

Soccer Rules

Any rule and situation not specifically covered are subject to the current version of the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) Soccer rules and the judgement of the intramural officials.

All rules are subject to change at the discretion of the Intramural Sports Office, and the Intramural Sports Office has the final decision on all situations covered and not covered by the rules.

Rule 1: Player Eligibility & Registration

Player Eligibility

- ✓ Currently enrolled (at least half-time), fee-paying Tennessee Tech University students as well as faculty and staff of the University may participate in intramural leagues, tournaments, and contests as long as they have a membership to the fitness center.
- ✓ Prior to each contest and event, participants must check in with a member of the IM staff.
- ✓ For postseason eligibility, a player must have participated in at least one (1) regular season game.
- ✓ Current varsity athletes cannot participate in their sport or related sport. Former varsity athletes cannot participate in their sport or related sport for one calendar year (365 days) after their official affiliation with a college or university team has ended.
- ✓ Current professional athletes cannot participate in their sport or related sport. Former professional athletes cannot participate in their sport or related sport for five (5) years after their official affiliation with a professional team has ended.
- ✓ Intramural Sports Professional staff shall make the final decision on eligibility issues.
- ✓ Players are only allowed to play on one (1) intramural soccer team per season.

Registration

- ✓ Teams should register on FusionIm (recreation.tntech.edu)

Rule 2: League Format & Team Composition

League Format

- ✓ A pool play section shall precede the postseason tournament. The overall number of registered teams will determine the number of pools and number of teams in each pool.
- ✓ League standings will determine a team's eligibility for the postseason tournament. The following criteria will determine the league play standings: (1) number of wins, (2) sportsmanship rating, (3) Head-to-head record, (4) Point differential, and (5) coin toss.

Leagues (Subject to Change Due to Number of Registered Teams)

- Men's
 - Elite
 - Recreational
- Women's

Team Composition

- ✓ Each team will have eight (8) players on the field at one (1) time, and a minimum of five (5) players are required to start the game.
- ✓ Each team shall designate a captain to serve as the point of contact between the team and IM staff.
- ✓ **Club Players are required to play in the highest league available (Elite) and are allowed 3 players per team.**

Rule 3: Defaults, Forfeits, Grace Periods, & Protests

Defaults

- ✓ A default is an unplayed game without penalty (e.g. dropped from the league).
- ✓ To receive a default, the team captain or representative must notify the Intramural Sports Office by **2:00 PM** on the day of the contest.

Forfeits

- ✓ A forfeit is defined as one of the following:
 - Failing to field a team for an intramural contest without contacting the Intramural Sports Office.
 - The final score shall be 3-0.
 - Receiving three or more conduct warnings before, during, and after an Intramural contest.
 - If the forfeiting team is ahead, the final score shall be 1-0 in favor of the opposing team.
 - If the non-forfeiting team has the higher score, the game shall end with the existing score.
 - Defaulting two games during pool play.
- ✓ Forfeits automatically withdraws you from Post-Season play.
- ✓ Sportsmanship Rating will be as followed:
 - Winning Team = 8
 - Forfeiting Team = 2
- ✓ If a team forfeits its first game of the season, that team may be dropped from the league and replaced with a team on the waiting list.
- ✓ A second forfeiture may result in removal from the league.

Grace Period

- ✓ If at least one (1) team member is present at game time, the team will be granted a **five-minute (5:00)** grace period.
- ✓ Once a team reaches the minimum number of players to start the game, the team must start when directed by IM staff.
- ✓ A team may **NOT** wait for additional players once the minimum number of players have arrived.
- ✓ If the team has not reached the minimum number of players required to play at the end of the grace period, a forfeit will be declared.

Protests

- ✓ Intramural Sports Graduate Assistants and Professional Staff will consider protests.
- ✓ During the contest, teams may protest (a) the misinterpretation or the misapplication of a rule or (b) a scoring error. The protest must be submitted immediately, and, if the protest is denied, a timeout will be charged to the protesting team.
- ✓ Protests regarding the judgement of the game officials will not be recognized.
- ✓ When protesting player eligibility:
 - *Regular season:* The eligibility of any player may be protested at any point during the regular season (e.g. before, during, and after the contest; anytime during office hours)
 - *Postseason Tournament:* Player eligibility must be protested before the start of the contest. Protests made after the start or end of the game will be not recognized.

