

Getting Started in Under 6 Micro Soccer

Game Monitor Guide

Revised August 2005

The Alameda Soccer Club pioneered the Micro Soccer format in the East Bay, and provided invaluable text for Game Monitor Guide for Micro Soccer. A special thanks to Montclair Soccer Club parent Julianna Fleming for her hours of editing on this Game Monitor Guide.

Micro Soccer and Game Monitors

The Under 6 (U6) age group division uses formats generally referred to as “Micro Soccer.” The U6 division plays in a “3v3” format. This format involves fewer players on the field than in past years, resulting in more touches on the ball, better soccer learning, and more fun.

The Micro Soccer format uses *Game Monitors* as on-the-field facilitators/referees. Rather than the licensed referees used for older age groups, Game Monitors are typically the parents or soccer-experienced older siblings of the kids who are playing. This helps achieve our goal of de-emphasizing competition and promoting fun.

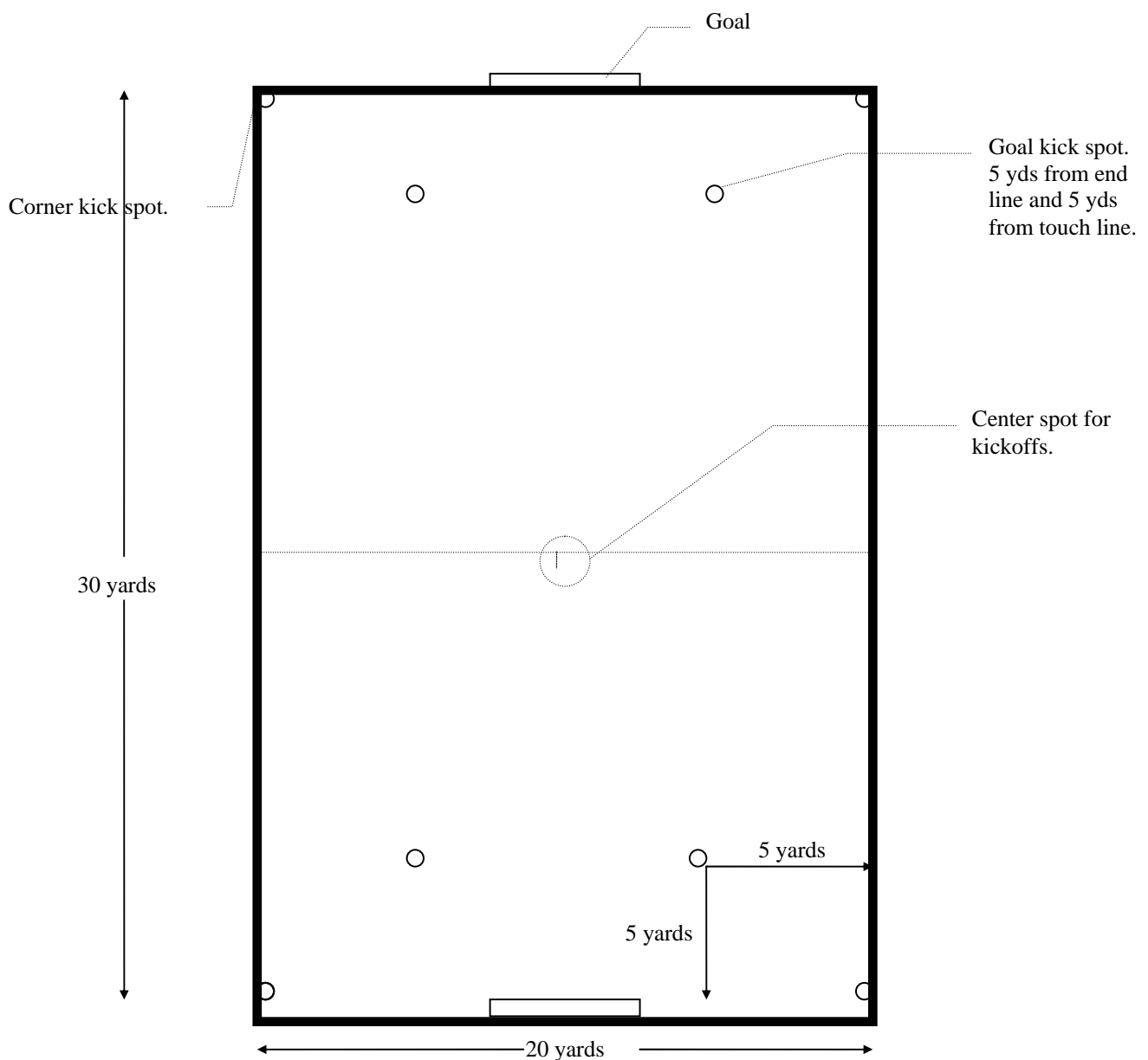
Game Monitors play an important role in making Micro Soccer work. The most important job of Game Monitors is to keep the game moving quickly. The vast majority of a Game Monitor’s actions are re-starting the game after the ball has gone out of play or after a goal has been scored.

