

# PINELANDERS PLAYING RULES

## Effective 2/12/2025

This document contains:

- 1) **Part 1: Playing Rules**
- 2) **Part 2: Playing Rules - Modifications to Laws of the Game**

### Part 1 - Pinelanders Playing Rules

Pinelanders' Intramural soccer program is designed to teach youngsters how to play the game of soccer. The emphasis of the program is on learning soccer skills, strategy and good sportsmanship. Our Pinelanders Rules supplement the Laws of the Game as well as provide information to coaches, referees and parents. Coaches, officials and parents are reminded that they should always set a good example of sportsmanship and behavior.

1. **Playing Time.** Every rostered player must play at least one half of the game regardless of his/her ability or skill level.
2. **Goalkeepers.** No player should play goalkeeper for more than half of any game.
3. **Injuries.** In the event a player is injured, the referee will stop play so that the player may be attended to. Play will be restarted as directed by the Laws of the Game.
  - a. If a player sustains a significant injury, the player's coach must immediately bring the injury to the attention of the Board Member on Duty, and complete the required Injury Report forms after the game.
  - b. Coaches may not enter the field to tend a player until permitted to do so by the referee. With the permission of the referee, coaches may invite parents onto the field if the injury is severe.
4. **Playing Positions.** Coaches may set up players in whatever positions they feel is advantageous. They may use forward, midfielders, defenders and/or wingers, stoppers, sweepers, fullbacks, etc. However, coaches must use players at several different positions throughout the season to increase the players' knowledge of the game and improve skills.
5. **Uniforms.** The Club uniform comprises a Pinelanders team shirt, plain black shorts, plain black socks completely covering shin guards, shin guards, and soccer cleats or sneakers. The goalkeeper will wear a shirt or pinnie that easily distinguishes him/her as goalkeeper. Players must observe the following rules:
  - a. Uniform shirts must be tucked in and the player's number must be visible.
  - b. Players not in uniform or otherwise improperly attired will be sent off the field by the referee, and not allowed to return until in proper uniform.
  - c. Players are not permitted to play in mutilated shirts. Any player who mutilates his/her team shirt must either repair it or bear the cost of a replacement shirt.
  - d. The Board may designate specific periods during which modified uniforms may be permitted, to acknowledge a special event or occurrence. Such modifications will not be considered permanent and will require a vote by the Board for each occasion.
6. **Dangerous Articles.** For reasons of safety:
  - a. No jewelry (including earrings), hair barrettes, beads or hard casts or splints (even if padded) may be worn during a game.
  - b. Players may not chew gum or eat candy while on the field.
  - c. The referee is to remove any player wearing dangerous articles from the game until the items in question are removed. A substitute may only replace a removed player during normal substitution times as defined elsewhere in these Rules.

7. **Equipment and Uniform Check.** It is the coach's responsibility to check players for proper equipment prior to the game, and have them remove any improper articles before taking the field.
8. **Disputes.** Any rules disputes are to be brought to the attention of the Board of Directors. Interpretation of the Laws of the Game is not grounds for dispute. All interpretations of the Laws of the Game and Club Rules by the referee are final. No protests are allowed.
9. **Arrival Time.** All players and coaches should arrive at the field fifteen minutes prior to the scheduled start time of their game.
10. **Canceled, Postponed or Abandoned Games.** All games will be played as scheduled unless postponed by the Board of Directors designated schedule manager, President or BMOD. Postponements are subject to the following restrictions.
  - a. No coach may change the scheduled time or date of a game. Any game not played as scheduled, and not officially postponed, will result in a no-game.
  - b. Games may only be postponed or abandoned for reasons of inclement weather or special circumstances as deemed appropriate by the Scheduling Manager. Games that are abandoned after starting will not be made up.
  - c. The club will reschedule postponed games on the first practical date (considering referee, field and board availability). The club will make every reasonable effort to play each scheduled game, however games unable to be played prior to the final day of the season (trophy day) will not be made up.
11. **Coach & Spectator Positioning and Behavior.** See the Field Rules policy for information about Spectator Positioning.
  - a. During a game coaches and teams are limited to "technical areas," defined as within 10 yards of the mid-field line, on their own side of the mid-field, as chosen at the beginning of the game. For small-sided fields, coaches are limited to their chosen side of the mid-field but must not enter the "6 yard" area.
  - b. Spectators and teams are to be on opposite sides of the fields during a game – that is, both teams must be on one side, and all spectators must be on the other side.
  - c. No spectators or coaches will be allowed to run the length of the field to coach players during a game.
12. **Short-Handed Games.** If at the start of a game, a team does not have the number of players designated for the division, there are multiple remedies available.
  - a. Under no circumstances may teams use unregistered players.
  - b. Teams are encouraged to borrow players from the opposing team to balance out the squads.
  - c. If there are not enough players between the two teams, a short-handed team may "borrow" a registered player from another team provided the player is age/gender eligible for that division (i.e. U9 may borrow from U9 or U9G). Coaches shall ensure that the use of borrowed players does not otherwise restrict the playing time of players assigned to their team. If assigned players arrive late and the squads become filled then the borrowed players shall be removed from the rotation to ensure assigned players receive adequate time.
  - d. If one team is short-handed to start a game, the other team should play "down" to the same number of players. However, coaches may agree to 'play down' by one player if the game can remain balanced / fair.
  - e. Late arriving players may be fielded by both teams if more become available during the course of the game.
  - f. There is no requirement for a team to play down to compensate for a player on the other team who is ejected, or who leaves the field as a result of injury or for any other reason.
  - g. With the approval of the BMOD and the referee, if teams are extremely shorthanded they may seek any open field that the coaches, referee and BMOD deems suitable for the number of available players.

