

MINI SOCCER AT A GLANCE

2025/2026 season:

	U7	U8	U9	U10
Max permitted format	5v5	5v5	7v7	7v7
Ball Size	3	3	3	3
Offside	No	No	No	No
Throw Ins	No	No	No	No
Pass or Dribble In	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Back Pass Rule	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Corners	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Retreat Line	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Power Play	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Deliberate Heading Allowed	No – if occurs an indirect free kick to the opposition	No – if occurs an indirect free kick to the opposition	No – if occurs an indirect free kick to the opposition	No – if occurs an indirect free kick to the opposition

PASS OR DRIBBLE-IN

U7-U10 (2025/26)

**Traditional throw-ins will no longer take place
and will be replaced by a pass or dribble-in.**

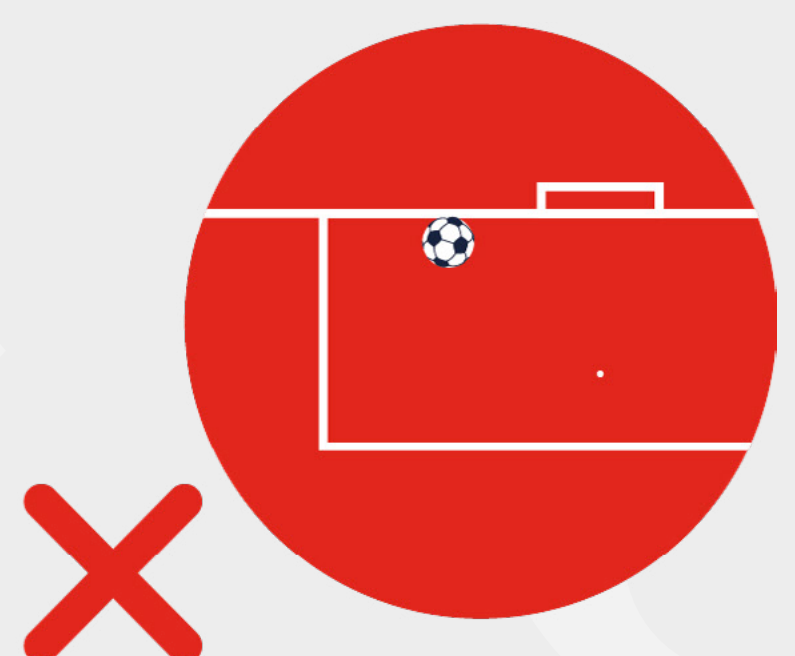
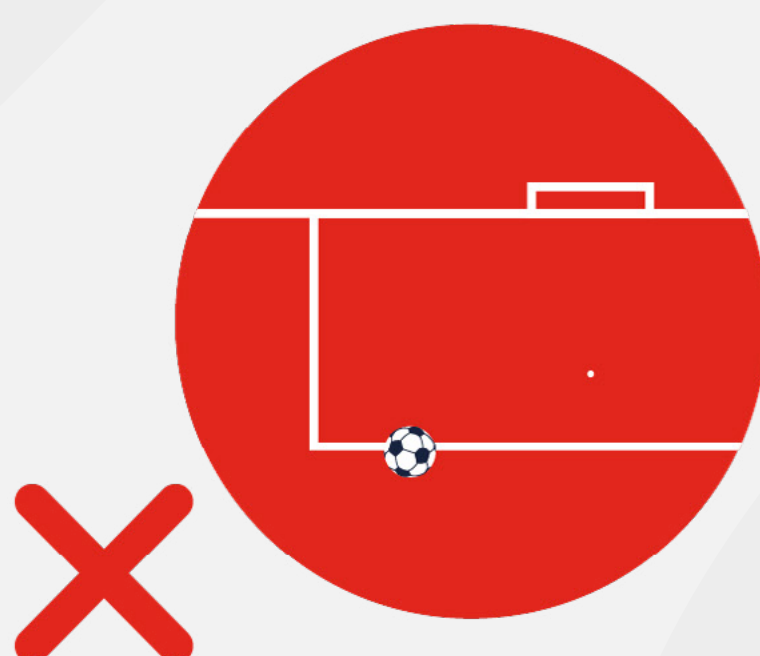
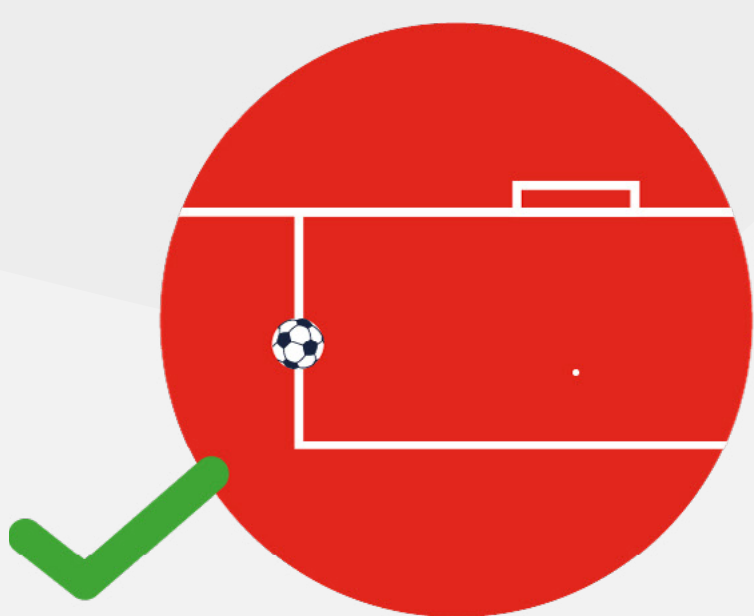
For more details [click here](#).

DELIBERATE HEADING

**No deliberate heading for Under 7s up
to and including Under 10s.**

Deliberately heading the ball is an offence punishable by an indirect free kick. The indirect free kick is taken at the point where the ball was deliberately headed, except:

Where a player deliberately heads the ball within their own penalty area, the referee will stop the game and restart with an indirect free kick to the opposition from the nearest side line of the penalty area where the offence took place.



FURTHER HEADING GUIDANCE

- ✓ Heading guidance in training for all age groups between under 6 and under 18.
- ✗ No heading in training in the foundation phase (primary school children).
- ✓ Graduated approach to heading training for children in the development phase between under 12 to under 16.
- ✓ Required ball sizes for training and matches for each age group – under 7s to under 10s will play with a size 3 ball.
- ✗ No deliberate heading in matches for Under 7s up to and including Under 10s. All other age groups can head the ball in matches.

