

## Recreational Coaching Guidelines and Procedures

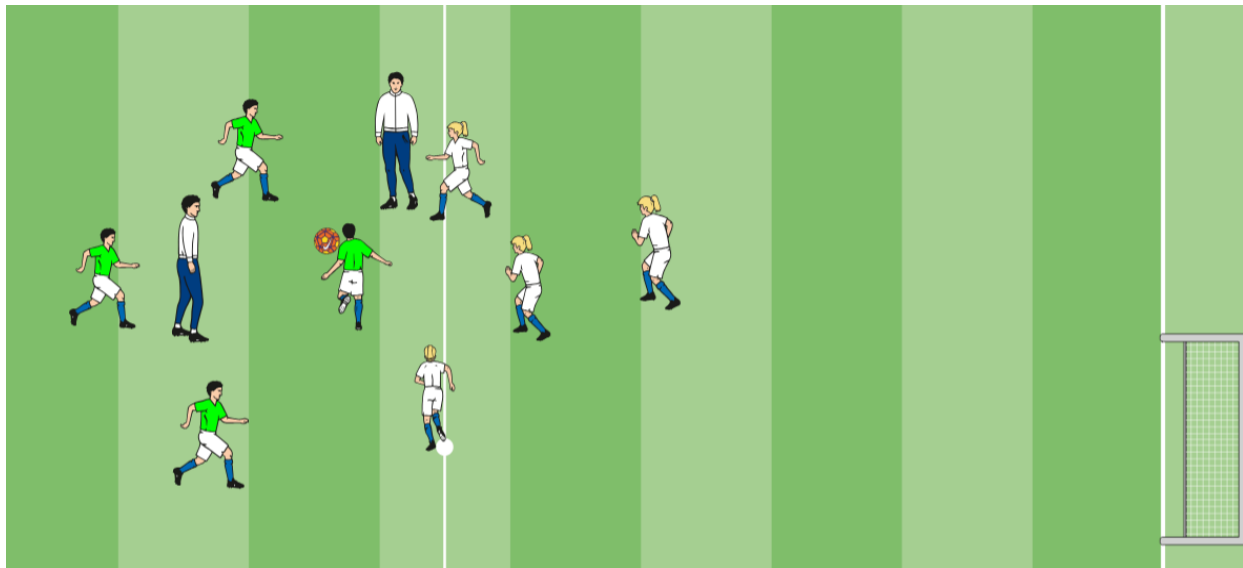
Our unwavering goal in the recreational soccer program at Norman Youth Soccer Association (Oklahoma Celtic Football Club) is to create a safe, enjoyable environment for our players. We are committed to ensuring they have fun and continue playing soccer for many years. Your dedication to this goal is what makes our program successful.

These guidelines and procedures, tailored to each format (4v4, 7v7 & 9v9), provide a clear roadmap for effective environments during match days. They will help ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for our players.

