

MWFA UNDER 6 AND UNDER 7 FOOTBALL GUIDELINES FOR GAMES AND RULE INTERPRETATIONS

This document outlines the rules under which Under 6 and Under 7 Football is played in the MWFA. It will be a useful guide to coaches, managers and interested parents who find themselves holding the whistle on the day. These notes are based on the principle that players in these young age groups who infringe the rules have not done so deliberately. The aim is to let the game flow with as few stoppages as possible in this non-competitive environment.

These rules are almost identical to FFA 'AIA MiniRoos' Rules (renamed from 'SSG').

GENERAL PRINCIPALS

The Under 6 and Under 7 ages form into groups of ungraded teams. No competition points will be awarded and no competition tables will be kept. There are no Finals. Identity Cards will not be required.

SEASON STRUCTURE

The season has 17 or 18 fixture weeks depending on start date. Teams will play as a Round-Robin between others in the same group. Washed-out and unplayed games will not be rescheduled. Each pair of games occupies a 45 minute time-slot. The morning slots are: 8.30; 9.15; 10.00; 10.45; 11.30. The afternoon slot is: 12.15pm

THE PLAYING AREA

These are general only. All fields are approved and allocated by the MWFA.

The ideal field is approximately 30 metres in length and 20 metres in width. Fields should have four corner flags or poles. The goal size is 0.9 to 1.0 metres (H) by 1.5 to 2.0 metres (W). Pop-up goals are supplied by the MWFA for game use.

The field is divided into four equal quarters, with two quarter-lines and a halfway-line. This is marked on U.6 fields by the use of different colour low marker cones. On an U.7 field the lines are marked via a line-marker.

MATCH BALL

The U.6 and U.7 age groups use a size three ball. The match ball is to be provided by each team. The ball should be firm but not too hard. There should be some give under firm adult thumb pressure.

NUMBER OF PLAYERS AND INTERCHANGE

A maximum of four players from each team can be on the field at any time. Arrangements to increase this number should NOT be entered into with the opposition.

Players may be freely interchanged at any time throughout the game. There is no limit to the number of times a player can be interchanged. All interchanges should take place at the halfway line. A new player cannot enter the field until the substituted player has left the field of play. The referee's permission does not have to be obtained, and "flying" substitutions are allowed.

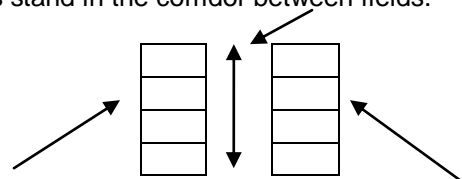
(A) When an U.6 team is short of players, some may be borrowed from any other U.6 team within the team's Club.

(A) When an U.7 team is short of players, some may be borrowed from any other U.6 or U.7 team within the team's Club.

Under no circumstances should an unregistered player be used as he/she is not covered by FNSW insurance.

PLAYING FORMAT AND PLACEMENT

The playing fields of the U.6 and U.7 age groups are arranged in pairs as shown in the diagram below. Each team consists of between 8 and 12 players. The team splits into two groups of four and the remaining players act as substitutes. The two groups play simultaneously in 4 X 4 games on side-by-side fields. Team officials and substitutes stand in the corridor between fields.



- Spectators should stand on either side of the pair of fields but not between these (see arrows to define spectator standing areas).
- Coaching of players is permitted ONLY from the sidelines.
- At no time are coaches allowed on the field to coach.
- Standing behind or on the goal-line is not permitted. This includes spectators and team officials. The presence of people on or by the goal-line is intimidating, can cause confusion and can be counter-productive
- One person may stand behind each goal-line to collect the ball and reduce lost time.

TEAM PLAYER USAGE

The aim in these U.6 and U.7 age groups is to allow players to enjoy themselves, by having as balanced teams as possible. To ensure this happens coaches should learn to know the relative ability of all their team players and use this knowledge to avoid lopsided results by balancing the two games through moving players.

PLAYING EQUIPMENT

The basic compulsory equipment of a player is a shirt, shorts and socks in Club colours with shin pads & boots.