FOUNDATION PHASE TRAINING

For age groups u5 to u11 heading should NOT be introduced in training sessions.

Coaches should use the time they have with players to maximise enjoyment and development of other skills, particularly the fundamentals of working with the ball in their hands and feet.

Focus should be on learning to master the ball and control of the body through fun activities.



[www.EnglandFootball.com/participate/
learn/Brain-Health/Heading-in-Football](http://www.EnglandFootball.com/participate/learn/Brain-Health/Heading-in-Football)

INTRODUCTION

**Without Laws there would be no football.
But when very young children play there are
many other things to consider too.**

- ✓ *Can we make sure that everyone, children AND adults, has an enjoyable time?*
- ✓ *If the pitch is fit to play, is the weather appropriate for small children?*
- ✓ *Is there any reason why EVERY child should not be able to enjoy at least 50% game time on the day?*

If we can all apply these principles just as much as the Laws themselves, then we should see more and more children enjoying the greatest game in the world.

Players will play to the laws of the game of the age-group that they are playing in.



THE GRASSROOTS CODE

The Grassroots Code is designed to unite everyone across grassroots football by driving positive standards of behaviour we can all get behind.

Good behaviour deserves everyone's respect.

Created with contributions gathered from grassroots clubs, The Grassroots Code will improve and maintain the standards everyone expects to see at your own club as well as others.

To do so, The Grassroots Code includes Standards of Behaviour which ensure a positive football environment for all. They're very clear, so everyone can understand and remember them:

- **Enjoy The Game** - we're here to enjoy ourselves... win, lose or draw.
- **Give Respect** - we always treat others as we'd like to be treated.
- **Be Inclusive** - we embrace our differences... football is a game for everyone.
- **Work Together** - we're a team, on and off the pitch.
- **Play Safe** - we all have a role in safeguarding young people and vulnerable adults.



THE GRASSROOTS CODE

Together, these Standards of Behaviour promote a positive, inclusive and respectful football experience for everyone.

One in which your club can take pride in. One which makes even the strongest football clubs stronger. One which better represents our communities.

[The Grassroots Code | England Football](#)



SILENT SUPPORT

**There will be two National Silent Support
Weekends this season:**

15 - 16 November 2025

14 - 15 March 2026

Silent Support Weekend is here to help young players to find their voice on the pitch, make their own decisions and enjoy their game... with no distracting noise from spectators on the sidelines.

Leagues can run their own silent support weekends in addition to the two national events.

**[www.EnglandFootball.com/participate/
behaviour/Silent-Support](https://www.EnglandFootball.com/participate/behaviour/Silent-Support)**



THE BEHAVIOUR HUB

1.6 million people in England play football regularly, with participation bringing huge mental, physical and emotional wellbeing benefits. From players to parents, coaches to club officials, we have a collective responsibility to create a positive football experience for all.

The Behaviour Hub is here to support everyone to uphold and improve the **Standards of Behaviour** we expect to see across grassroots football.

The Grassroots Code
Behaviour Improvement Programme
Behaviour Improvement Resources
Reporting Discrimination
Sanctions and Discipline

www.EnglandFootball.com/participate/behaviour



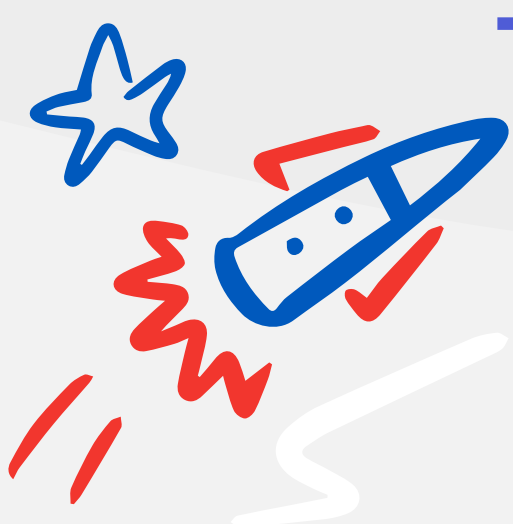
Childhood is a magical time of infinite possibilities, hope and potential! To help our young children we have developed Play Phase for children age 4-6 as England Football's Early Years philosophy.

The fun of taking part in games while keeping active can make a huge and positive difference that lasts a lifetime. So, let's lay these good foundations early.

Play Phase is about encouraging children in skills and learning that will eventually be useful not just in football, but in life. It makes learning fun, playful and creative, for lifelong benefits.

To find out more about Play Phase go to:

www.EnglandFootball.com/play/ways-to-play/play-phase



PFA YOUTH ADVISORY SUPPORT

Signing for an academy is an exciting opportunity, but it's also an introduction to the highly competitive, complex nature of football.

The PFA is not affiliated with leagues, clubs or governing bodies, so they can provide accurate, free, impartial information and advice about the academy system and what it entails for young players and their families.

They operate a free, confidential service where you can get advice about:

- Premier League and English Football League youth-development rules.
- Academy registrations, inductions and contractual offers.
- Football Association and FIFA regulations scholarship offers.

PFA YOUTH ADVISORY SUPPORT

- End-of-season procedures and requesting release
- Player development, including coaching and education rules
- Player welfare
- Intermediaries



0161 236 0575



youthadvisory@thepfa.com



[www.thepfa.com/players/
youth-advisory/independent-advice](http://www.thepfa.com/players/youth-advisory/independent-advice)

INTRODUCTION

Children from U7– U10 do not play in leagues. They can play in a maximum of three trophy events during the season.

This allows them to learn about winning and losing in a fun environment. Trophies can be awarded to the winners and the results of the mini-event published.

Age Maximum Format Trophy Events

U7s - U8s		U9s - U10s	
	3 x 2 weeks in a season		3 x 4 weeks in a season



When you see this symbol, rotate your device to see the diagram in more detail.

All sizes, times or numbers shown are the maximum allowed unless otherwise stated in the FA Standard Code of Regulations (SCORY). All diagrams are shown with 7 versus 7 for illustrative purposes only.