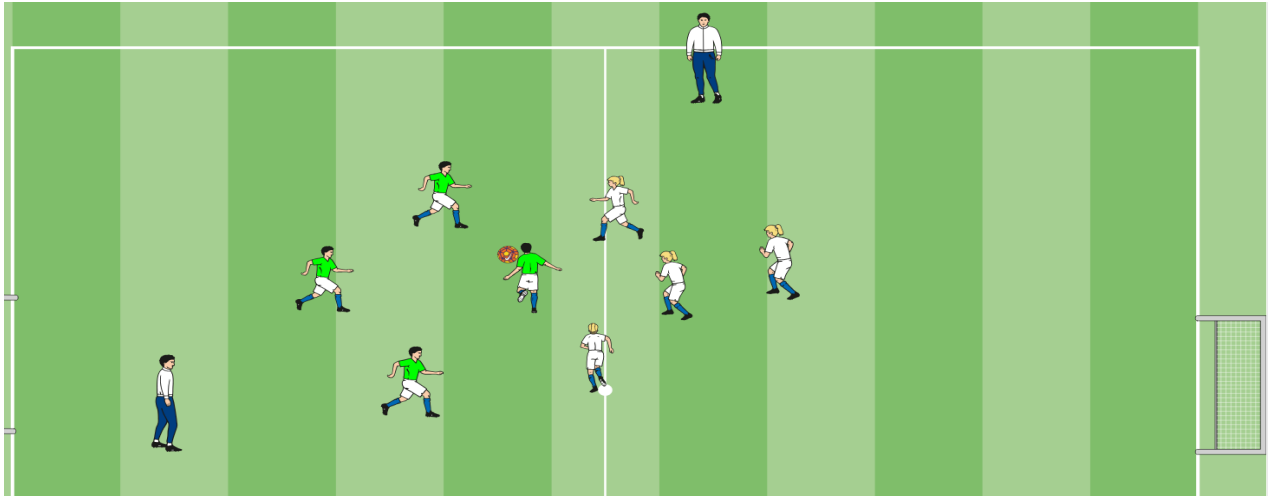
### **4v4 (U6 – U8)**

In this age group, coaches can be on the field helping and assisting our younger players. We believe this will help with the flow of the game and improve the players' understanding of rules, positions, and soccer actions.

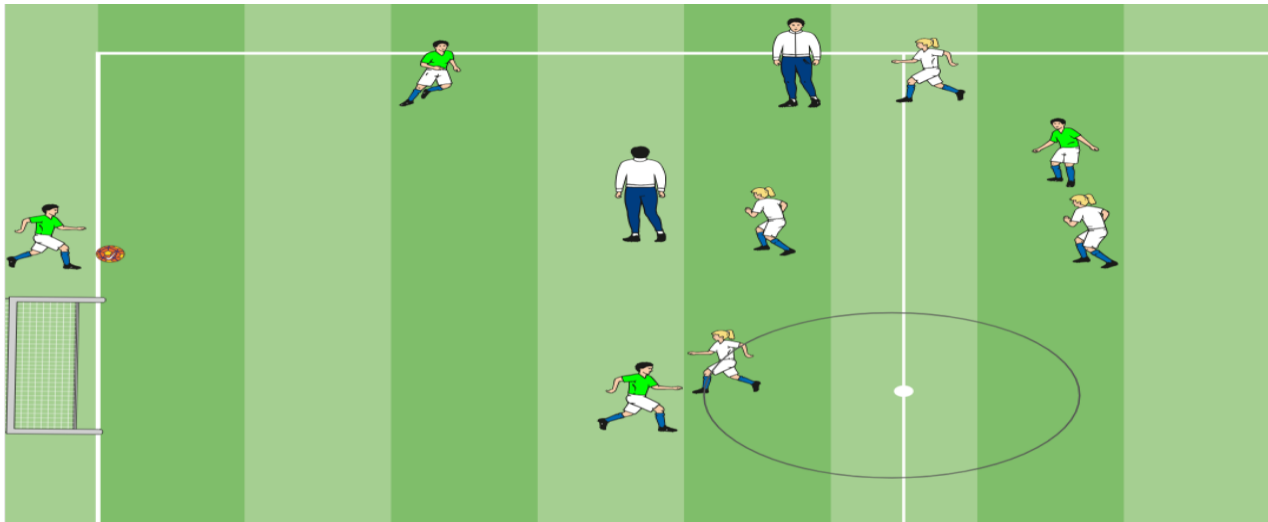
However, coaches must try not to interfere in the game, interfere with the players' decision-making, **physically touch or move a player into position**, block the movement of players, or block the goal. In the example below, both coaches are in the way of player movements and a pass.



Below is the correct positioning. They are close enough to give instructions, without blocking or being in the space where players can move.