A player shall not wear anything that is dangerous to him/herself or another player. In particular there must be neither watches nor caps. Boots must not have sharp studs. Players cannot wear plaster casts. Ear rings, studs or any other jewellery must be removed. Players are permitted to wear sports goggles, sports glasses or sports sunglasses as long as, in the opinion of the referee, they pose no danger to the player or other players. The Optometrists Association of Australia recommends that children involved in sport, requiring assisted vision, should wear protective eyewear such as sports goggles or sports

glasses with soft or flexible frames fitted with a plastic or polycarbonate lens. Parents should ensure their Optometrist confirms the glasses to be worn meet this criterion and obtain a letter stating this fact. The decision to allow a player to wear or not wear particular glasses or goggles is up to the individual game leader/referee. Teams Officials/Game Leaders must ensure all players' equipment is checked BEFORE the game starts.

GAME LEADERS (REFEREES)

At all times common sense should prevail!

It is impossible to show all situations in these notes.

The duty of a Game Leader is to ensure a safe, fair and enjoyable game for all concerned by correctly and impartially administering the laws of the game and to keep the time. There are no official referees' cards.

Each team should provide a Game Leader for one of the simultaneous games. It is preferable for these Game Leaders to have attended a 'MiniRoos' Coaching Course held by the MWFA early each year.

The game should be played with as little interference as possible, consistent with the above. Constant whistling for trifling or doubtful offences should be avoided. The spirit should be that young children do not deliberately break the rules. Our players are learning the game of Football. The approach of officials is to be flexible and patient so as not to discourage a young player from his/her enjoyment. The Game Leader should blow the whistle clearly to signal all stoppages of play and sometimes for the subsequent restart after a stoppage. Some specific tips:

- Encourage all children to have fun and for different children to take 'restarts-in-play'
- Discourage players from permanently 'over-guarding' the goal.
- Use a 'players ready – set – start' prompt to encourage quick decisions when restarting play.
- Encourage players to dribble or pass the ball into play from all re-starts rather than a long kick.
- Ensure team officials and parents create a safe, enjoyable and positive playing environment for the children without stressing winning or losing.
- Allow the game to flow and to give instructions to all players 'on-the-run where possible.
- Ensure team officials/spectators guidelines are adhered to as much as possible.

Ideally coaches should not be Game Leaders as their job is to assist their teams through coaching. If they do act as Game Leaders, they must avoid the temptation to coach their players during play. This of course does not exclude an even-handed approach to advising these young players on the reasons for free kicks or to explain the rules, during the course of a game.

Maintaining adequate separation of players at the taking of free kicks is one of the difficulties at this level.

All infringements during the taking should be handled by taking the kick again after appropriate instruction.

When a player is injured or appears injured, the play must be stopped promptly. You do not necessarily have to wait for a stoppage in play. It is assumed at this level that players do not feign injury for advantage. **Please ascertain the seriousness of the injury before moving an injured player.** Start play again with a drop ball.

The game should be stopped promptly if a dangerous situation develops, for example a player down on top of the ball with a group of surrounding players trying to kick

the ball free. The players should be separated and play recommenced with a drop ball.

A coach or a parent can enter the field of play to tend to an injured player.

Coaches can offer encouragement and constructive instructions to the team from the sideline but not from around the goal area. **At no time are coaches allowed to be on the field to coach.** The presence of people on the goal line IS NOT PERMITTED as it is intimidating, can cause confusion and be counterproductive. This includes spectators and any officials.

Ensure all spectators are outside the field of play, and that no unauthorised persons enter the field of play.

The decisions of the Game Leader regarding the facts of play are final. Any decision, incorrect or not, cannot be reversed once play has recommenced.

A Game Leader must not try to make up for a bad decision by being lenient or giving a doubtful free kick later to the previously affected team.

DURATION OF THE GAME

Matches are for 15 minutes each half with a five-minute half time break. The game ceases at the end of each half immediately the time has expired. Play does not continue until a logical stopping point or to allow a goal scoring opportunity to be completed.

There is NO allowance for time lost during the game. The Game Leader is responsible for trying to maximise the time available for play by instruction of the players particularly when taking free kicks, throw-ins, corners and goal kicks.

Games must start on time. When not starting on time, each half must be reduced so the game ends on time.

START OF PLAY

At the beginning of the game the choice of ends is decided by the toss of a coin. The team winning the toss chooses the goal it will attack in the first half. The team losing the toss must kick-off first.

The Game Leader is to make a note of which team kicked off first at the start of the game!

After a goal has been scored the game is restarted by a kick-off by a player of the team conceding the goal.

At the start of the second half, ends are changed and the kick-off is taken by a player of the opposite team to that which started the game.

