give a red card. We'll leave the specifics to the referees on this.

- If a player is **given a yellow card**, the player may continue to play in the match.
- If a player is given two yellow cards in the same game, that is equal to a red card.
- A red card can be given at any time without the player first receiving a yellow card.
- When a player is **given a red card**, they must leave the game and their team must play short.
- An ejected player cannot be replaced (unless they are ejected prior to the start of the game).

# 9. OFFSIDES

This is without a doubt the least understood rule by parents, coaches and players alike.

- This rule may not be called for the U-8 or younger teams.
- U-6 and U-8 coaches should still have an understanding of this rule in order to begin teaching their players not to be offside.

As quoted from the FIFA soccer rules:

- A player is in an offside position if: he is nearer to his opponents' goal line than both the ball and the second last opponent.
- An offensive or attacking player cannot be ahead of the ball and involved in the play unless there is a defender between them and the goalkeeper.
- Or, a player cannot hang out at the other team's goal waiting for the ball.

It is not an offense for a player to be in an offside position.

- The player must be involved in active play, as determined by the referee, to be called offside.

## Exceptions:

- A player cannot be offside on a corner kick, goal kick, or throw-in.
- A player cannot be offside if they are standing on their own half of the field.
- Also, the offside rule applies when the ball is kicked, not when the player receives the ball.
- To accurately judge offside, one has to stay even with the second-to-last defender and not watch the ball.
- Listen for the kick of the ball and judge at the time of the kick whether or not the player was offside.

As always, trust the referees to call offsides and direct play. This is a rule that takes time to understand so try not to get too hung up on it.