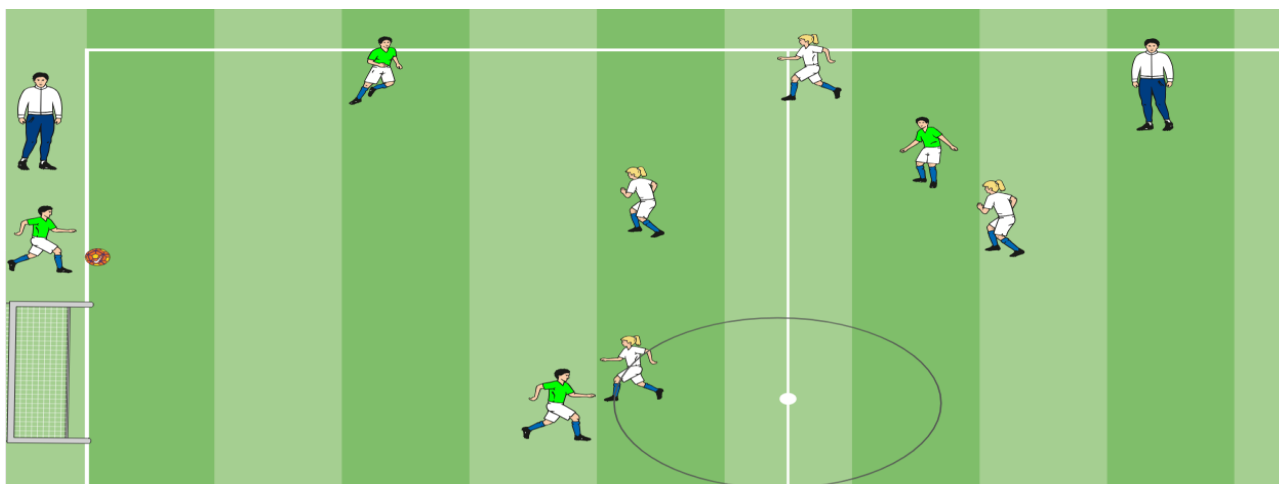
Below is another example of the wrong position on the field hindering movement, passes, and dribbling actions.



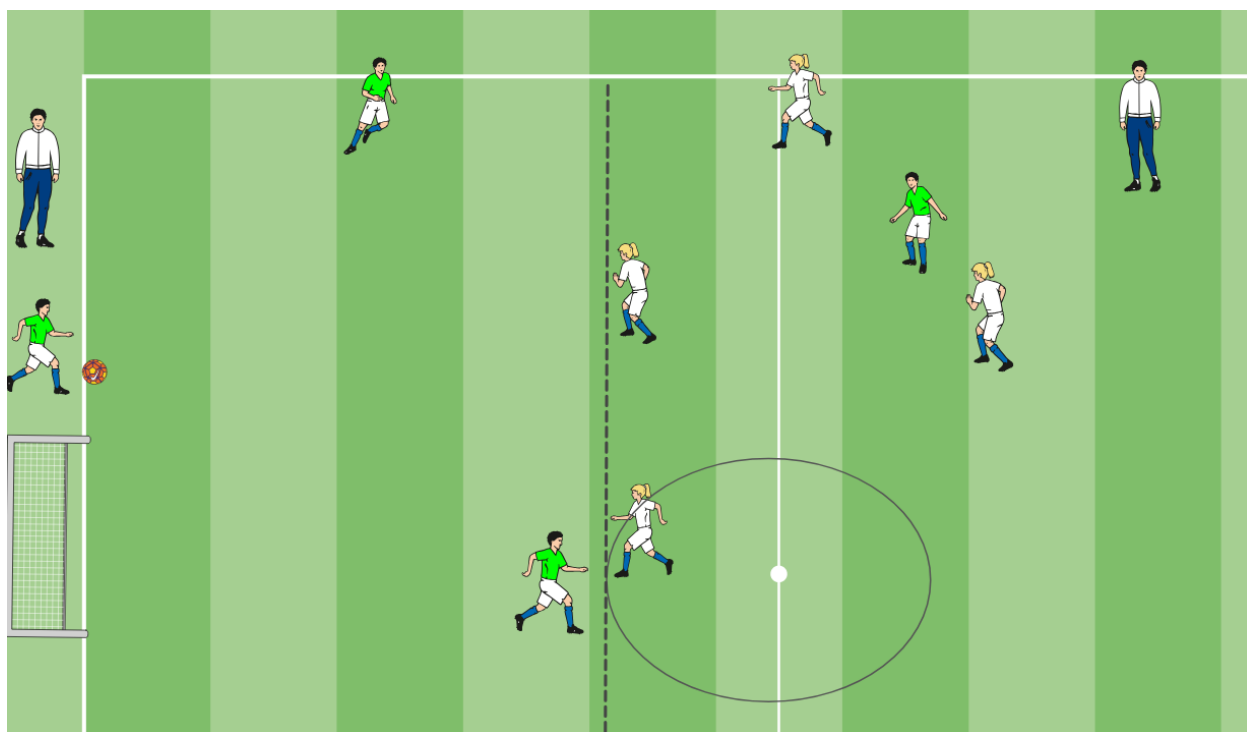
Below is the correct coach position from a goal kick. Coaches are not interfering but can still give pointers and encouragement to players. While being off the field is the best way to avoid being in the way, coaches are allowed to be on the field. We ask coaches to be mindful of interference when helping on the field.