This guide presents the rules and guidelines used in the 3v3 (U6) format. Issues requiring clarification or amendment to these rules should be referred to the Micro Soccer U6 Coordinator.

The Field of Play – Under 6

Each coach is responsible for laying out an entire field on the assigned location. Two goals, 20 small cones, and four flat cones are provided to each coach for this purpose. Use all the cones to clearly mark the field boundaries. The field is marked as follows:

- Dimensions of approximately 30 yards long by 20 yards wide
- Goals at each end
- Cones in each corner to mark the location for corner kicks
- Flat cones to mark the four spots for goal kicks, each cone 5 yards out from the goal line and 5 yards from the touch (side) line



Micro Soccer Rules

These rules are intended to simplify the game in a way that is readily intelligible to young children. In general, supervising adults should allow children to play freely with minimal interference. Use common sense to handle problematic situations not explicitly covered by the rules.

1. **The ball:** standard #3 size soccer ball
2. **Number of Players**
 - a. Maximum of three players on the field at one time (3 vs. 3).
 - b. There are no goalkeepers. All players are “field players.” Positioning players in a solely defensive position (e.g. stationed in front of the goal) is not permitted.
 - c. Substitutions allowed at **any time** during the games (i.e. “on the fly” without a stoppage of play).
 - d. All children who are present should have equal playing time.
3. **Officiating**
 - a. Knowledgeable parents, older siblings, coaches, assistant coaches, or referees assigned by the Club may serve as Game Monitors.
 - b. Each team provides a Game Monitor for each game. The two Game Monitors share responsibility and must be the only non-players on the field.
 - c. Game Monitors briefly explain rule infractions to offending player.
 - d. Game Monitors intervene as little as possible, allowing games to flow.
 - e. No whistles shall be used.
4. **Duration of the Game**
 - a. Games between two squads are 10 minutes each. The clock shall not be stopped for any reason.
 - b. Five minute break between games.
5. **Start and Restart of Play**
 - a. At the beginning of the game, the Game Monitor tosses a coin to determine which team kicks off. The other team chooses its half of the field.
 - b. On all “free kicks” (e.g. kick-offs, kick-ins, corner kicks, goal kicks, and indirect kicks), defending players must be at least three (3) yards from the ball. This is referred to below as the Free Kick Distance.
 - c. The ball is kicked off from the exact center of the field. All players must be in their own half of the field. Defending players must be at the Free Kick Distance (see 5b) from the ball when it is kicked. On a kick-off, the ball must travel forward.

- d. Play is considered to stop when the ball crosses **completely** over the goal line or touch (side) line. If any part of the ball is on the field, then the ball is still in play.
- e. If the ball is out of play over the touch line, the team that last touched the ball loses possession. The other team puts the ball back into play with a **kick-in** (not a throw-in), which is classified as an **indirect kick** (i.e. a goal cannot be scored directly off a kick-in – it must first touch another player). The ball is placed on the touch line where it went out. The opposing team must be at least three yards from the ball when it is kicked in.
- f. If the ball is out of play over the goal line, the team that last touched the ball loses possession.
 - i. If the attacking team gains possession, it puts the ball into play with a **corner kick**. Opponents must be at least the Free Kick Distance (see 5b) away when the ball is kicked.
 - ii. If the defending team gains possession, it puts the ball into play with a **goal kick**. For Under 6, this kick may be taken from either goal-kick spot. Opponents must be at least the Free Kick Distance (see 5b) away when the ball is kicked.
- g. When the ball is out of play because a goal was scored, the team that defended re-starts the game with a kick-off from the center of the field (see 5c).
- h. If the Game Monitor halts play due to injury, dog on the field, or other event not covered by these rules, the game is restarted via a Drop Ball.
- i. The player who performs the free kick or throw-in may not touch the ball again until it has been touched by another player.
- j. If a restart is performed incorrectly, the Game Monitor will halt play, explain the error, and allow the player to retake the throw or kick.