FOOTBALL IS FOR EVERYONE

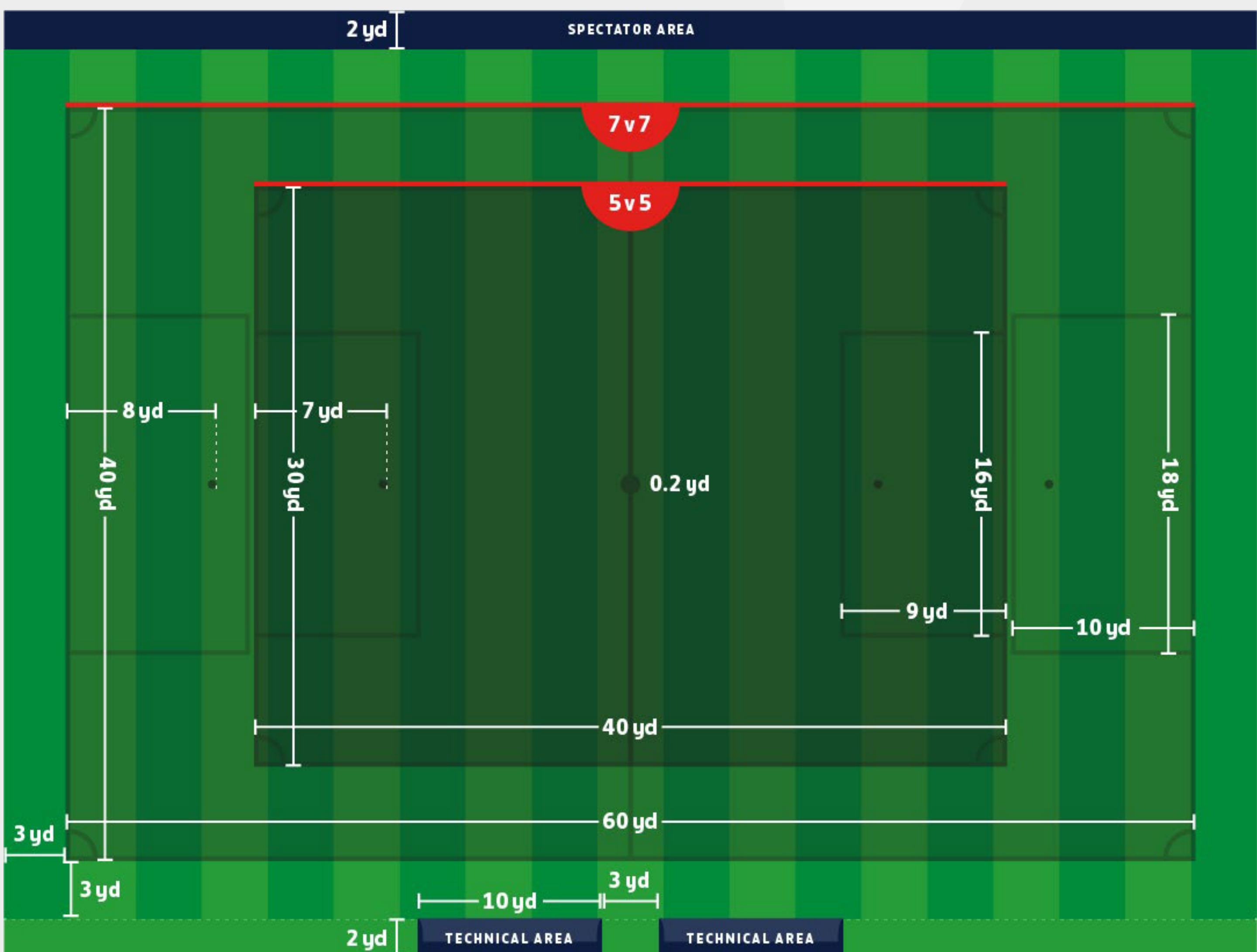
The FA is committed to making football accessible 'For All' and we strive to remove all barriers that may restrict people from taking part in the sport.

In order to support this principle, if a player has to wear clothing as a requirement of their faith, we would expect the match referee to allow this to be accommodated. On occasions, where players wear shorts over the top of the trousers, this may result in trousers that are a different colour to the shorts worn; similarly with shirts and undershirts. Wearing shorts over the top of trousers/tracksuit isn't required and should not stop participation.

Otherwise, everyone is generally expected to adhere to Law 4 regarding playing equipment (i.e. socks, shin pads and correct footwear).

MINI-SOCCER LAWS INDEX

1 PLAYING AREA



The 5v5 playing area and pitch markings are for U7/U8 and the 7v7 playing area and pitch markings for U9/U10.

- **Kick offs:** these are taken from the centre mark on the half way line.
- **Retreat line:** the team without the ball moves back to the half way line when goal kicks are taken.
- **Goal sizes:** the goal size for Mini-Soccer is 12ft × 6ft.

2 BALL

Ball size by age

U7s - U10s



Size 3

- U7s - U10s should use a size 3 ball.
- The ball should be safe for children to play with and made of leather or another suitable material.

3 NUMBER OF PLAYERS



Maximum number of players by age:

U7s - U8s	U9s - U10s
	

- **U7s – 8s:** the maximum number of players is 5* with a squad of 10 or less.
- **U9s – 10s:** the maximum number of players is 7* with a squad of 14 or less.

*Subject to the potential operation of the power play rules

- Coaches can be flexible outside of Trophy Events
- The FA is strongly of the opinion that there are technical benefits to be gained by playing formats of the game using smaller numbers such as 4v4, 3v3, 2v2.
- The structure of development football lends itself to playing in a variety of different competitive formats across the season. Leagues should be flexible with fixtures.
- Reds U7s and Blues U7s, each with 7 registered players, could play a 4v4 and a 3v3 instead of a 5v5 and two substitutes, where facilities allow. The FA recommends that coaches should seek to provide these different challenges.
- Roll-off roll-on substitutions can be made at any time during the game with permission from the referee, including players who have already been substituted.
- All team members should receive equal playing time where possible, with a best practice recommendation of at least 50% per player for each game.

4 PLAYING EQUIPMENT



- Children **MUST** wear shin pads to play Mini-Soccer.
- These should be covered entirely by knee length socks. [Click here](#) for guidance on use of shin pads in grassroots football.
- Goalkeepers should wear a different coloured shirt to the rest of the team.
- Footwear should be appropriate for the playing surface.
- If the weather is poor then players should wear appropriate clothing, but hoodies are not allowed.

5 & 6 REFEREE AND OTHER MATCH OFFICIALS



- Any person who referees a game of Mini-Soccer has the authority to apply the Laws of Mini-Soccer even if they are not a fully qualified referee.
- The referee should always help the players to learn the game by explaining their decisions.
- Assistant referees are not required for Mini-Soccer.

7 DURATION OF THE GAME

Age maximum playing time in any one day:

U7s - U8s		U9s - U10s	
	40 minutes		60 minutes

- Children should not exceed the maximum playing time for their age in any one day. It is the responsibility of the club and/or the child's parent or carer to ensure this.
- Each league is allowed to determine its own playing time up to the maximum allowed.
- Half time should not be more than five minutes.
- Mini-Soccer can be split into quarters within the maximum playing time allowed.
- For tournament football see the Standard Code of Rules for Youth Competitions.