### 13. Two-Team Divisions.

- a. If a division consists of only two teams then shortly before each game the teams shall be designated by the coaches. Coaches should build balanced teams based on the players present.
- b. Coaches should make adjustments as appropriate if late arrivals, problems with the draft process and/or other issues result in significant team imbalance. Adjustments should consist of transferring players between teams to improve balance and game play.
- c. The redraft and any other adjustments apply only to the scheduled game, and all players return to their original assignments for weekday practices and other team events.

A two-team division may be combined into a single team for administrative and/or practice purposes at the discretion of the Commissioners.

## Playing Rules Part 2 - Modifications to Laws of the Game

The IFAB Laws of the Game, as adopted by FIFA, will be the basis for all playing rules and will apply unless noted here. The annual updates to the Laws of the Game will be applied annually in the Fall season.

FIFA rules apply to all divisions except as noted in the rules that follow. Modifications based on the age and ability of Pinelanders players are included within this second of the Playing Rules.

1. **Length of Games.** Game lengths for each division may vary from season to season, and are provided in an on-line document. There will be a five-minute break between periods. All games will end at least five minutes before the scheduled start of the next game on that field, regardless of their own start time or any delays, unless an emergency situation dictates otherwise.
2. **Number of Players.** Shall be prescribed by the club and posted on the website under Division Structure each season. Teams should start with even numbers of players, however, at the discretion and with agreement of both teams' coaches, a team with fewer than the prescribed players may elect to play down a player if there are no players to borrow.
3. **Field Dimensions.** Will be set by the club each season.
4. **Substitutions.** Goalkeepers or field players may be substituted with the permission of the referee on any goal kick, corner kick or throw in, or after a goal has been scored. There is no limit to the number of substitutions. Reentry is permitted. Players leaving the field must be removed prior to their replacements entering the field of play. Players may not be substituted during free kicks or penalty kicks.
5. **Self-Protection.** Players may use their hands and arms in a "cross-arm" fashion to protect their faces or chests. However, if in the opinion of the referee the player had other options available or gains an advantage by such use (i.e. propels the ball), a free kick or penalty kick, as appropriate, will be awarded to the opposing team. All other use of the hands will be considered a violation of the laws of the game.
6. **Slide Tackling.** Slide tackling is prohibited in all divisions. Indirect free kicks are to be awarded from the point of infraction of this rule. Repeat offenders will be considered to be exhibiting unsportsmanlike conduct, and cautioned accordingly.
7. **Heading the Ball.** In alignment with U.S. Soccer Federation guidelines, Pinelanders specifically prohibits coaches from teaching heading in all age groups.
  - a. Players in U11/U12G and younger age-groups must not deliberately head the ball in soccer matches. In practices, coaches should stop the drill/scrimmage and reinforce this rule.
  - b. If a player deliberately heads the ball, the referee will immediately stop play and restart with an indirect free kick.
  - c. If a player is inadvertently struck in the head with the ball, there is no rule infraction. However, if the referee deems the player to be injured the referee will immediately stop play, have the player removed, and restart with a drop ball.
  - d. In all cases the referee will assess the player to determine if the player is injured.

- e. Notes: A goal may not be scored against an opponent by deliberately heading the ball
- f. Denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity does not apply to heading the ball, as this action is not a foul.

8. **Five-Goal Rule.** When a team has a five-goal advantage in any game with a referee, the game is officially over and the final score is recorded at this point.