KICK-OFF

The procedure for a kick-off is:

- All players must be in their team's own half of the field.
- Opposing players must be at least 5 metres away from the ball.
- The ball must be stationary and placed in the centre of the halfway line.
- The Game Leader gives a signal.
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves forward, even if only a little.
- The kicker must not touch the ball again until it has touched another player.
- Opposing players may not enter his opponents half or the centre circle until the ball is in play.

In the spirit of 'MiniRoos' Football any infringements of these rules should be dealt with by corrective instruction and then another kick-off.

A goal may be scored directly from the kick-off. It can go straight into goal whether or not touching another player.

DROPPED BALL

At times the game has to be stopped by the Game Leader when the ball is in play, but no infringement has occurred for example when a player is injured or spectator interference or dangerous situations where no team is at fault. When this occurs, the game is restarted with a dropped ball from where the ball was situated when play stopped. If this is in the goal area, the ball should be dropped outside of the goal area.

For safety try and use only two players who should stand either side of the Game Leader and not so close as to cause injury when attempting to play the ball.

The ball should be dropped from about waist height. As soon as the ball touches the ground the ball is in play. Each side challenges for the ball. If any player touches the ball before it hits the ground or the ball goes out of the field of play after it makes contact with the ground but is not touched by another player, play must be stopped and the ball dropped again. In these age groups the standard form of a 'drop ball' with such inexperienced players can be confusing. Circumstances may require the referee to vary the way he/she drops the ball.

BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY

The ball is out of play when it has wholly crossed the goal line or side line either on the ground, or in the air. A common mistake is to rule the ball out of play when it rolls onto the line. Also note the ball is still out of play if it wholly crosses the line in the air but curves back into play. The ball is in play at all other times including when:

- it rebounds off a goal post, crossbar or corner post
- it rebounds off the Game Leader in the field of play.

If a player in the field of play touches the ball after it has already left the field of play in the air, he is not the last player to have touched the ball before it went out of play.

Spectators should stand well back from the sideline. This is for their own safety and that of the players and also to stop interference with the course of the ball and with players trying to keep the ball in play. If the path of the ball is interfered with by a spectator in the field of play, rule the ball out if it was obviously going out, but allow play to continue if there is doubt and no obvious advantage to either team. If there is confusion or advantage results from spectator interference halt play and restart with a dropped ball. If the opportunity arises, ask the spectators to move back if interference occurs.

KICK-IN NOT Throw-In !!

In U.6 and U.7 Football, the concept of throwing a ball in the correct manner is difficult to understand. To that end the Throw-In is replaced by a Kick-In.

A Kick-In:

- is awarded when the whole of the ball passes over the whole of the width of the touch-line, whether on the ground or in the air.
- Is awarded at the point where the ball crossed the touch-line.
- Is awarded to the opponents of the player who last touched the ball.
- Is placed at the point where the ball crossed the touch-line and kicked into play
- Is taken by a player who may continue to dribble it without being touched one of his/her team-mates

- Is taken by a player who is encouraged to kick to another team-mate at the Kick-In
- On being taken, may see a goal scored only if it has been subsequently touched by another player
- Must see all players from the opposing team at least 5 metres from the ball at the Kick-In spot
- Is retaken by the team awarded the Kick-In if the procedure is not followed correctly.

GOAL KICK

A goal kick is awarded to the defending team when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line either on the ground or in the air having last touched a player of the attacking team and a goal is not scored.

A goal may be scored directly from a goal kick, but only against the opposing team.

Procedure:

- the ball is kicked from any point on the Quarter-Line closer to the Goal-Line the ball crossed
- opponents must remain in their own half of the field until the kick is taken.
- The kicker may play the ball again before it is touched by another player, including dribbling.
- It is recommended that players are encouraged to pass the ball rather than dribble it as this is closer to the main aim for Football.
- A goal may be scored if the ball subsequently touches another player before it enters the goal.

Infringements and Sanctions:

The kick should be taken promptly. Where stalling becomes obvious, reprimand the player and use your whistle to start play.

Infringement of any of the above results in the goal kick being retaken.

A player cannot be offside if he/she receives a ball directly from a goal kick.

CORNER KICK

There are no Corner Kicks at these age levels.

When the ball goes out of play over the Goal Line but does not enter the goal, having last been touched by a defender, the same procedure as a Goal Kick is followed

METHOD OF SCORING

A goal is scored when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, between the goal posts and the crossbar. The Game Leader cannot award a goal if the whole ball does not wholly cross the whole line. If a spectator (such as one leaning on the goal post) makes contact with the ball and prevents a certain goal, the game must be stopped and restarted with a dropped ball with no goal awarded.