Rule 4: Playing Area & Equipment

Playing Area

- ✓ All games will be played on the Intramural Fields.

Team Benches

- ✓ Team benches will be located on opposite sides of the playing field. Team fans and spectators must occupy their team's side of the field opposite of the team bench.

Game Ball

- ✓ Each team may use the provided IM soccer ball or use one of their own soccer balls if approved by IM staff and both team captains.
- ✓ Intramural sports staff reserves the right to declare any ball legal or illegal for play and request that a team use a legal ball.

Team Jerseys

- ✓ Opposing teams must wear distinguishing colors.
- ✓ If teams cannot furnish their own legal jerseys, the Intramural Sports Office will provide game jerseys.

Clothing & Equipment

- ✓ **Proper athletic attire is required.**
- ✓ All attire and equipment are subject to the approval of Intramural Sports staff. Any clothing or equipment that is deemed unsafe or illegal must be removed prior to competition.
- ✓ IM staff reserves the right to ask participants to remove or conceal clothing that, in the opinion of IM staff, displays offensive or demeaning language or imagery.
- ✓ Footwear
 - Players are required to wear athletic shoes (e.g. basketball shoes, running shoes, tennis shoes).
 - Molded rubber cleats, molded rubber cleats with metal tips, and screw-in cleats with studs are allowed. Spiked cleats and screw-in metal cleats are **PROHIBITED**.
 - Footwear including but not limited to boots, cleats, open-toed shoes, crocks, and sandals is strictly **PROHIBITED**.
- ✓ Jewelry
 - Religious or medical jewelry is permitted and must be taped down against the body.
 - Participants must remove all watches and necklaces prior to each contest.
- ✓ Headwear
 - Players may wear knit or stocking caps, headbands, and hair control devices made with soft and non-abrasive material.
 - Headwear including but not limited to baseball caps, hard plastic hair devices, bobby pins, and safety pins is strictly prohibited.
- ✓ Pads/Braces
 - Leg & knee braces covered with soft, pliable material and free of any sharp edges are allowed.
 - Compression sleeves and wrist sweatbands are permitted above the waist.
 - Casts may **NOT** be worn on any part of the body.
- ✓ Shin Guards
 - Shin guards are strongly recommended.
- ✓ Blood
 - Participants that are bleeding, have an open wound, and/or have an excessive amount of blood on the uniform will be directed to leave the game.
 - The bleeding must be stopped, the open wound must be covered, and/or the bloody uniform must be changed/cleaned before the player can return to the game.

Rule 5: Timing & Scoring

Timing

- ✓ The game will consist of two twenty-minute (20:00) halves with a five-minute (5:00) halftime.
- ✓ The clock will run continuously unless there is an official's timeout, injury, or unexpected interruptions.

Scoring

- ✓ Goals
 - All goals will be worth one point.

- A goal is scored when a team member legally propels a ball that completely crosses the goal line or the plane of the goal line.
- A player **MAY** score a goal directly during the following:
 - Kick-off
 - Direct Free Kick
 - Goal Kick
 - Penalty Kick
 - Corner Kick
 - Goalkeeper's throw, punt, or drop kick
- A player may **NOT** score directly from (a) an indirect kick, (b) a throw-in, or (c) a free kick into his or her team's own goal.

Shootout

- ✓ Regular season games may end in a tie. Therefore, shootouts will not occur during the regular season.
- ✓ During the postseason, the following procedure shall determine the winner:
 - Shootout
 - A coin toss or single game of rock/paper/scissors will determine which team shoots first.
 - Any player that is on the field at the end of regulation is eligible for the shootout.
 - Each team will designate five (5) players and a goalkeeper.
 - The five (5) players shall attempt one shot each, and teams will alternate shot attempts.
 - The goalkeeper for each team must remain the same for the entire shootout.
 - The goalkeeper may also serve as one of the five (5) attackers for his/her team.
 - The team with the most goals shall be declared the winner.
 - If a tie still exists at the conclusion of the shootout, teams shall alternate penalty kicks until one team has a one-goal advantage after the same number of kicks for both teams.
 - All other team members that were on the field at the end of regulation will then attempt a shot before any players will attempt a second time. The rotation will remain the same throughout the entire shootout.