- a. Before a five-goal differential is reached, the coaches of the team that is ahead should make efforts to control the game using techniques that do not discourage the players from competing or humiliate the opposing team.
- b. The referee should advise coaches when there is a 4-goal advantage to begin preparing for the potential of the five-goal rule being invoked.
- c. If a five-goal differential is reached the game is officially over and the final score is recorded by both coaches.
- d. The remaining time will be played as a scrimmage, with additional goals no longer tracked.
- e. The winning team's most dominant or highest-scoring player is given to the losing team as an added player, preferably as a defender. This will result in numerically unbalanced squads on the field. This player is not substituted for another player on the losing team or entered into the team's normal player rotation; he or she is simply added to the field as an extra player who should be instructed to stop attacks and to distribute the ball. However, the player traded should still be encouraged to do his or her best and is expected to try to score if given the opportunity.
- f. Opposing coaches should observe the overall effect on the game and work together to move additional players if necessary to balance the scrimmage
- g. Implementing the Five-Goal Rule is not optional or subject to a coach's or referee's discretion, however discretion may be used regarding how the teams are balanced at the time the five-goal rule is evoked.
- h. Players affected by the Five-Goal Rule should be recognized by the coach for outstanding performance.

9. **Ejection.**

- a. An ejected player must stay by his/her coach and may not take any further part in the game. The player may leave the field if accompanied by their responsible parent, guardian or responsible adult.
- b. An ejected adult must leave the vicinity of the game, which at Hoffman Fields is described as the main parking lot or parking lot at Memorial School.
- c. Refusal to leave will result in a suspension of the game and a forfeit by the offending team and may result in termination of the player's or family's club membership.

10. **Buildout Line**

- a. In divisions U6, U7, U7G, U9 and U9G, a buildout line will be used to give teams a chance to possess and process the ball following goalkeeper possession or a goal kick.
- b. The buildout line may be marked with a solid or dashed line, or with cones at the sidelines, depending on the field configuration.
- c. The buildout line shall be located halfway between midfield and the top of the penalty area (U9) or top of the goalbox (U7)
- d. **Offside & Buildout Line (U9 Only – There's no offside in U7)**
  - i. The build out line on the attacking half of the field shall denote where an offside offense may be called.
  - ii. Players cannot be penalized for an offside offense when on the attacking half of the field between the halfway line and the buildout line.
  - iii. Players may only be penalized for an offside offense when on the attacking half of the field between the build out line and the opposing goal line when the ball is last played by a teammate

- e. Goal kicks / Goalkeeper Possession (Ball in hands)
  - i. On a goal kick, a defensive free kick inside the penalty area, or when the goalkeeper has possession of the ball with their hands, the opposing team must move behind the build-out line until the ball is put back into play.
  - ii. In all divisions with the buildout line, the goalkeeper can throw or roll the ball to put it back into play. In U9, the goalkeeper can punt or drop kick (accepting the risk that if the ball hits the ground it is in play and the goalkeeper is not permitted to pick the ball back up).
  - iii. On a goal kick, free kick inside the penalty area or when the goalkeeper has possession of the ball with their hands, the opposing team may cross the build-out line when:
    - 1. The goalkeeper changes possession from their hand to play the ball with their feet, or
    - 2. A second touch is made by another player on the goalkeeper's team, or
    - 3. The ball comes to a complete stop, or
    - 4. The ball crosses the buildout line.
- f. Buildout Line Practical Applications
  - i. Ideally, the goalkeeper will wait to put the ball into play once all opponents are past the buildout line
  - ii. However, the goalkeeper can put the ball into play sooner but he or she does so accepting the positioning of the opponents and the consequences of how play resumes
  - iii. To support the intent of the development rule, coaches and referees should be mindful of any intentional delays being caused by opponents not retreating in a timely manner or encroaching over the buildout line prior to the ball being put into play
  - iv. Coaches are responsible for addressing these types of issues with their players
  - v. Referees can manage the situation with misconduct if deemed appropriate.
  - vi. Referees should be flexible when enforcing the 6 second rule and counting the time of possession should only begin when all opponents have moved behind the build out line.

#### **11. Goal Kick Rule (Clarification)**

- a. Buildout line provisions superseded this rule in divisions using the buildout line.
- b. This rule allows the goalkeeper's teammates to remain in the penalty area when a goal kick is taken.
- c. This rule is noted here as a change from Pinelanders prior to Spring 2025.
  - i. The ball must be stationary and is kicked from any point within the goal area by a player of the defending team
  - ii. The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves
  - iii. Opponents must be outside the penalty area until the ball is in play

#### **Additional Rules for Divisions U9/U9G**

- 12. **Buildout Line.** Buildout line is located half way between the top of the penalty area and midfield. Rules are enforced based on the 'Buildout Line' rule included in this policy.
- 13. **Throw-Ins.** If a player makes a foul throw in, he/she will be instructed on proper technique and given another attempt. If the second attempt is also a foul through, possession will change to the opposite team.