**If the ball hits/touches the coach in front of the goal, a goal will be awarded.**

**No one (Coach/Assistant Coach/Parent) is allowed behind the goals giving help/instructions to players!**



**Goal kicks:** In the 4v4 format, there is no build-out line, but the defending team must be back in line with the top of the center circle in the opponent's half when their opponent takes a goal kick, as shown below. The dashed line isn't painted on the field, but gives you a visual of where the starting point for the defending team must be.



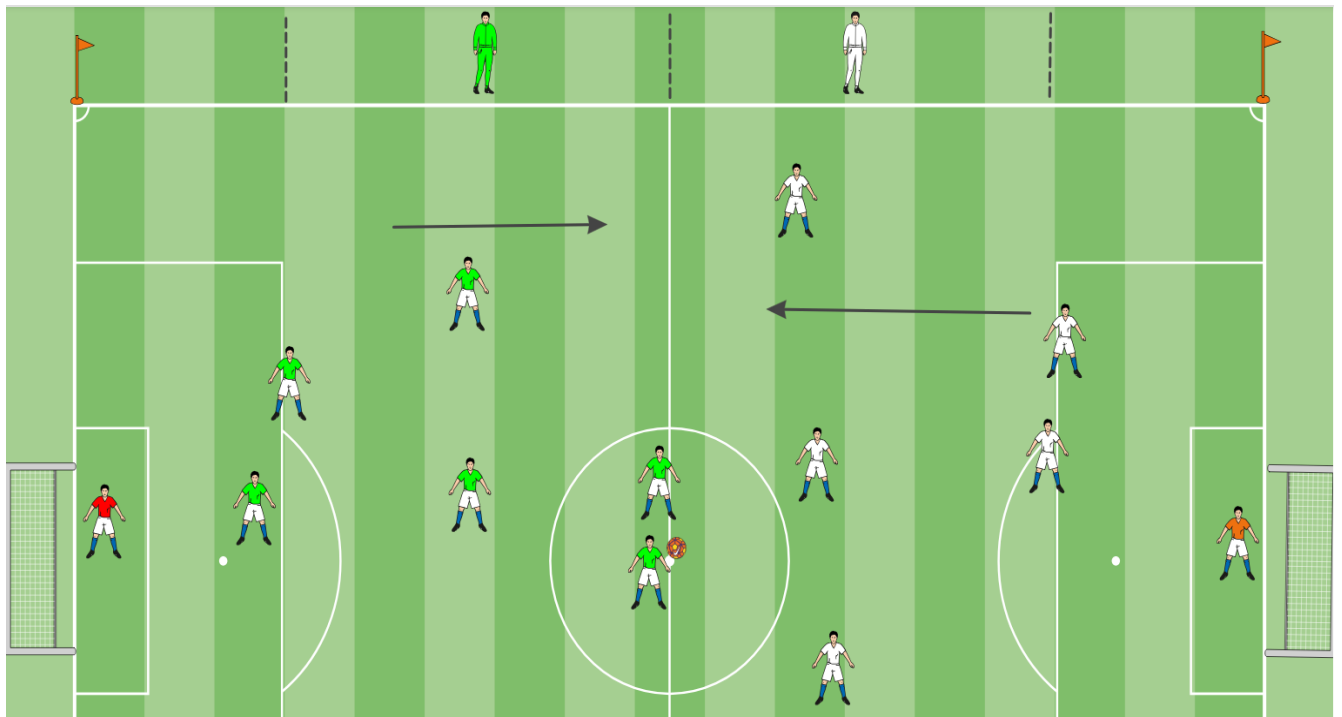
Some players might be confused about where they can start from, and if it's difficult to explain this to them, coaches can always state on the halfway line (white line in the picture), but remember, the rule is in line with the top of the center circle.

