Macarthur Football Association Inc

MiniRoos (U8 to U12) Rules 2026

FOOTBALL PHILOSOPHY

MFA endorses small-sided football as its preferred playing format for Under 12 and below in various formats

Mini Roos football is focused on individual player development, unlike traditional 11-a-side football, which focuses primarily on the result and team objectives. Mini Roos football is an opportunity for the players to demonstrate the core skills in a match-day setting guided by age appropriate coaching and interactions.

Mini Roos football is designed to be inclusive, individual development focused and to provide a great experience for all involved. Players within these age groups are in their formative years on building a love for the game and developing core physical literacy and football related skills.

MATCH RESULTS

Within these age groups it is recommended for results tables not to be maintained on public websites or scoreboards, nor the results of individual matches shared publicly.

Commonly known as 'non-competitive', results are not recommended to be shared to ensure coaches, players and parents focus on the game experience and the individual development of players

SPECTATORS

This non-competitive environment is conducive to encouraging players to express themselves and showcase what they have been taught in their club's development processes, thus, recognition of skilful play and players trying new aspects of the game are fundamental to this age group and the role of the spectator plays an integral role in creating the appropriate environment for players to thrive.

Spectators should be aware of the club's code of conduct and match day expectations. We actively encourage spectators to reward good play from both teams with messages of encouragement and praise. Whilst berating mistakes and coaching players from the sidelines should not occur and should be managed by the club's match day officials.

SUBSTITUTION/INTERCHANGE

- Players may be rotated on and off the field any time during the game.
- Substitutions can take place while the ball is in play, but the player leaving the field must be off the field for the substitute to come on.
- Substitutes entering the field should do so from the touch line and not into defensive positions.

ROLE OF THE GAME LEADER

Each game is to be controlled by one Game Leader whose main role is to facilitate the development of the players, keep the game moving fluently, limit stoppages and assist players with all re-starts.

Allowing the game to flow should be seen as an opportunity for players to practice and showcase a core skill to support their technical development and decision making. Most importantly, they must make every effort to create an environment that ensures that all players have fun, are learning the game and have maximum involvement.

The Game Leader can be a club official, parent, young adult/older teenager or beginner referee and should always be enthusiastic and approachable. Most importantly, remember the children are learning the game – be flexible and patient.

The Game Leader should:

- Check all players are wearing shin guards.
- Ensure team officials and parents create a safe, enjoyable and positive playing environment for the children and do not emphasis winning or losing.
- Be enthusiastic, consistent and approachable.
- Let the game flow and give instruction to all players on the run where you can.
- Praise and encourage both teams.
- Encourage all children to have fun and different children to take re-starts.
- The closest player to the restart should be encouraged to take the restart especially with throw ins. This speeds up play and will stop teams trying to work out who's turn it is to take a throw in. The goalkeeper to take all goal kicks.
- Use a "Ready, Set, Go" prompt to encourage quick decisions when restarting play.
- Ensure the correct number of players are on the field.
- Discourage players from permanently standing in blatant offside positions and instruct them to move into onside positions. In the Small Sided Games age groups players should be made aware of the offside rule during training and be encouraged to always adopt this philosophy during the game.
- Encourage children to dribble or pass the ball to team mates rather than kick the ball long.
- Ensure the opposing team are 10 metres (retreat line/exclusion zone) from the penalty area.
- Encourage children to be involved in all aspects of the game, attacking and defending.
- Award free kicks as appropriate to help children learn the rules and consequences of committing fouls.
- Explain the rules to players and why a free kick has been awarded.
- When blowing the whistle make it loud so everyone can hear as this provides a perception that you are in control of the game.

FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

Within Mini Roos football involving junior players (U8 - U12) we encourage all Game Leaders, Coaches and spectators to observe a common sense approach. Players within these age groups are developing their physical literacy, social and behavioural management skill set. At times they will be clumsy, aggressive or uncontrolled. Approach these moments to ensure player welfare is the number one priority by utilising restarts such as free kicks to 'reset' the match and ensure everyone remains involved where possible.

Fouls and misconduct are:

- Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent;
- Trips or attempts to trip an opponent;
- Jumps at an opponent;
- Charges at an opponent;
- Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent;
- Pushes an opponent;
- Tackles an opponent from behind to gain possession of the ball;
- Makes contact with the opponent before touching the ball;
- Holds an opponent;
- Spits at an opponent;
- Handles the ball deliberately;
- Plays in a dangerous manner; and
- Impedes the progress of a player.

FREE KICKS

Indirect free kicks are awarded for all acts of handball or fouls and misconduct. Opponents must be at least 5 metres away from the ball when the free kick is taken.

