

Fundamental Rules of Soccer

The following set of rules is a greatly simplified version of the rules of the game. However, the game can be played with a number of variations. Do not get bogged down with rules.

1. **No Hands.** No player, except the goal keeper, may touch the ball with the arms or hands. When a player uses hand, the opponents get a direct kick. A ball that touches the hand or arm of a player unintentionally, and does not directly influence the outcome of the game (i.e. blocks a shot on goal), may be deemed no foul. The goalkeeper is only allowed to use hands inside the 18 yard box. When outside this box, the goalkeeper is considered to be a field player. * In mini games (3 vs 3) no goalkeeper is used.
2. **Obstruction.** Players may not block, screen or obstruct the path of another player without making a play on the ball. This penalty results in a direct kick.
3. **Unfair Play.** No kicking, tripping, running into from behind or aggressively, pushing, holding, jumping into, or striking of other players is allowed. This penalty results in a direct kick.
4. **Don't mess with the goalkeeper.** Players may not obstruct, kick, or tackle the goalkeeper. They may not attempt to kick the ball out of the hands of the goalkeeper.
5. **No slide tackles from behind.** A defender may not slide tackle a ball carrier from behind or outside the area of peripheral vision. A tackler must not tackle an opponent without getting the ball first. This results in a direct kick for the opponent. * To ensure a safe environment in **P.E. no side tackling allowed.**
6. **Dangerous Play.** A play is considered dangerous when it occurs within six feet of an opponent and has any of the following characteristics: Lowering the head below waist level, lifting the leg above waist level, bicycle or scissors kick, and playing the ball while on the ground. This results in an indirect kick. * If Dangerous Play occurs in P.E. you will sit in the penalty box (time out).
7. **Offside.** A player in this offensive end must have at least two players or the ball between them and the goal. If they do not, they are deemed offside and an indirect free kick from the spot of the offside player is awarded to the defending team. *In short sided games (3 v 3, 5 v 5, 7 v 7) offside isn't use.

Throw-ins, Corner Kicks, Goal Kicks: When the soccer ball passes all the way across a touch line, it is considered out of bounds. Possession is given to the opponent of the player last contacting the ball (like basketball). When the ball goes out of bounds over a side line, play is restarted with a throw-in from the point where the ball left the playing field. When a ball goes over the end line of the defensive team, a corner kick is awarded to the offense. A corner kick is an indirect free kick from the closest corner of the field. When the offense puts a ball over the end line, the defense is awarded a goal kick. A goal kick is an indirect free kick from the nearest top corner of the six yard box.

Direct Kick: This penalty allows a team to shoot directly on goal. It is awarded at the spot of the foul. If the spot of the foul is inside the eighteen yard box, a penalty kick is awarded to the opponent. Defenders may form a wall (when in a wall players are allowed to cover sensitive body parts with their hands and arms) to prevent direct access to the goal, but must be ten yards away from the spot of the foul.

Penalty Kick: A penalty kick is taken from a spot 12 yards away from the goal. No players are allowed inside the eighteen yard box, except a shooter and the goalkeeper. The goalkeeper must start on the goal line and may not move until the ball is struck. The shooter may not stop, fake, or stutter the approach to deceive the goal keeper.

Indirect Kick: The shooter may not directly shoot on goal. The ball must touch another player before going into the goal. Defenders may form a wall 10 yards from the spot of the ball.

Basic Skills

Passing

- The most effective way to move the ball down the field
- Accuracy, pacing, and timing
- Three different ways
 - Inside of the foot
 - Outside of the foot
 - Instep of the foot
- Provide accurate demonstrations

Trapping

- Control the ball in an efficient way, in order to then dribble, pass, or shoot
- Beginning methods and advanced methods
- Three different ways to trap a ball on the ground
 - Inside of the foot
 - Outside of the foot
 - Bottom of the foot
- Provide accurate demonstrations

SOME IMPORTANT TERMS: Following are some terms that we will use to help explain positions. These terms refer to parts of the field:

- "Center of the field" - The center of the field is the area between the 2 goals (as opposed to the "wings" or sides of the field where the sidelines are). The center of the field is where the "Center Fullback", "Center Midfielder" and "Center Forward" mostly play (you may not have Center positions in your "Formation"; if you play 7 or less on the field you may only have "Right" and "Left" positions). If you say "center it", you usually mean to kick the ball to the area in front of the goal.
- "Middle of the field" - The middle of the field is the area of the field that includes the "Halfway Line". Many coaches say "go to the middle" when they really mean "go to the center".
- "Attacking Third" - The Attacking Third is the third of the field that is closest to your opponent's goal (i.e., the goal the opposing Goalie defends). When your team attacks, you hope your Forwards and possibly your Midfielders get the ball into the Attacking Third. When your opponent is attacking your goal, you will probably not have any players in the Attacking Third, since your Midfielders will probably have dropped back near your "Penalty Box" line to help defend and your Forwards will have dropped back to the Halfway Line or to the inside of the "Center Circle" so they are in position to win "cleared" balls. (This "shifting and sagging" with the ball is very important so you have "support" on offense and defense).
- "Middle Third" - The Middle Third is the third of the field that includes the "Halfway Line" and the "Center Circle". When you attack, if your Fullbacks "Push Up" they will come up into the Middle Third. When your opponent is attacking your goal, your Forwards may come back into the Middle Third to the Halfway Line or even to the inside of the Center Circle so they are in position to win "cleared balls". (See "Push Up" in the Dictionary and "Should You Push Up When You Attack?" on the SoccerHelp Home Page).
- "Defensive Third" - The Defensive Third is the third of the field that includes your goal (your goal is the one your Goalie defends). Your Fullbacks will spend most of their time in the Defensive Third unless you have a good team and your Fullbacks "Push Up" when you attack. Your Midfielders will probably drop back into your Defensive Third to help out when your goal is under attack, but your Forwards should not come into your Defensive Third, because if they do there won't be anyone in position to win the ball when your Fullbacks or Midfielders "Clear" the ball.

BASIC POSITIONS: The number of players who play on the field varies greatly by age and league, and can range from 5 per team to a maximum of 11 per team. If there are only 5 on a team they may not have "Midfielders". Following are the basic positions for each team:

One **Goalkeeper** ("GK").

There is always just one Goalkeeper per team. The Goalie's job is to defend his team's goal and he usually stays close to his goal. You can identify the Goalie because he wears a different colored shirt or a vest over his shirt. As long as he is in the "Penalty Box" he can use his hands to pick up the ball, but if he comes out of the Penalty Box he cannot use his hands. (This is a very simplified description, read "Goalkeeper" in the Dictionary for more details). Except for "Throw-Ins" and to pick up the ball in "Re-Start" situations, the Goalie is the only player who can legally use his hands.

Usually 2, 3 or 4 Defenders who are called **Fullbacks** ("FB").

Fullbacks play closest to their goal (which is the goal their Goalie defends). Along with the Goalie, they have the primary job of stopping the opponents from scoring. However, to a degree, every player should be a "defender" when the opponent has the ball. One way to teach this is by teaching the concepts of "First Defender" and "Second Defender".

Usually 2, 3 or 4 **Midfielders** ("MF").

The Midfielders play between the Fullbacks and the Forwards. They are often in the "Middle Third" of the field. There can be "Offensive Midfielders" who play closer to the Forwards and "Defensive Midfielders" who play closer to the Fullbacks, as below.

Usually 1, 2 or 3 **Forwards** ("F").

Forwards play closer to the opponent's goal, which is the goal guarded by the opposing Goalie. The Forwards are the primary scorers, although Midfielders sometimes score and at older ages Fullbacks even occasionally score.

There are also 2 special positions that some, but not all, teams use; a "**Sweeper**" and a "**Stopper**".

A Sweeper will play behind the Fullbacks and a Stopper will play between the Fullbacks and the Midfielders. These positions add additional layers of defenders and give you defensive strength in the Center of the field. See "Sweeper" and "Stopper" in the Dictionary for a more detailed description.

