



DENVER YOUTH SPORTS SPRING 2026 SOCCER RULES

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

- A. All head coaches must be at least 18 years of age by the first scheduled game unless approved by Youth Sports. Failure to comply or falsification will result in the expulsion of the coach from the league. All volunteer coaches must complete volunteer application and pass an annual background check before coaching or assisting.
- B. Parents will be required to sign Parents Code of Ethics prior to the first game of the season.
- C. Team Roster/Paperwork - Paperwork will include a complete team roster, Coaches', Parents', and Players' NAYS Code of Ethics forms, and valid proof of age for each participating player. Recreation Centers will be responsible for providing required paperwork if requested by Youth Sports within 24 hours of the request. Player additions to teams may be made up to **April 26, 2026**. The official rosters will be produced through ActiveNet by the Youth Sports or Rec Center Staff. A PENALTY FOR FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH ABOVE OR FALSIFICATION WILL RESULT IN DISCIPLINARY ACTION TO THE COACH AND CENTER.

II. SAFETY RULES

- A. Sportsmanship and Conduct
 - 1. Managers, coaches, players, parents, and spectators will not attempt to instruct, taunt, threaten or in any way verbally or physically abuse a Referee/Official, Site Supervisor, coach, player, or member of the Youth Sports team before, during, or after any game.
 - 2. Any unsportsmanlike conduct by players, coaches, and/or spectators is not allowed before, during or after any game. Failure to comply may result in immediate removal from the game, as directed by the official or DPR Staff.
 - 3. Ejection from a game for any rule infraction may result in immediate removal from the facility, as directed by the official or DPR Staff.
 - 4. Ejection from a game for any rule infraction will result in suspension from the team's next scheduled game and may result in suspension from practice or attending other DPR facilities or activities at the discretion of DPR Staff.
 - 5. Failure to comply with the departmental policies and Code of Ethics may result in probation/termination.
 - 6. If a player, manager, coach, or assistant coach is ejected from any two (2) games during the season, s/he will be terminated from their position with the Youth Sports program. If the coach is a full-time employee, they will be reported to their immediate supervisor, as well as the Directors of Recreation.
- B. After each game, each team is responsible for removing their trash (water bottles, cans, etc.).
- C. No drugs, alcohol, or tobacco (including vapor pens) should be used on or near the field of play or within indoor facilities. Any spectators under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be asked to leave the premises.
- D. In the event of an injury that requires medical assistance, call 911. The Site Supervisor, manager, or coach will remain in charge of emergency treatment until advanced medical

treatment arrives. If injury dictates that injured player is not to be moved, game play will be delayed as necessary.

- E. It will be Youth Sports Staff responsibility to decide to make up games cancelled because of inclement weather.
- F. A player who is bleeding must come out of the game, until the bleeding is stopped. If blood is on a game jersey, the player must put on another jersey.
- G. No casts, hard or soft, are allowed during league play.
- H. **Jewelry is prohibited.** This includes but not limited to watches, bracelets, necklaces, earrings, or other piercings (taping over is not allowed), and acrylic nails. Hair adornments (hair beads, hard head bands, hair bobby pins, hard hair clips) may be worn in the hair if they are secured close to the head and do not present a risk of injury to the player, teammates, or opponents (at the discretion of Site Supervisors and Officials). Religious and medical-alert medals are not considered jewelry. A religious medal must be taped and worn under the uniform. A medical-alert medal must be taped and may be visible.

III. AGE DIVISIONS

- 1. 5-6 age classification: any player turning 7 years of age before April 19, 2026 is ineligible.
- 2. 7-8 age classification: any player turning 9 years of age before April 19, 2026 is ineligible
- 3. 9-10 age classification: any player turning 11 years of age before April 19, 2026 is ineligible.
- 4. 11-12 age classification: any player turning 13 years of age before April 19, 2026 is ineligible.
- 5. Any player not listed on the team roster may not play in the league.
- 6. In the case of needing to fill the **minimum** number of participants for a team's game, the coach will be allowed to move up no more than **three** rostered players, if they meet all requirements. The participant(s) must be: (1) on an ActiveNet roster for the same sport/recreation center, and (2) only one year younger than that age group (i.e., a 10-year-old playing in the 11-12 age group). Coaches must notify Youth Sports or Rec Center Staff at least one hour prior to game time to move a player up.

IV. SPORT-SPECIFIC RULES

NFHS HIGH SCHOOL RULES WILL BE ENFORCED WITH THE FOLLOWING DENVER PARKS & RECREATION MODIFICATIONS

ROSTERS

- 1. 5-6 Division: Teams will be composed of a minimum of 4 players and a maximum of 8.
- 2. 7-8 Division: Teams will be composed of a minimum of 6 players and a maximum of 12.
- 3. 9-10 & 11-12 Divisions: Teams will be composed of a minimum of 7 players and a maximum of 14.
- 4. Players can only be on one roster per age group.
- 5. Teams are allowed a **maximum** of 3 total players from **the same** outside team unless approved by Youth Sports.

NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Maximum number of players on the field at any one time:

- 1. 5-6 Division – Four (4). Teams can play with 3 players. Games are played **without** a goalkeeper.
- 2. 7-8 Division – Six (6). Teams can play with 5 players. Games are played with a goalkeeper.
- 3. 9-10 Division – Seven (7). Teams can play with 5 players. Games are played with a goalkeeper.
- 4. 11-12 Division – Seven (7). Teams can play with 5 players. Games are played with a goalkeeper.

Substitutions:

1. Injuries
2. Any dead ball, with referee's permission
3. Teams in possession on a throw-in may initiate substitutions. Teams defending a throw in may match substitutions but may not initiate substitutions.