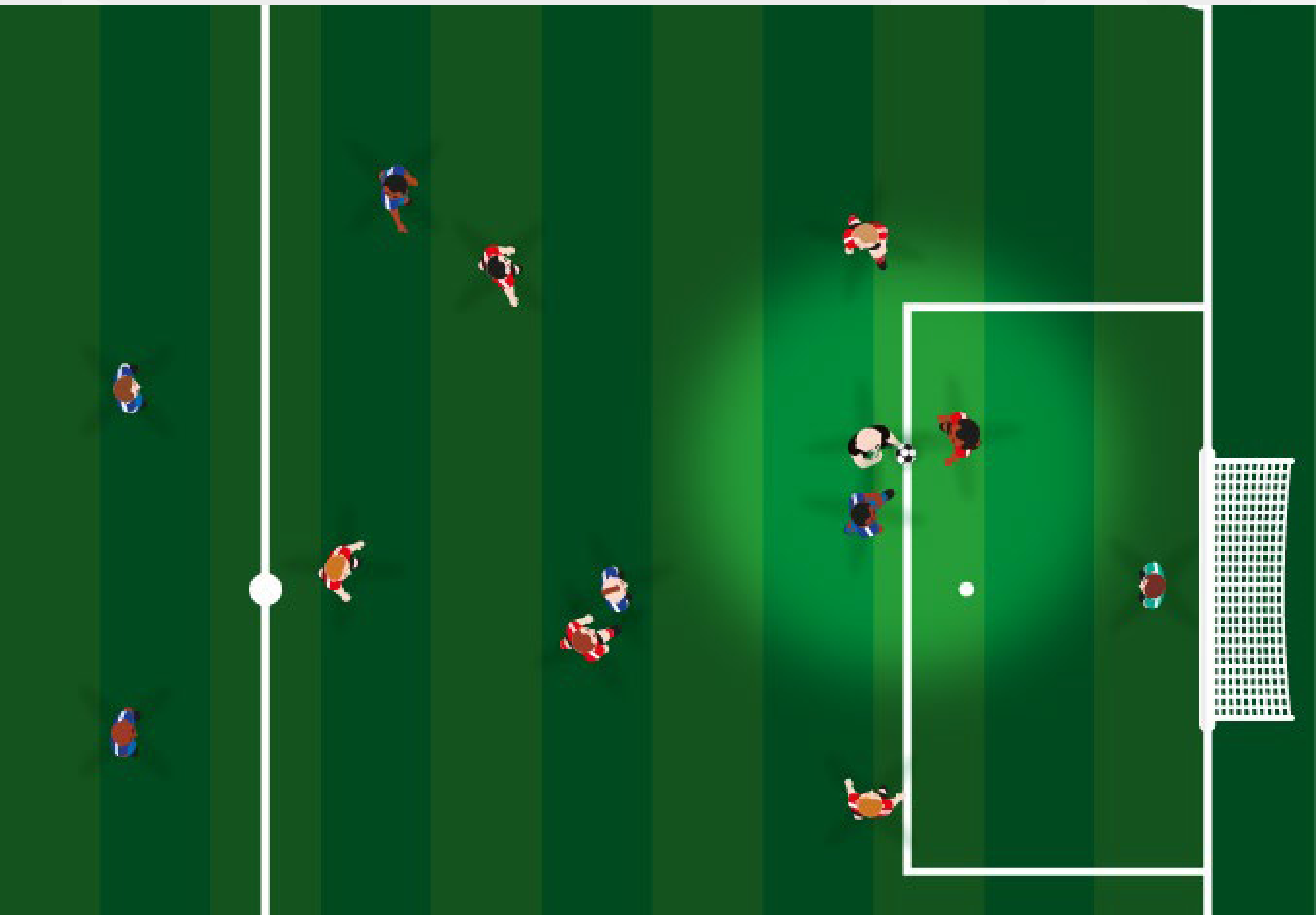
8 START AND RESTART OF PLAY



- A kick off from the centre mark starts the game, or restarts it after a goal is scored.
- It can be taken in any direction.
- The opposition must be five yards away and in their own half.