Mercy Rule

Point Differential	Time Remaining	Result
Ten Goals	Ten minutes (10:00) or less in 2 nd Half	End of Game
Five Goals	Five minutes (5:00) or less in 2 nd Half	End of Game

Rule 6: Playing Rules

Coin Toss

- ✓ Each game shall begin with a coin flip or a single game of rock/paper/scissors. The winner of the coin flip has two choices: (1) kick off or (2) side of field.

Kickoff Procedures

- ✓ A kickoff will be taken to begin a match, the second half and after every goal.
- ✓ The kickoff will be taken from the midfield line with the opposing team at least ten yards off the ball.
- ✓ To begin play, the ball must be played with a kicking motion and passed to a teammate
- ✓ The kicker shall not play the ball a second time until another player (of either team) has touched the ball.

Out of Bounds

- ✓ The ball is out of play when it completely crosses a goal line or touchline either on the ground or in the air.
- ✓ The ball that is on the boundary line is **INBOUNDS**.

Goalkeeper

- ✓ The keeper can only play the ball with his/her hands inside his/her team's penalty area.
- ✓ The goalkeeper may **NOT** use their hands on a kick or throw in from his/her own teammate.
- ✓ Goalkeepers are **NOT** allowed to defend the goal with a feet-first slide and will be assessed a **YELLOW** card if a defender is near.
- ✓ A goalkeeper may dropkick or punt the ball during play.

Substitutions

- ✓ Substitutions may be completed by either team during goal kicks, kickoffs, or the issuing of a **YELLOW** or **RED** card.
- ✓ During a throw-in or corner kick, substitutions are limited to the players of the offensive team.
 - Exception: Opponents that reported prior to the offensive team substitution may enter as well.
- ✓ No substitutions may occur during the administration of a direct or indirect free kick.

Goal Kick

- ✓ The kick may be taken from anywhere on the goal box line.
- ✓ The defending team receives a goal kick when the entire ball crosses the goal line (outside of the goal) after the attacking team last played or touched the ball.
- ✓ The kick may be taken from anywhere on the goal box line.
- ✓ Opposing players must remain outside of the penalty area until the ball exits the penalty area.
- ✓ During the goal kick, the kicker must kick the ball from the ground.
- ✓ After the goal kick clears the penalty area, any player, with the exception of the kicker, may play the ball. The kicker may not play the ball until another player has touched or is touched by the ball.
- ✓ The goalkeeper cannot directly receive the goal kick.

Corner Kick

- ✓ A corner kick shall be awarded to the attacking team when the entire ball passes beyond the goal line (outside the goal) after the defending team last played or touched the ball.
- ✓ The corner kick will occur from the ground and within the corner arc nearest where the ball left the field of play.
- ✓ Defending players should be at least ten (10) yards from the ball until the ball moves.
- ✓ After the corner kick, with exception of the kicker, any player may receive the ball.

Throw-In

- ✓ The player throwing the ball must use both hands to throw the ball, keep both feet on the ground, and bring the ball completely behind his or her head.
- ✓ The motion must be continuous when the ball is thrown - i.e., A player may not bring the ball forward and drop it in bounds.
- ✓ The ball must touch another player of either team before the thrower may play the ball again.
- ✓ If the thrower plays the ball before it has been touched by another player, an indirect kick will be awarded to the opposing team at the spot of the infringement.
- ✓ After being released, if the throw-in does not completely enter the field, the referee shall award a re-throw to the team.

Offsides – OFFSIDES WILL NOT BE ENFORCED

Slide Tackling

- ✓ Slide tackling within playing distance (5 feet) of the ball and a player is not allowed.
- ✓ Players that perform a legal slide tackle (an attempt to play the ball and avoiding contact with the opponent) shall be assessed a **YELLOW** card.

- ✓ Slide tackles that are malicious in nature (a non-attempt to play the ball and contact occurs with the opponent) will result in a **RED** card and disqualification.

Punting

- ✓ Dropkicking or punting during play **IS** allowed
- ✓ The goalkeeper may **NOT** dropkick or punt the ball during a goal kick.