6. Method of Scoring

- a. When the attacking team kicks the ball completely across the goal line and between the goal posts, it scores a goal.
- b. No official score is kept.

7. Fouls and Misconduct

- a. Fouls are as follows:
 - i. TRIPPING
 - ii. VIOLENT PLAY (striking, kicking, pushing, abusive language)
 - iii. HAND BALL (player uses hands or arms in a deliberate attempt to control the ball; includes a goalkeeper handling the ball outside of the goal area)
 - iv. POOR SPORTSMANSHIP (including disruptive behavior, failure to retreat at least the Free Kick Distance from a free kick, excessive gloating after a goal, etc.)
 - v. SLIDE TACKLING (MSC does not permit slide tackling at this age level)

- b. If a foul is committed, the Game Monitor or Coach will briefly explain the infraction to the responsible player.
- c. A foul results in an indirect free kick for the team against which it was committed. A goal may not be scored on an indirect free kick until the ball has been touched by another player of either team. Opponents must be at least the Free Kick Distance (see 5b) from the ball when a free kick is taken. If the foul occurred within the Free Kick Distance (3 or 5 yards) of the offending player's goal, the indirect free kick is taken from that distance (3 yards) from the goal.

8. One-Sided Games

- a. If one team draws ahead by three goals or more, the team's coach should use methods to reduce his/her team's scoring. This may include resting his/her most effective players and/or instructing certain players to remain in the defensive half.
- b. If one team draws ahead by four goals, they will play with one less player on the field (i.e. two (2) players for Under 6). When the goal differential is reduced to three or less, the team may again use their full complement of field players.
- c. If one team draws ahead by five or more goals, they will play with two less players on the field (i.e. one (1) player for Under 6). When the goal differential is reduced to four, the team may add a player, playing only one man down.
- d. If both coaches agree, the team that is losing may elect to add more players instead.

Note: In youth recreational soccer, the objective is make sure that teams are challenged *and* having a good competitive experience. We all love to win, but a team that wins all of its games in a season, or conversely loses all of its games, is not having an optimal experience. If a team is winning all of its games, players are likely not challenged enough. If a team is losing all of its games, players are probably feeling at times less like soccer players and feeling more like orange practice cones. The ideal outcome is for a team to win half their games and lose half their games in the season.

Good sportsmanship should be exhibited in all games. Coaches are required to follow a 3 Goal Rule (a.k.a. The Golden Rule). Although in U6 soccer we do not keep official score, the kids will notice if the game starts to become mismatched. The coach of a team that is losing by 4 or more goals should take action to even up the match by adding a player for each goal over a 3 goal lead. If that doesn't help, the winning team should take steps such as:

- instructing players pass three times before they shoot
- having the lead goal scorer stay exclusively in his/her own half
- removing a player from the dominating team from the match.

The key here is to honor the intent, not the exact letter, of this rule: *evening up the match*. For example, removing one of the least skilled players would meet the rule nominally, but certainly would not be considered good sportsmanship. Good sportsmanship would involve taking steps to make the game challenging to **both** teams.

In games where there is a mismatch, the Game Monitor should **DISCRETELY** remind the coaches to so adjust. Game Monitors are required to enforce this rule during the game; coaches are expected to honor the intent of the rule.

Game Monitor Guidelines

- **Enforce the Sidelines**
It's tempting to let play continue even though the ball has gone over the touch line or end line. This can quickly get out of control, with play continuing far afield or even on the next field. Instead, strictly enforce the field's boundaries. Kids will quickly learn to stop play when the ball goes over the touch line or end line.
- **Quick kick-ins**
Try to get the ball back in play quickly. Encourage the player kicking in the ball to do so quickly. One reason why kick-ins can take a long time is that all three players will want to take the kick-in. As your team's representative on the field, you get to pick who takes it. Talk with your coach about how to pick the kicker (e.g. strict rotation, whoever's closest, etc.).
- **Positive Encouragement**
Encourage the players on the field (both on your team and the other) with lots of positive comments. It will be hard to resist a little on-field coaching, and that's okay. But be sure to keep the comments positive.
- **One-Sided Games**
If one team pulls ahead by three or more goals, then notify the coach of the team that is ahead that she or he must take action according to Rule 8, above.
- **Timekeeping and Substitutions**
Get a parent on the sideline to keep track of the time and handle substitutions.
- **Have Fun!**
If the kids are having fun, then you're doing a great job! Consider taking the Referee Class and becoming a licensed referee.