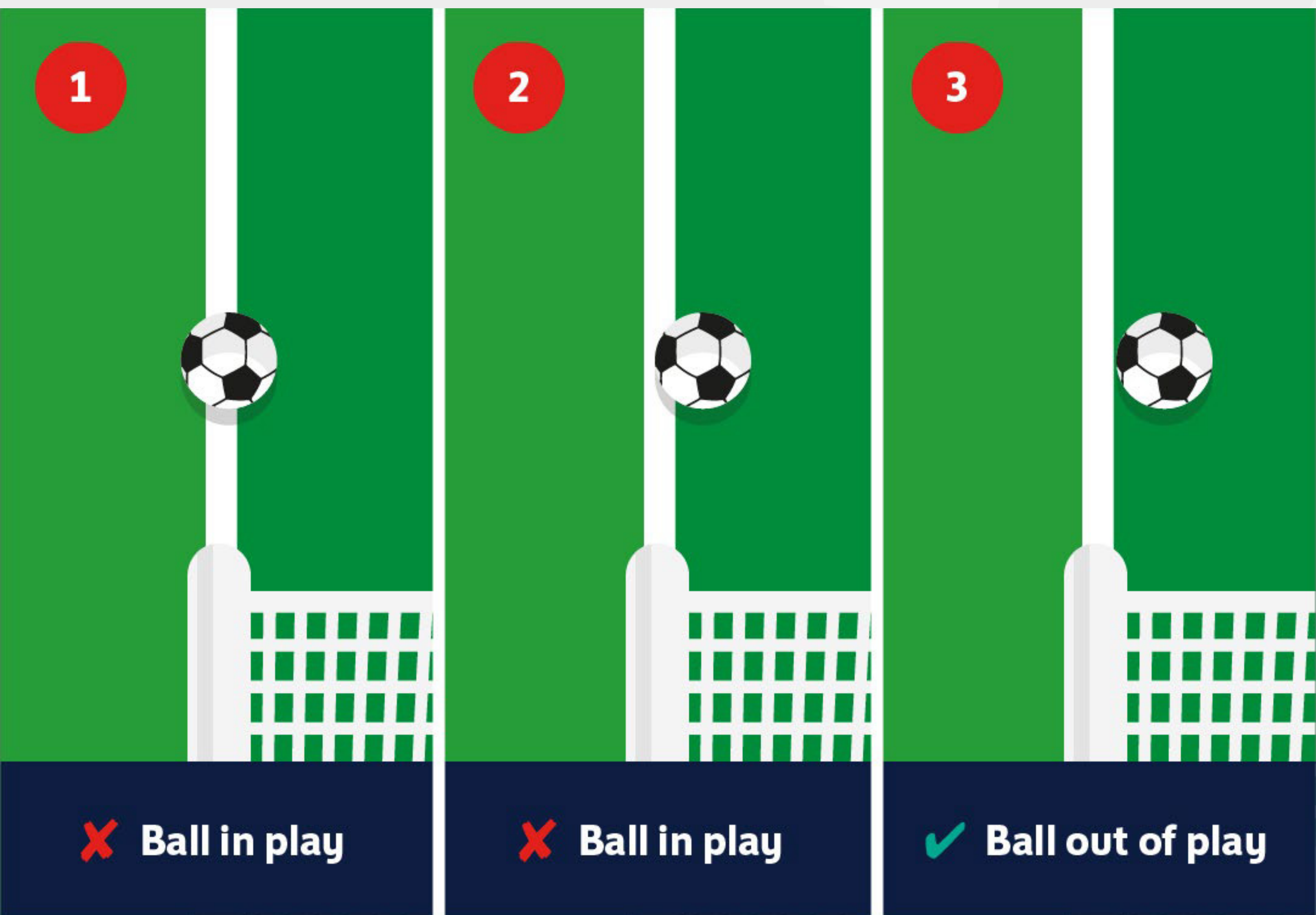
8 START AND RESTART OF PLAY



- In Mini-Soccer a goal cannot be scored directly from a kick off or a dropped ball.
- In special circumstances a drop ball is used to restart the game, such as after an injury.
- If the game was stopped with the ball in the penalty area, the referee drops it for the defending team goalkeeper in the penalty area.
- If the ball was outside the penalty area, the referee drops it for one player of the team that has or would have gained possession at its position when play was stopped.
- For a dropped ball all other players (of both teams) must remain at least 5 yards away from the ball.



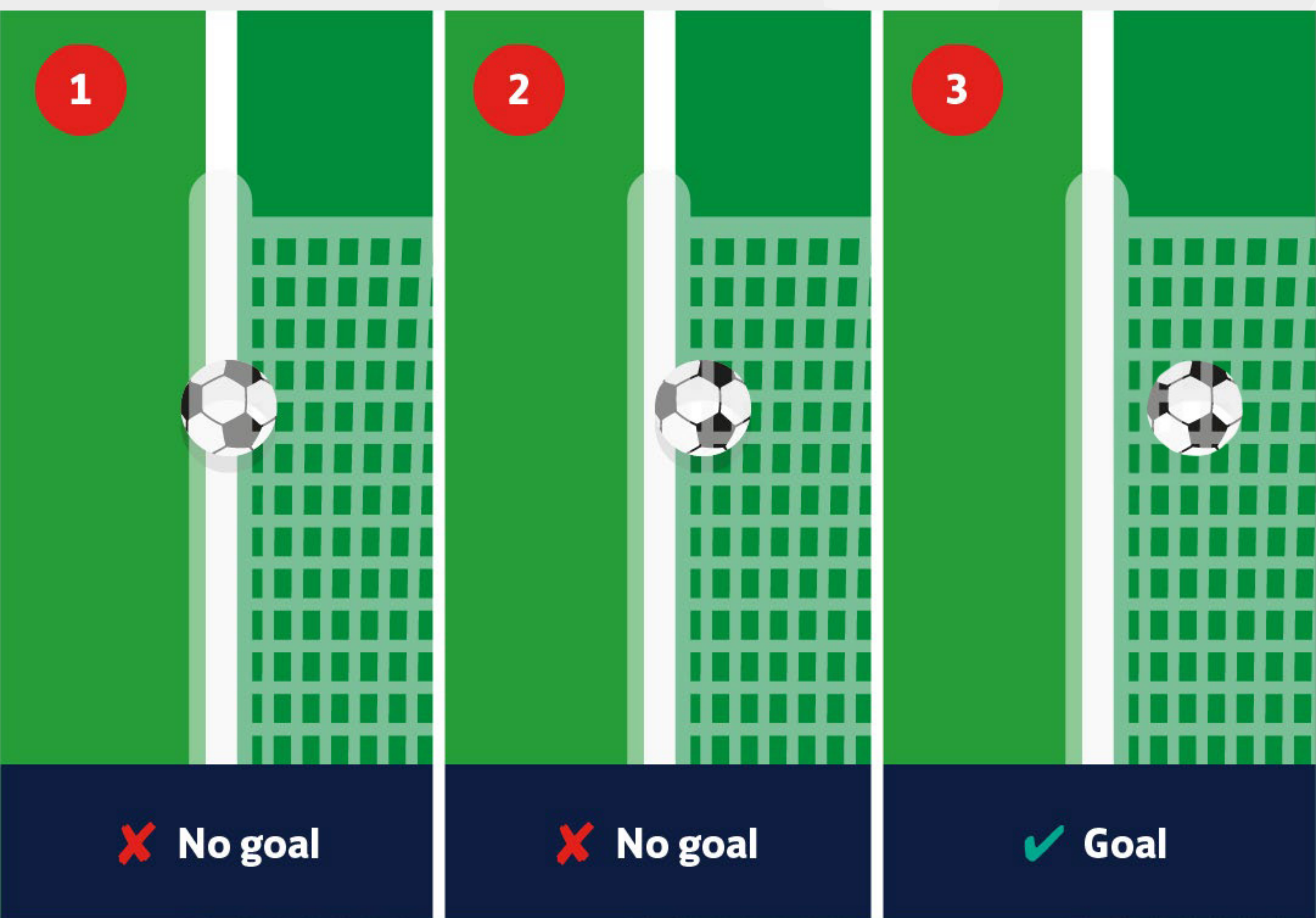
9 BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY



- The goal line and touchlines are part of the field of play. The ball must be entirely over these lines to be out of play (pictured).
- If an attacker is the last player to touch the ball over the goal line, a goal kick is given.
- If a defender is the last player to touch the ball over the goal line, a corner kick is given.
- If a player touches the ball over the touchline, a "Pass or Dribble-In" is given to the opposing team.