LEGEND:

R = Right (as you face the opposing Goalie)

C = Center

L = Left (as you face the opposing Goalie)

FB = Fullback

MF = Midfielder

OMF = Offensive Midfielder

F = Forward

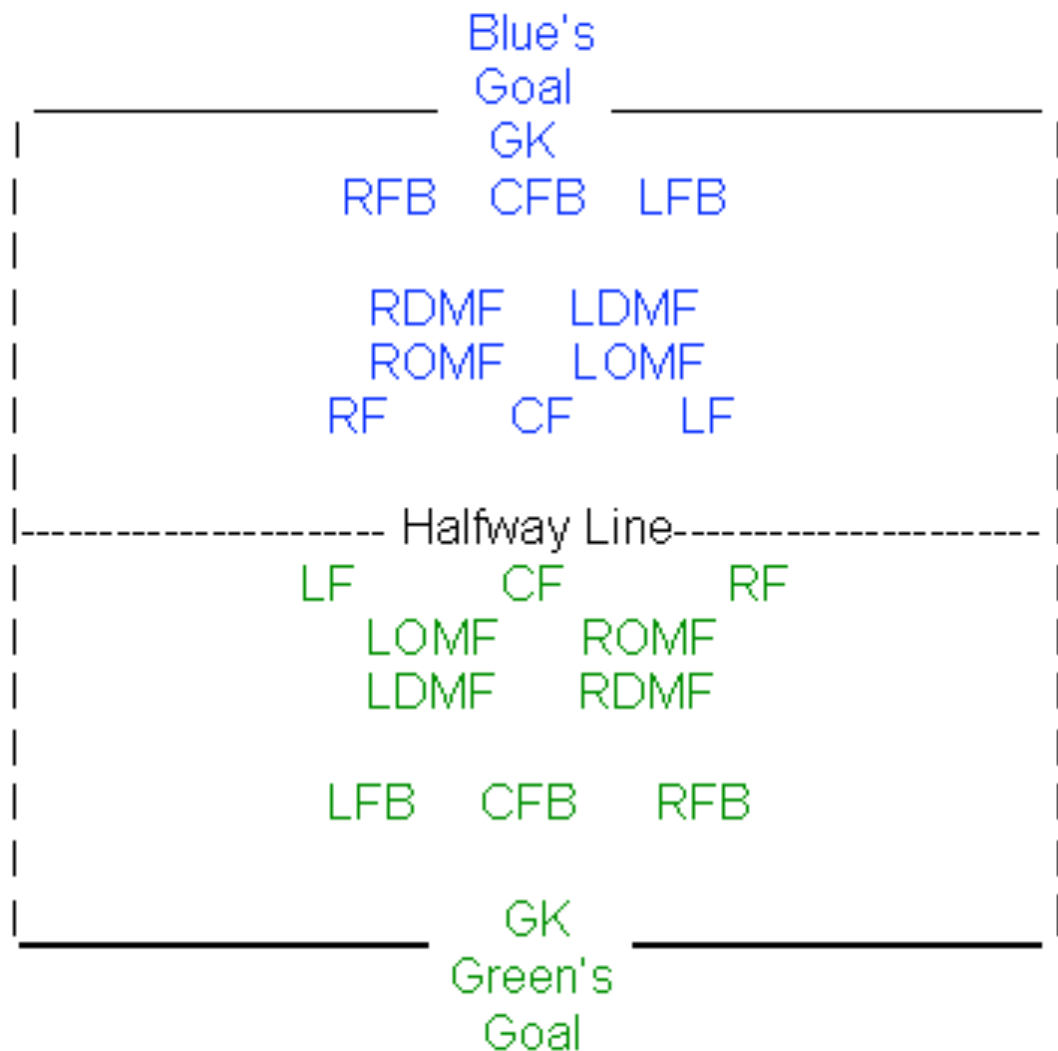
GK = Goalkeeper

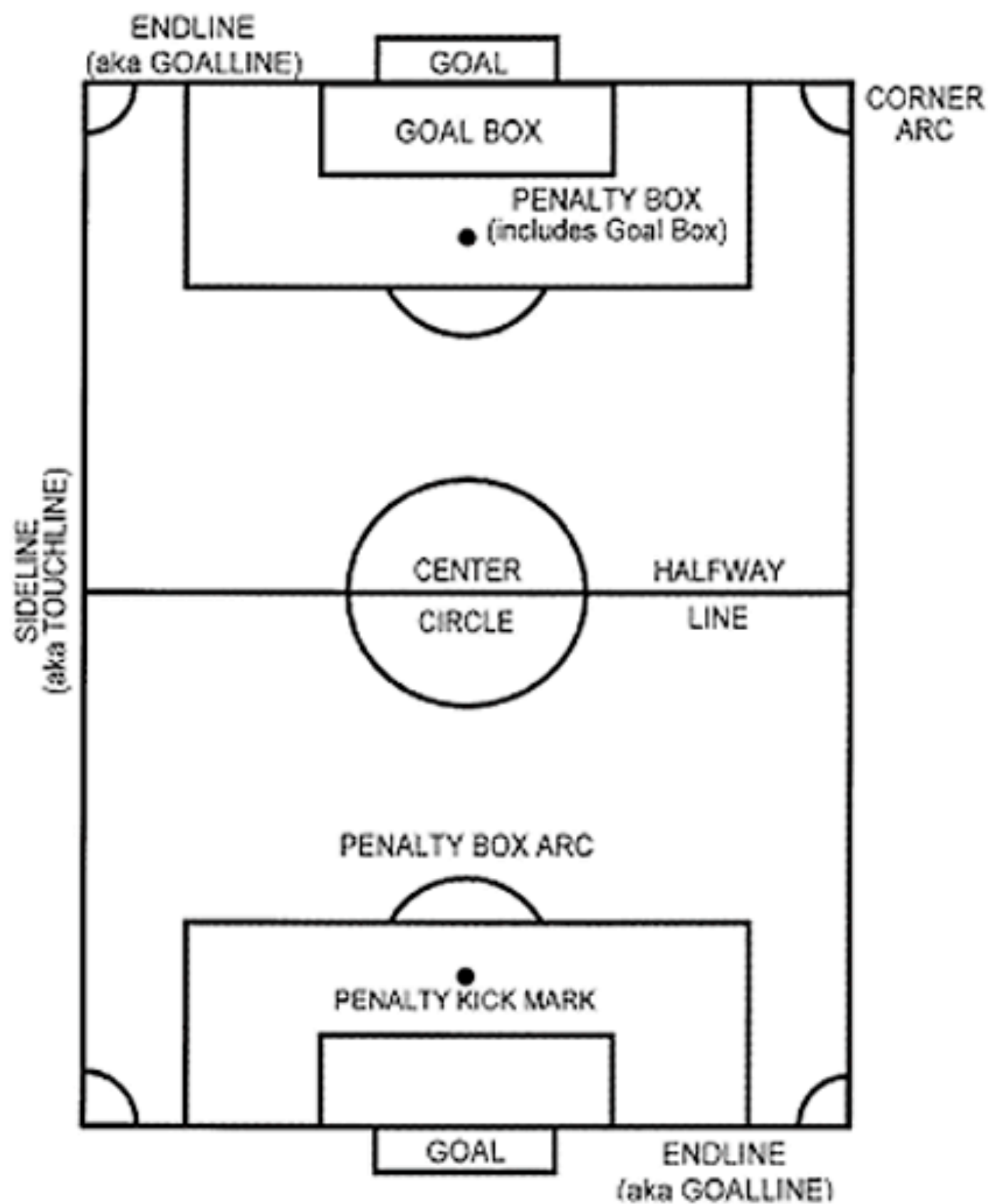
DMF = Defensive Midfielder

(RFB is Right Fullback, LF is Left Forward, RDMF is Right Defensive Midfielder, etc).

EXAMPLES OF WHERE PLAYERS MIGHT BE POSITIONED ON KICK-OFFS:

- A. A. The diagram below assumes 11 players per side (11 vs. 11) in a 3-2-2-3 formation and the "Green" team is kicking off. Blue is on defense. (Note: the "field" below is not to scale; see the "Field Diagram" for a better drawing of a field. **See Notes, below.**):





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