FREE KICKS

Free kicks are given for various breaches of the rules. These breaches must occur while the ball is in play.

At this level all free kicks are INDIRECT. For Indirect free kicks a goal cannot be kicked directly into goal. Note:

- If an indirect free kick is kicked directly into the opponents' goal a goal kick is awarded.
- If the ball is kicked directly into a team's own goal, a goal kick is awarded to the defending team.

Signal

The referee indicates an indirect free kick by raising his/her arm above his/her head. He/she must maintain the

raised arm until the kick has been taken, the ball has been touched by another player or goes out of play.

Procedure

The ball must be stationary when the kick is taken and the kicker must not touch the ball again until it has touched another player. This includes rebounds from the Game Leader, the goal uprights or crossbar. If this happens take the kick again and give appropriate instruction that touching the ball a second time would lead to loss of possession in normal football.

Notes:

- Free kicks do not have to be played forwards.
- All opponents must be at least 5 metres from the ball in any direction when the kick is taken
- Sometimes players take a quick free kick when the defenders are closer than 5 metres. This should be allowed as advantage play, but if the ball hits a defender the game should continue.
- Note that if the ball is driven directly at goal, even the slightest accidental deflection off a player is sufficient to score if the ball enters the goal. The only exception may be an infringement by an attacking player while the ball is in motion.
- A Game Leader does not always have to award a free kick if, although an infringement has occurred, awarding a free kick would advantage the opposition. The judgment when this should be applied comes with experience.
- The Game Leader should clearly indicate an advantage is being applied by saying 'play on' to show players that he/she has seen the infringement but is allowing play to continue. A simple example is if a player breaks through a defence and even though fouled, keeps his/her feet to have a good chance at goal. To award a free kick would allow the opposition defence to regroup. Advantage should be applied carefully, but once applied the decision cannot be reversed. After playing advantage, the next break in play will provide the opportunity to instruct the offending player on nature of the infringement.

PENALTY KICK

At this age group level there are no Direct Free Kicks or Penalty Kicks.

FOULS AND MISCONDUCT (Note U.6 & U.7 differ !!)

Under FIFA Laws, for '11-a-side' Football, free kicks are awarded when a player commits any one of the following seven offences in a manner considered by the referee to be *careless, reckless or using excessive force*:

- Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent
- Trips or attempts to trip an opponent
- Jumps at an opponent
- Charges an opponent
- Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent
- Pushes an opponent
- Tackles an opponent

A Direct Free Kick is also awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following three offences:

- Holds an opponent
- Spits at an opponent
- Deliberately handles the ball

An Indirect Free Kick is awarded to the opposing team if, in the opinion of the referee, a player:

- Plays in a dangerous manner
- Impedes the progress of an opponent
- Prevents the goalkeeper from releasing ball from his hands

Players in these age groups are not expected to have intent when they commit a 'Serious Foul Play' offence against a player. Nevertheless, these infringements may involve excessive force, may be through a lack of co-ordination or the result of a lack of skill. The above infringements must be eliminated from a player's game and an Indirect Free Kick should be awarded against the offending player. Such award of a Free Kick should always be accompanied by a clear explanation from the Game Leader. Technically, poor tackling is dangerous to any players involved and should be eliminated at this age group level. The following sections are an interpretation which the MWFA believes will aid with this aim.

ALL infringements are handled by awarding an indirect free kick at the point the infringement occurred against the team of the player committing the offence. The referee should always explain clearly why the free kick has been given to provide instructional feedback.

There are three broad categories of infringement:

Dangerous Play:

The infringements, particularly relating to offences with the body and feet and dangerous use of the arms will occur when a player is tackling a player with the ball or competing with a player to get to the ball. This dangerous play is due to lack of skill of the young players and should be penalised by the award of an Indirect Free Kick.

Players must be educated to tackle in a safe way. The aim is to minimise injury and to give the advantage to the player with the ball. All tackles must have the clear objective of taking the ball and not the player. A fair tackle cannot be made when the tackler does not have a clear shot at the ball.

Tackles from behind the line of vision of a player with the ball are especially dangerous because the player with the ball cannot anticipate the tackle, may fall awkwardly and may be hurt. All such tackles are especially dangerous because the player with the ball cannot anticipate the tackle and may fall awkwardly and be hurt. All tackles from behind should be discouraged and if a player is brought down from behind should be penalized with an Indirect Free Kick being given.