Where a free kick is within 10 metres of the goal line, the Referee shall move it to a point at least 10m from the goal line and in line from where the offence took place. All defending players should be at least 5m away from the free kick spot.

An indirect free kick is where a goal can be scored only if the ball subsequently touches another player before it enters the goal.

PENALTY KICKS

For U8 and above a penalty kick should only be awarded for deliberate or serious acts of handball or fouls and misconduct in the penalty area, a penalty kick is awarded from an 8-metre penalty mark with only a goalkeeper in position. All other players must be at least 5 metres behind the penalty mark.

CAUTIONS (*YELLOW & RED CARDS)*

In Mini Roos football we do not issue Yellow or Red cards, however we encourage Game Leaders & Coaches to take responsibility for the safety and welfare of all players.

If the Game Leader or Coach believes a serious foul has been committed that would warrant a caution in traditional football formats we encourage them to utilise one of the following techniques:

- Substitute the player(s) from the match for 5 minutes.
- Remove the player for the remainder of the game.

START OF PLAY & AFTER GOAL SCORED

- Kick off from the centre mark of the field and pass the ball forward.
- There should be a centre circle at least 5 metres around the centre mark. Players must stand behind the centre circle until the ball is kicked.
- If there is no centre circle, the Referee shall determine how far back the opposing players should be for the kick off which should be at least 5 metres.
- The ball must be touched by a team mate before a goal can be scored.

BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY

The ball is out of play when it has wholly crossed the goal line or the touch line on the ground or in the air, or when play has been stopped by the Game Leader.

METHOD OF SCORING

A goal is scored when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, between the goalposts and under the cross bar.

GOAL TYPE

It is preferable that portable goals are used where possible however, the use of poles or markers as goals is also suitable.

OFFSIDE

There is no offside rule in Small Sided Football
Game Leaders should strongly discourage children from permanently standing in blatant offside positions.
If a Game Leader believes that a player is permanently standing in a blatant offside position to gain an advantage, and they receive the ball, an indirect free kick shall be awarded to the opposition.

GOALKEEPER (*OPEN PLAY)*

The goalkeeper is allowed to handle the ball anywhere in the penalty area. To restart play after a save or gathering the ball with their hands, the ball must be thrown or rolled from the hands or played from the ground with their feet, within 6 seconds.

The goalkeeper is not allowed to kick or drop kick the ball directly from their hands. Opponents must be at least 10 metres outside the penalty area and cannot move inside the penalty area until the ball is in play. The ball is in play once it moves out of the penalty area or when the goalkeeper places the ball on the ground and kicks it.

An indirect free kick is awarded if the goalkeeper touches the ball with their hands after it has been deliberately kicked to them by a team mate.

BALL CROSSING THE TOUCH LINE (*THROW IN)*

Player faces the field of play, has part of each foot on the ground either on or behind the touch line, uses both hands and delivers the ball from behind and over their head.
The thrower must not touch the ball again until it has touched another player. Opponents must be at least 5 metres away from the ball until it is in play. The ball is in play once it enters the field of play.
A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw in.

BALL CROSSING THE GOAL LINE AFTER TOUCHING THE DEFENDING TEAM LAST (*CORNER KICK)*

Corner kick. A player from the attacking team places the ball inside the corner arc nearest to the point where the ball crossed the line. Opponents must be at least 5 metres away from the ball until it is in play. The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves.
A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick.

BALL CROSSING THE GOAL LINE AFTER TOUCHING THE ATTACKING TEAM LAST (*GOAL KICK)*

Goal kick from anywhere within the penalty area.
Opponents remain at least 10 metres from the penalty area until the ball is in play. Game Leaders should not restart play until they are satisfied all opposition players are back the required distance.
The ball is in play once it is kicked directly out of the penalty area.

Rules for U8 & U9

NUMBER OF PLAYER	7-a-side including a goalkeeper.
GOALKEEPER	Yes
FIELD SIZE (M)	Length: 45m - 50m Width: 35m - 40m
PENALTY AREA (M)	5m deep x 12m wide
GOAL (M)	3m wide x 2m high *Portable Goals*
BALL	Size 3
DURATION	20 minute halves (U8) 25 minute halves (U9) Minimum of 5 minute half-time break

Rules for U10, U11 & U12

NUMBER OF PLAYER	9-a-side including a goalkeeper.
GOALKEEPER	Yes
FIELD SIZE (M)	Length: 60m - 70m Width: 40m - 50m
PENALTY AREA (M)	10m deep x 20m wide
GOAL (M)	5m wide x 2m high *Portable Goals*
BALL	Size 4
DURATION	25 minute halves (U10 & U11) 30 minute halves (U12) Minimum of 5 minute half-time break