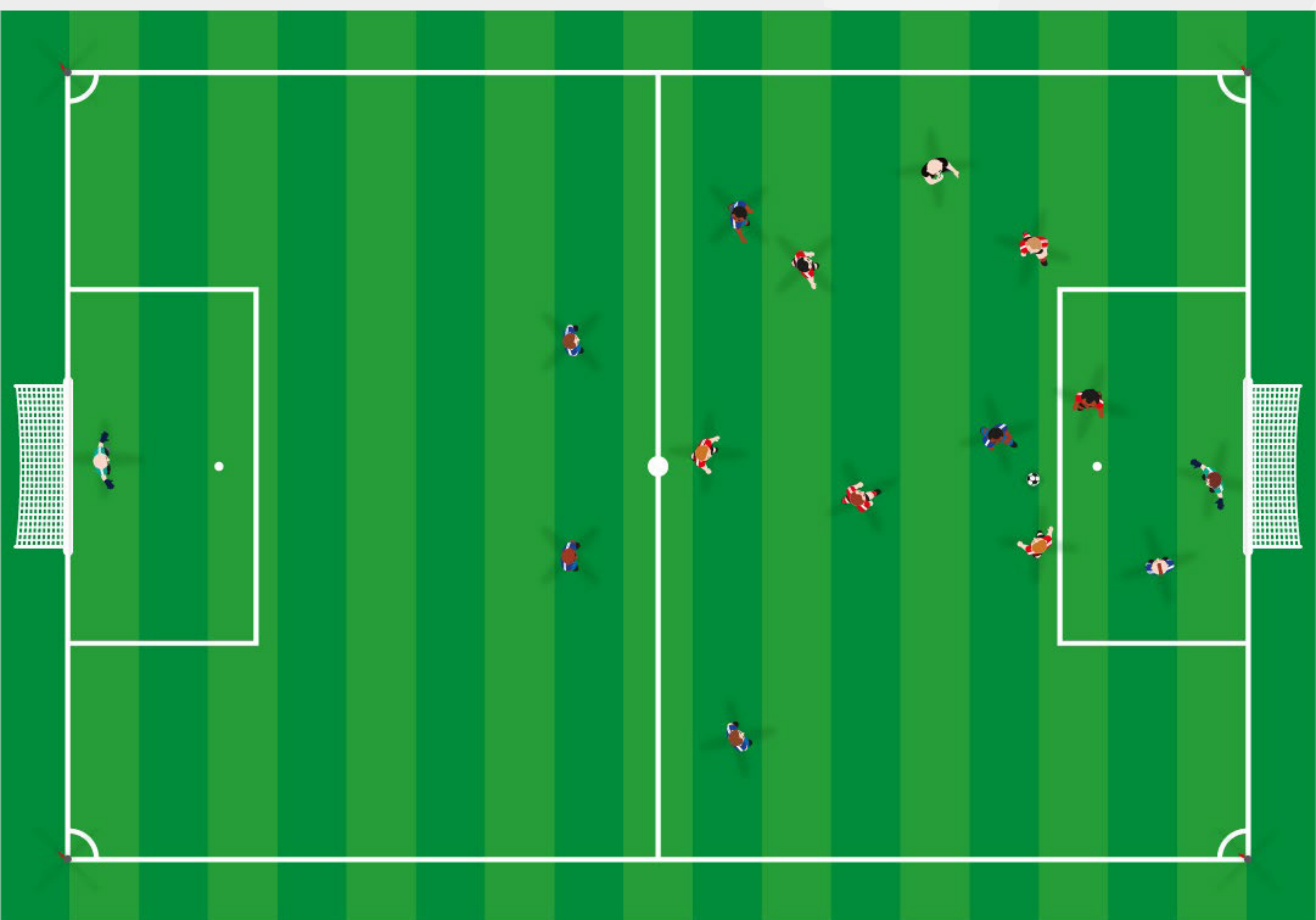
10 METHOD OF SCORING



- A goal is scored when the ball completely crosses the goal line between the posts and under the crossbar of the goal (pictured).
- If a foul or hand ball occurs the goal shall be disallowed.



11 OFFSIDE



- There is no offside in Development Football.
- The children can be in any area of the pitch at any time (pictured) apart from when the Retreat Line is played.



12 FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

- Free kicks are awarded when a foul is committed as in older age football.
- In mini soccer all free kicks are direct, except when a deliberate header has occurred.
- A goalkeeper is not allowed to pick the ball up if it has been deliberately kicked to them by a teammate.
- If this happens a free kick should be given on the penalty area line closest to where the incident occurs.
- Deliberately heading the ball is an offence punishable by an indirect free kick. The indirect free kick is taken at the point where the ball was deliberately headed, except: Where a player deliberately heads the ball within their own penalty area, the referee will stop the game and restart with an indirect free kick to the opposition from the nearest side line of the penalty area where the offence took place. ([See page 5 for the diagram](#))
- As with all other aspects of Development Football the children should be learning the game. Coaches in training, and referees on the day, should try to make sure the children understand all of the above.