Fouls

- ✓ Fouls can result in a direct free kick, an indirect free kick, or penalty kick.
- ✓ Direct Kicks
 - For direct kicks, a goal can be scored without the ball touching or being touched by another player.
 - The offensive player may request that defensive players are positioned ten (10) feet away.
 - The following is a non-exhaustive list of direct free kick fouls:
 - Any **RED** card
 - Violent or malicious tackles (illegal slide tackles)
 - A player holds an opponent
 - A player charges an opposing player or the goalkeeper
 - Attempting to or succeeding in an attempt to kick, strike, spit on, push, or trip another player, official, or an IM Staff member
- ✓ Indirect Kicks
 - For indirect kicks, a goal can only be scored if the ball touches or is touched by another player.
 - The offensive player may request that defensive players are positioned ten (10) feet away.
 - The following is a list of indirect free kick fouls:
 - Specified **YELLOW** card penalties
 - The ball is played twice by the original player who put the ball into play following a kickoff, free kick, penalty shot, goal kick, corner kick, or throw in
 - Obstructing an opponent while not attempting to play the ball
 - The goal keeper takes more than five (5) seconds before releasing the ball for play
 - Goalkeeper uses their hands on a pass back from their own teammate
 - Dangerous play (e.g. high kicks, non-vertical headers, playing the ball on the ground etc.)
 - The goalkeeper dropkicks or punts the ball
- ✓ Penalty Kicks
 - A penalty kick shall be awarded when a direct free kick foul by the defending team occurs within the defending team's penalty area.
 - With the exception of the kicker and the goalkeeper, all players should be outside the penalty area.
 - The referee will signal for the kicker to attempt the penalty kick.
 - After the referee's signal, the kicker shall kick a stationary ball forward in a continuous motion.
 - The goalkeeper shall be able to move laterally along the goal line prior to the kick.
 - Defensive violations
 - Encroachment
 - Non-lateral movement by the defending team's goalkeeper
 - The player shall receive a substitute kick if the goal is unsuccessful.
 - Offensive violations
 - Feinting/Non-continuous motion
 - Delaying unnecessarily after being signaled by the referee to proceed
 - Running past the ball and then backing up to take the kick
 - Excessively changing direction during the run to the ball
 - Making any motion with the intent to distract the goalkeeper.

- If a violation occurs, the referee should allow the play to finish, and based on the outcome, disallow the goal or award a substitute kick. If an offensive violation occurs, the game restarts with an indirect free kick at the penalty mark.

Cards & Penalties

✓ Yellow Card

- A player receiving a **YELLOW** card must exit the field for one (1) live ball period. He or she may be replaced with an eligible substitute.
- Three (3) **YELLOW** cards issued to a single team will result in forfeiture of the contest.
- A single participant can only earn two (2) **YELLOW** cards towards the team's totals.
- A **YELLOW** card shall be issued for behavior including but not limited to the following:
 - Entering or leaving the field without permission from the officials
 - Persistent Infringement
 - The opponent repeatedly and intentionally does not give the thrower two yards.
 - Encroachment
 - The players in the "Wall" on ceremonial kicks repeatedly and intentionally ignore the ten-yard (10) distance requirement.
 - A player intentionally blocks a direct or indirect free kick
 - Persistently committing fouls
 - Unsportsmanlike conduct
 - Slide tackling (legal slide tackle)
 - Delay of game
 - Persistent "flopping" (i.e. faking an injury to elicit a call from the referees)

✓ Red Card

- A player receiving a **RED** card shall be sent off and must exit the Intramural Fields immediately.
- A substitute is not allowed to take that player's place, creating a one-player advantage.
- A **RED** card shall be issued for behavior including but not limited to the following:
 - Two (2) **YELLOW** cards
 - Violent conduct or serious foul play
 - Foul or abusive language directed at another player, an official, or IM staff
 - If a player pushes an opponent with the hand(s) or arm(s) extended from the body
 - Spitting at an opponent, teammate, or game official
 - A slide tackle judged to malicious and dangerous (illegal slide tackle)
 - Attempting to kick or strike an opponent, official, or IM staff
 - Committing a handball violation to deny an obvious goal scoring opportunity
 - A player commits a direct kick foul to deny an obvious goal scoring opportunity.