#### **Additional Rules for Divisions U6/U6G & U7/U7G**

- 14. **Buildout Line.** Buildout line is half way between the goalkeeper box and midfield. Rules are enforced based on the 'Buildout Line' rules included in this policy.
- 15. **Free Kicks.** All free kicks, including goal kicks and corner kicks, are indirect, regardless of the violation.
- 16. **Offside.** The offside rule is not applied in this division.
- 17. **Throw-Ins.** If a player makes a foul throw in, he/she will be instructed on proper technique and given another attempt. This will continue until a proper throw is made. Players making throw-ins or corner kicks must be rotated during each game so all players have a chance to develop proper technique.

18. **Coaching on the Field.** Coaches may enter the field of play to position players at the start of a game or a period. With the referee's permission they may also do so for a restart, but must not unduly delay the game. Coaches may not enter the field of play for any other reason while play is in progress. This practice is encouraged in U6 divisions, but discouraged in U7 divisions especially later in the season.
19. **Goalkeeper's Box.** The box is used to protect the goalkeeper. The goalkeeper's box is the small box in front of the goal and the goalkeeper may not use his or her hands outside of the box. The following rules apply to the box:
  - a. An offensive player may not score a goal when the ball is inside the box; the ball must be played outside the box to score. If the ball is kicked into the goal from inside the goalkeeper's box a goal kick will be awarded.
  - b. The goalkeeper may use his/her hands to play the ball inside the box only.
  - c. After a save in the box the goalkeeper may throw the ball back into play, or place it on the ground and kick it. Punts and/or drop kicks are not permitted.

#### **Additional Rules for Division U5 (and U4 when relevant)**

20. **Offside.** The offside rule is not applied in this division.
21. **Buildout Line.** When a team is taking a goal kick, the opposing team should move behind the midfield line. They may cross the line once play has restarted (ball moves by kicking).
22. **Restarting after a Goal.** After a goal is scored, play should restart with a goal kick.
23. **Other Restarts/Free Kicks.** Players defending any restart should back up at least three yards from the kick taker. Kick-offs, kick-ins, corners and goal kicks should be rotated among players to encourage participation.
24. **Kick-ins (no throw ins).** When the ball is out of bounds on the sideline, a kick-in will be taken (instead of a throw-in). While kick-ins should encourage passing, there is no penalty if the kicker is the next player to touch the ball.
25. **Corner kicks.** To be taken in the vicinity of the corner of the field.
26. **Kick-off.** The ball is placed at midfield for a traditional 'kick-off' to start a period.
27. **Coaching on the Field.** A maximum of one coach per team should be on the field to serve as referees and coaches. The other coach for each team should manage the team on the sideline. If only one coach is available for a team then, as long as there is at least one coach/referee on the field, managing the players on the sidelines will likely supersede acting as referee on the field.
28. **Games & Practices.** Games are structured as 30 minutes of instruction followed by a 30-minute game. Games can be divided into halves or quarters at the discretion of the coaches. The periods do not need to be of equal length. Coaches should discuss timing and breaks before the game begins.
29. **Number of players.** Each team plays with four players on the field. Teams may play with fewer players, but not more. No player may be assigned to the goalkeeper position.
30. **Fouls.** Fouls and handballs should only be called where the offense is blatant.
31. **Goal Box/Arc.** This is the 'no goalie' box. Defensive players should not be positioned in this box. They may enter the box only to clear the ball. No hands / no goalkeepers.

### **Additional Rules for Winter Indoor Soccer – All Divisions**

32. **Offside.** The offside rule is not applied in the Indoor program.
33. **Substitutions.** Unless explicitly denied by the referee, substitutions may be made at any time, including during the course of the game. Referee permission and stoppage of play are not required for substitutions. Referees will not stop play for any substitutions.
34. **Kickoffs and Restarts.** All kickoffs and free kicks are indirect.
35. **Kick-ins.** If the ball goes out of play, play is restarted with a kick-in at the direction of the referee.
36. **Goalkeeper Clearance.** Clearances by the goalkeeper must touch the floor on the attacking team's side of the halfway line. An indirect kick will be awarded to the defending team for clearances that cross the halfway line without first touching the floor.
37. **Inanimate Objects.** The walls and any objects behind each goal and to the non-spectator side are in play and may be used by an attacking or defending player. If a ball becomes trapped behind the goal, play is restarted as a goal kick. If the ball is trapped by an inanimate object play is restarted at the direction of the referee.