## 7v7/9v9 – Coach's Box/Area

In the 7v7 & 9v9 format. Coaches are not allowed on the field during the flow of the game. The ref can signal a coach onto the field if there is an injury or any other instance that the ref allows. Also, be mindful of being a few yards back from the out-of-bounds line, so you aren't in the way of the assistant ref or the players on the field.

No coach area/box lines are painted on the field, but below is an example and visual of where you can move on the sideline. Coaches aren't allowed to walk up and down the whole sideline! Never go past the halfway line, into the opposing coach's area, as this can cause issues and frustrations. Usually, at the higher levels and ages, the coach area box doesn't go as far as in line with the penalty area, but we understand our recreational players need guidance.

**No one (Coach/Assistant Coach/Parent) is allowed behind or beside the goals giving help/instructions to players!**



All formats: **Communication** is key. It's not just about the game but also about the relationships we build. How we treat the ref and communicate with other coaches, parents, and players all matter. Let's foster a culture of respect and understanding in our soccer community.

Remember, the goal in the program is to create a safe, enjoyable environment for our players and, quite frankly, all involved. As adults, we have a significant responsibility to set a good example for the children we are responsible for. Be mindful of how we communicate to refs, opposing coaches, and parents, as kids hear and see everything and are very impressionable. No youth soccer scoreline or decision is worth setting a bad example for our youth. This isn't the World Cup; no T-shirts/trophies are awarded at the end of each season. Winning rec soccer games isn't the most crucial goal. We want the players to compete and try their best, but hopefully, they learn so much more than that!

## **Referees**

Referees can be as young as 13 years old. Many of their parents watch them from the sidelines because they don't feel they are 100% safe during some games. Grown adults screaming and shouting that it's a throw-in, offside, or foul is quite ridiculous at times. In the past, we've banned parents from games as they were cursing at our young referees; let that sink in.

I suggest coaches and parents concentrate on their players' controllables, not what they can't control. Effort, soccer actions, technically and tactically, are controllables that coaches and parents can control and encourage. Soccer is a game, and players play games to have fun. If it's not fun, children stop playing!

## **Scorelines**

**Mercy rule.** If teams are down by five goals, add a player; if teams are down by eight goals, add another player; if teams are down by ten goals, add another player. Remove the additional player if the score changes under the allowed player amount.

We only post a five-max goal differential on the website, so crushing an opponent doesn't help anyone. We are trying to create the most challenging environment for all involved. If players are winning by a lot, they get bored – not helpful. If teams lose by a lot, they aren't having fun, it is too challenging, and they will quit – not helpful.

If you are winning by a lot, here are some strategies to help, along with the mercy rule.

- Moving the stronger players who are scoring a lot to the goalkeeper or defender position.
- Moving all players around to different positions.
- Limit the number of touches players can make in certain areas of the field.
- Making a certain number of passes before shooting.
- Removing players so you're even more numbers down (be careful with this, as players need to play at least 50% of the game).

- Mix up the players on both teams so the game is even.