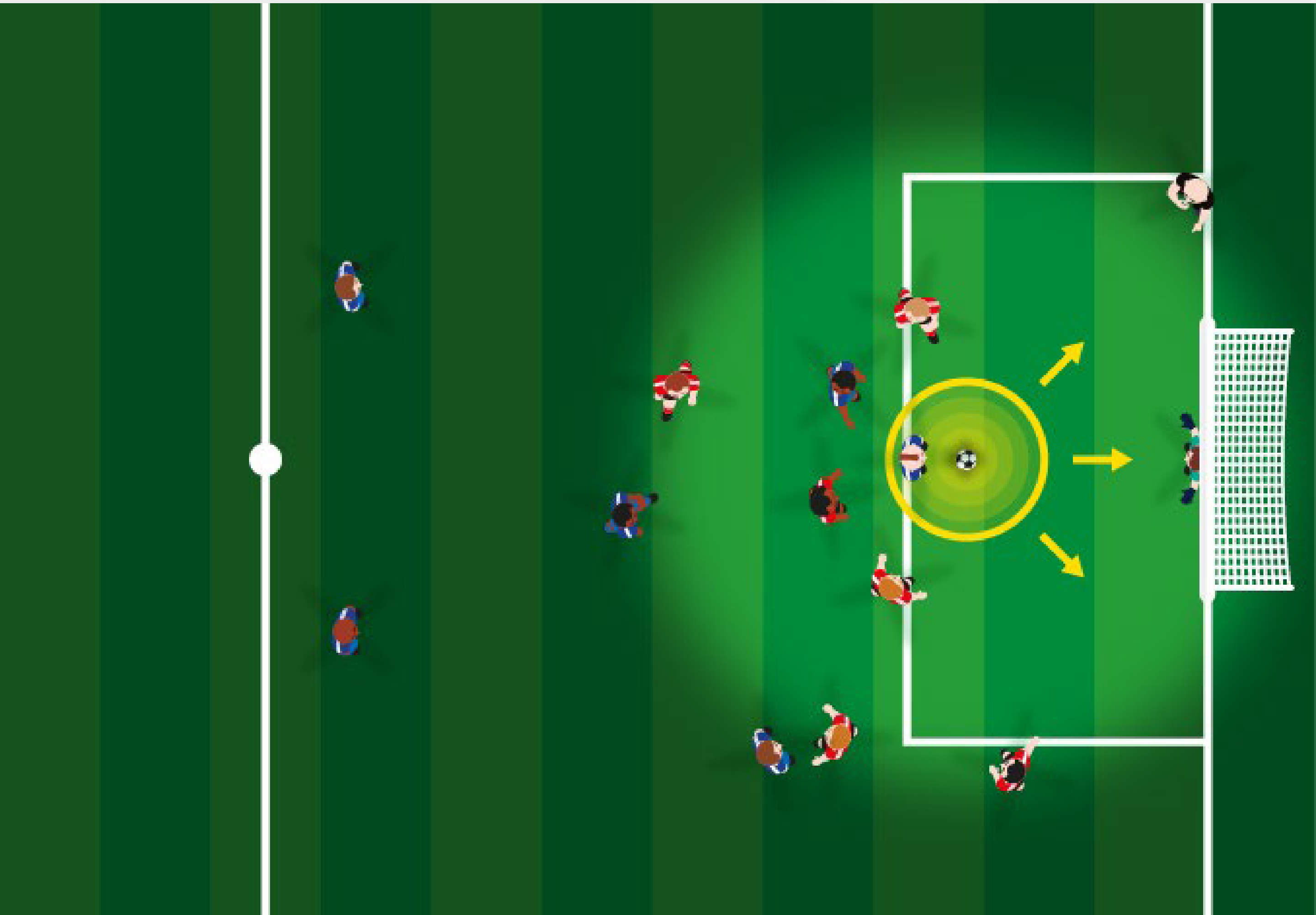
13 FREE KICKS



- For all free kicks defending players must be 5 yards from the ball (pictured).



14 PENALTY KICKS



- If a foul is committed in the penalty area by a defender a penalty kick will be awarded.
- All players except the defending goalkeeper and kicker must be outside the penalty area and at least 5 yards from the penalty mark.
- The ball must be kicked forward.



U7-U10 (2025/26)

15 PASS OR DRIBBLE-IN

- When the whole of the ball passes over the touchline, on the ground or in the air, instead of a throw-in, a pass-in or dribble-in is awarded.
- A kicker taking a pass-in may choose to touch the ball again before it is touched by another player

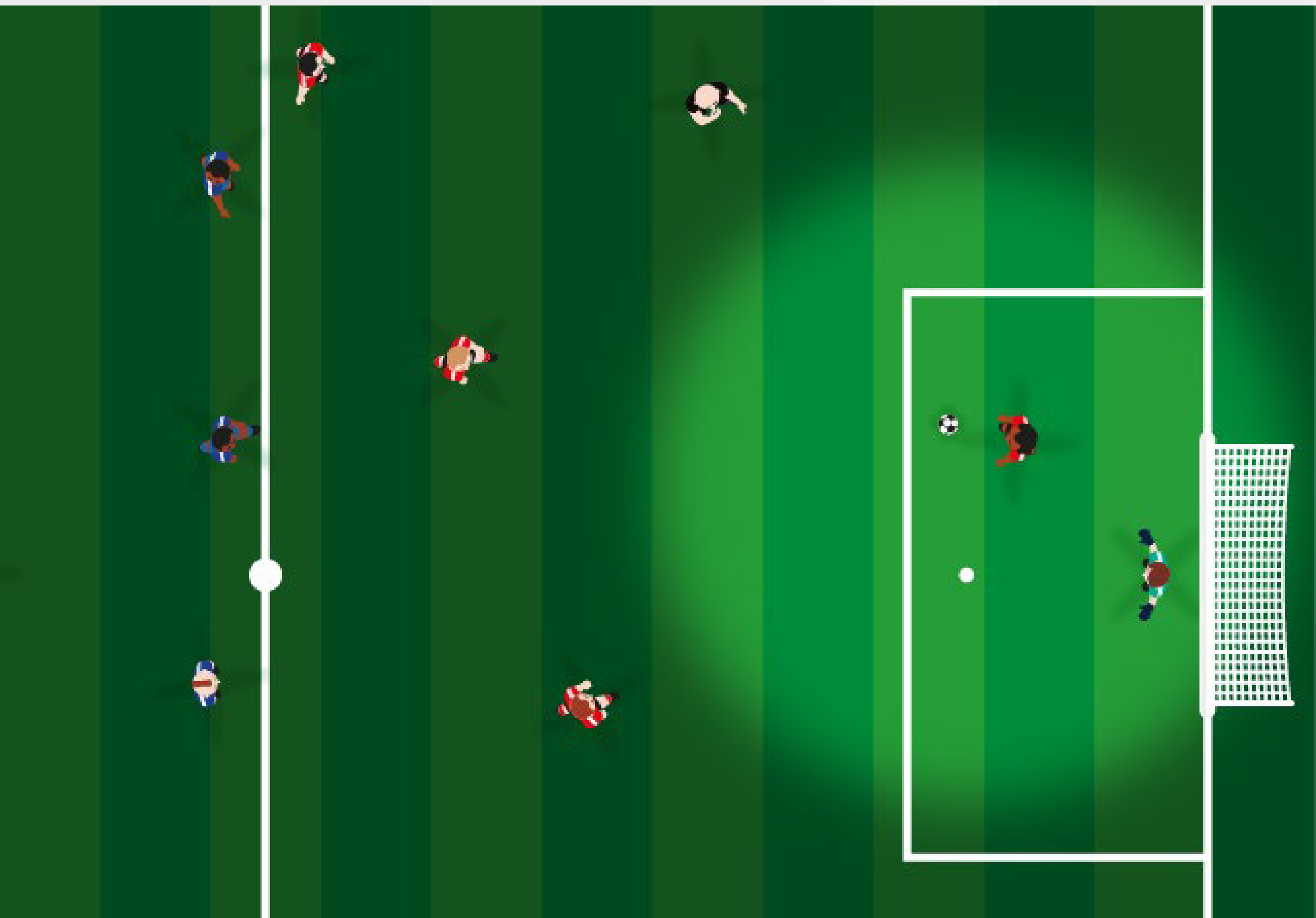
At the moment of delivering the ball:

- The ball must be stationary on the touchline at the point where it left the pitch; only the kicker may be off the pitch.
- All opponents must stand at least 5 yards from the point on the touchline where the pass-in or dribble-in is to be taken.