If the opponent is kicked or tripped, in the process of a player making a fair tackle, in which the ball is clearly played, the player should not be penalised.

Charging and Jumping

Provided the ball is within playing distance, a player is entitled to shoulder charge an opponent fairly. The player uses the shoulder to the shoulder region of the opponent. Arms and hands may not be used at any time to restrict or control an opponent. Players may not jump at an opponent either with the feet or the whole body. A dangerous charge also occurs when it is directed at a different part of the body, such as the back.

Jostling and aggressive competing for the ball is allowed providing no penalty offence is committed.

Striking an opponent or even attempting to strike an opponent is dangerous play in all circumstances and should be penalised.

If a player raises his/her boot above the waist, to play the ball and opponents are nearby or kicks at a trapped ball in a one on one situation resulting in dangerous play, an Indirect Free Kick is given.

Unfairly Preventing an Opponent trying to Play or Attempt to Play the Ball

A player may not hold an opponent. This act may be holding the shirt, arm or keeping an opponent on the ground. A player may not push an opponent to stop him/her from competing for the ball.

Unsporting Behaviour:

Sometimes players will simply shout or yell in an attempt to distract an opponent.

Players also must not wave their arms to distract or shepherd opponents.

Game Leader should instruct the players to stop these practices, but if they persist, players should be penalised.

Handball:

A Handball ruling does not occur simply because the ball touches the hand or any part of the arm of a player. At this age group the 'deliberate' intent of handball is judged if the hand goes to the ball rather than the ball to the hand. Also if, in the opinion of the Game Leader, the Handball significantly favours the offending team an Indirect Free Kick should be given.

OFFSIDE

There is no Offside ruling in U.6 and U.7 age groups.

FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

When an individual player is completely dominating the game, has already scored three goals and his/her team is winning by a three-goal margin, he/she can only score another goal when one of his/her team-mates is the next to score a goal for his/her team. This is to encourage good players to include other members of his/her team in more of the play and to have team-mates more able to have opportunities throughout the game. This would, as a result, encourage more players to stay and enjoy the game in this and future years.

For reference, 'AIA MiniRoos' information (from FFA) may be found at: www.miniroos.com.au

FOOTBALL RESTARTS

	Can score directly	Can be offside	Ball must go forward	Ball in play	Opposing players	Team mates	Second touch, ball in play
Kick off	Yes	N/A	Yes	Once kicked and moved	In own half, 5m away	In own half	Retake*
Indirect free kick	No	Yes	No	Once kicked and moved	5m (except quick kick)	Anywhere	Retake*
Goal Kick	Yes	No	No	Leaves Goal Area	In own half	Anywhere	Retake*
Kick-In	No	No	No	Enters field	5m	Anywhere	Opposition to retake
Drop ball	Yes	N/A	N/A	Touches ground	Anywhere	Anywhere	N/A

Note: * In Junior (Youth 12-16) and Senior Football, an Indirect Free Kick would be awarded but at this age these are considered technical issues of the game which require education and coaching rather than penalty.

FFA RULES IN COMPARISON WITH MWFA RULES

The table below shows no differences between the FFA 'MiniRoos' Rules (previously titled 'Small Sided Games) for the U.6 and U.7 age groups and the MWFA Rules in this document.

RULE	FFA 'MINIROOS'	MWFA
Offside	No. Game Leader instructs players to move into an onside position.	As for FFA 'MiniRoos'
Free Kicks	All Indirect Free Kicks. Penalties not awarded.	All Indirect Free Kicks as for 'MiniRoos'
Point Tables and Finals	No Point Tables or Finals	No Points Tables or Finals.
Distance of Opposition for Restarts	Opposition players must be at least 5m away for Kicks and at least 5m for Kick-Ins.	Opposition players must be at least 5m away for Kicks and at least 5m for Kick-Ins.

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- IN THIS DOCUMENT ARE PARTS OR ALL OF RELEVANT, DOCUMENTS FROM FOOTBALL FEDERATION AUSTRALIA'S 'AIA MINIROOS' SCHEME, THE FIFA LAWS OF THE GAME AND THE MWFA AMENDED RULES FOR JUNIORS UNDER 6 TO 11.
- THE DATE OF PUBLICATION OF THE DOCUMENT AND ITS COMMENCEMENT IN THIS FORMAT IS 30TH JANUARY, 2015