A goal cannot be scored directly from a pass-in.

The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves. For more information, including a video please [click here](#).

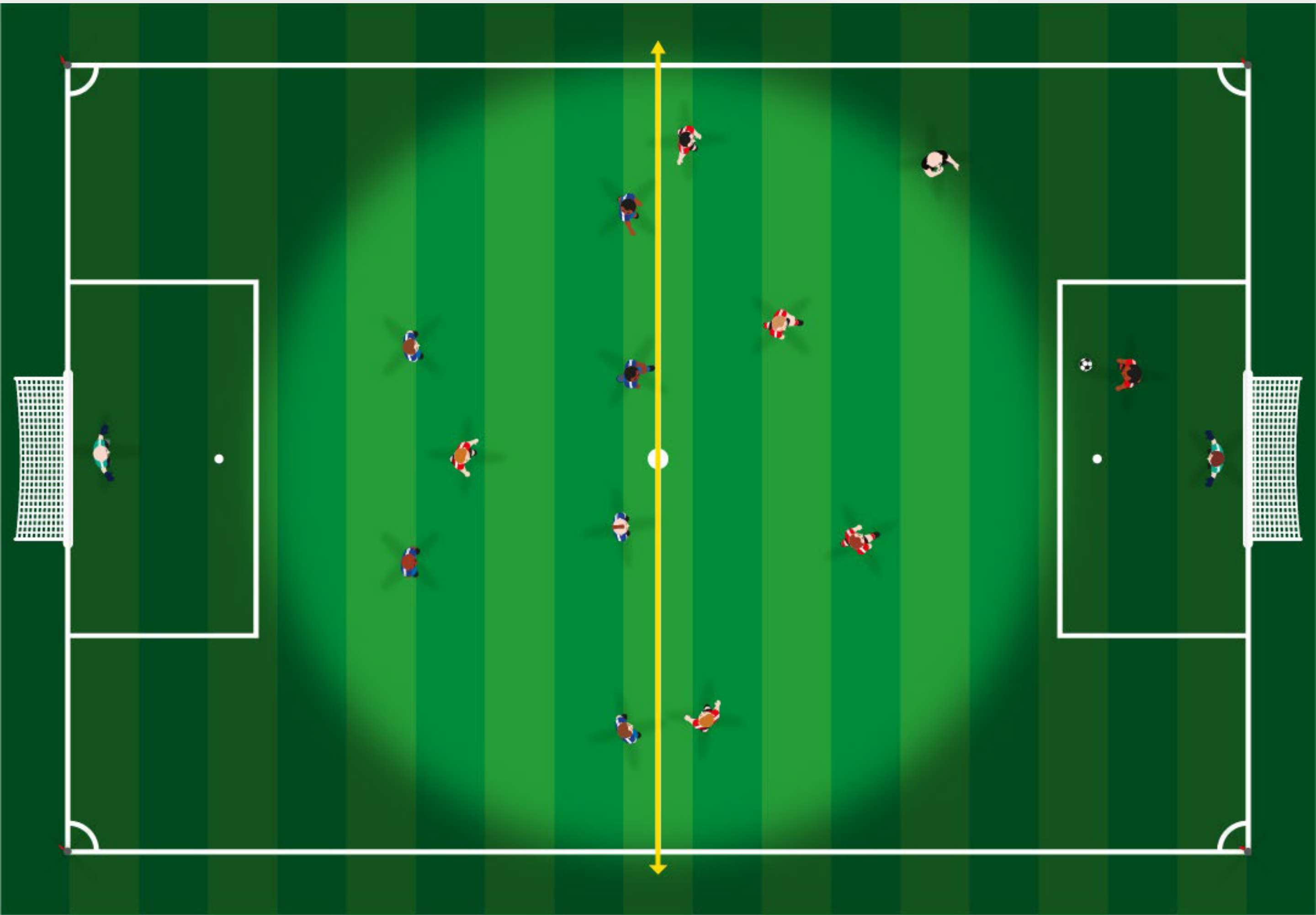
16 GOAL KICKS



- If an attacking player kicks the ball over the goal line a goal kick is awarded to the defending team.
- A goal kick can be taken from any point within the penalty area and by any player from the team with the ball (pictured).



16 GOAL KICKS



- The team without the ball must retreat to their own half until the ball is in play.
- This is known as the Retreat Line (PICTURED).
- Once the ball is in play, the team without the ball can try and win it back.
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves.
- As with all the Laws of Mini-Soccer, the referee should help the players learn the game.



17 CORNER KICKS



- If a defending player kicks the ball over the goal line a corner is awarded to the attacking team.
- The defending players must remain at least 5 yards from the ball until it is in play (PICTURED).
- The player taking the corner may not touch the ball again until it has touched another player.





OPTIONAL POWER PLAY LAW

Development football is designed to create the best learning and fun experience for young players. To ensure an imbalance in ability does not spoil this, the FA has approved 'Power Play' as an option that mini-soccer and youth leagues can adopt.

- If a team is losing by a four goal difference they can put an additional player on – so 5v5 becomes 6v5.
- If the score returns to less than a four goal difference the team takes off a player. It does not have to be the last player to come on.



OPTIONAL POWER PLAY LAW

- If a team goes on to be losing by a six goal difference a further additional player can be added – so 6v5 becomes 7v5.
- The main aim of the Power Play option is that all players are being challenged and enjoying the game.
- Power Play is available through all mini soccer football formats 5v5 and 7v7.

OPTIONAL

POWER PLAY LAW

The diagram below helps to explain the process:

Score	What happens?	5v5	7v7
Red Team 3-0 Blue Team	No change	5v5	7v7
Red Team 4-0 Blue Team	Blue Team brings on one extra player	5v6	7v8
Red Team 4-1 Blue Team	Blue Team removes one player*	5v5	7v7
Red Team 5-1 Blue Team	Blue Team brings on one extra player	5v6	7v8
Red Team 6-1 Blue Team	No change	5v6	7v8
Red Team 7-1 Blue Team	Blue Team brings on another extra player	5v7	7v9
Red Team 7-2 Blue Team	Blue Team removes one player*	5v6	7v8
Red Team 7-3 Blue Team	No change	5v6	7v8
Red Team 7-4 Blue Team	Blue Team removes final extra player*	5v5	7v7

* This does not need to be the same player that was put on as the additional player.