Playing Time:

1. Each player will play a minimum of 50% of the total playing time (half the game). The exception to this would be late arrival, illness/injury, or discipline reasons. This needs to be noted to site supervisor, officials, and opposing coach before the start of the game.

THE FIELD**Dimensions:**

1. 5-6 Division – Length: 25 Yards Width: 20 Yards
2. 7-8 Division – Length: 50 Yards Width: 30 Yards
3. 9-10 Division – Length: 60 Yards Width: 40 Yards
4. 11-12 Division – Length: 70 Yards Width: 50 Yards

Goal Size:

1. 5-6 Division – Four feet high and six feet wide (4x6)
2. 7-8 Division – Six feet high and twelve feet wide (6x12)
3. 9-10 Division – Six feet high and twelve feet wide (6x12)
4. 11-12 Division – Six feet high and eighteen feet wide (6x18)

THE BALL**Size:**

1. 5-6 Division – Size 3
2. 7-8 Division – Size 3
3. 9-10 Division – Size 4
4. 11-12 Division – Size 4

PLAYER EQUIPMENT**The basic equipment of a player consists of the following:**

1. DPR-issued jersey (same color for all players on a team)
2. Shorts – jersey must be tucked in
3. Shin guards – MANDATORY for protective reasons
4. Socks – must completely cover the shin guards
5. Footwear – tennis shoes or non-metal soccer cleats
6. Goalie shirts (Players can bring their own, or pinnies will be provided). Goalies must have DPR-issued team uniform available.
7. Goalie gloves are recommended.

REFEREES

1. Coaches are responsible for refereeing all games. One coach from each team must be on the field with a whistle to officiate.

2. All rule infractions will be briefly explained to the offending player, and coaches should work collaboratively to foster an educational and instructional environment.

DURATION OF THE GAME

1. 5-6 Division – The game will be divided into four (4) eight-minute quarters.
2. 7-8 Division – The game will be divided into four (4) eight-minute quarters.
3. 9-10 Division – The game will be divided into two (2) twenty-minute halves.
4. 11-12 Division – The game will be divided into two (2) twenty-minute halves.
5. There will be a two-minute break between each quarter for 5-6 and 7-8 divisions.
6. There will be a three-minute halftime break for 9-10 and 11-12 divisions.
7. Each team will have one (1) 30-second timeout per half for 9-10 and 11-12 divisions.

START OF PLAY

1. At the start of the game, choice of field ends, and kick-off is determined by coin toss.
2. Opponent must be five yards from the center mark while kick-off is in progress.
3. Ball must be passed (touched) to another player (no dribbling on kick-off).

BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY

The ball is out of play during the following circumstances:

1. When it has gone completely over the boundary line (on the ground or in the air).
2. When the game has been halted by an official.

METHOD OF SCORING

1. A goal is scored when the whole ball passes over the goal line.
2. The ball must cross the goal line between the goal posts and under the crossbar.

MERCY RULE

If a team is ahead by 5+ goals, the winning team must do the following:

1. May not score within the Penalty Box area and all the shots must be taken from outside of Penalty Box area. Violations will result in a goal kick.
2. Remove a player; preferably, striker or goalkeeper.
3. Retreat to midfield line on goal kicks by opponent.

OFFSIDE

1. 5-6 Division – None
2. 7-8 Division – None
3. 9-10 Division – Offside rule will apply in the attacking half
4. 11-12 Division – Offside rule will apply in the attacking half
5. There is no offside offense on goal kicks, corner kicks, throw-ins, or if the “offending” player is on his team’s defensive half; however, offside offense may occur on indirect kicks.

FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

For ages 5-6 & 7-8 all fouls and infractions will result in indirect free kicks.

For ages 9-10 & 11-12 all fouls and infractions will result in an indirect free kick unless inside the penalty area.

The following infractions will result ONLY in an indirect free kick, even if inside the penalty area:

1. Illegal hand ball by the goalie (foot pass from own team handled by goalie)
2. Dangerous play stoppage by official

These indirect free kick infractions will result in the ball being placed on the top line of the penalty box closest to where the infraction took place.

Any player who commits one of the following infractions will be penalized by the opposing team being awarded an indirect free kick, or a penalty kick if inside the penalty area:

1. Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent
2. Trips an opponent
3. Jumps into an opponent
4. Charges an opponent
5. Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent
6. Pushes an opponent
7. Slide tackles an opponent (regardless of when ball contact is made)
8. Holds an opponent
9. Impedes the progress of an opponent
10. Handles the ball deliberately (hand ball)
11. Unsportsmanlike behavior

FREE KICKS

1. All free kicks outside of the penalty area are indirect kicks.
2. Indirect kick: a goal cannot be scored unless the ball has been played or touched by another player of the same team (other than the kicker) before passing through the goal.
3. Opponents must be five yards away from the ball before a kick is allowed.

RECKLESS PLAY/FORCED SUBSTITUTION (Yellow Card/ Red Card)

1. There is a yellow-red card system, meaning the official(s) may impose a "forced substitution" on a reckless player.
2. Yellow card means a player must sub out of the game for a minimum of three minutes. Red card means the player is ejected and cannot participate in the remainder of the game.

PENALTY KICK

1. Any physical fouls or intentional hand balls by the defense in the penalty area will result in a penalty kick.
2. During the penalty kick, all other players must be outside of the penalty area.

THROW IN

1. All age divisions – A second throw will be allowed if the player commits a foul on the initial attempt. The coach/referee will explain the proper method before allowing player to throw in again.
2. Ages 5-6 may kick in instead of throw in.

GOAL KICK

1. A goal kick is taken by a member of the defending team when the ball crosses the goal line outside of the goal when last touched by a member of the attacking team.
2. The kick is taken from the edge of the goal area or from the goal line.

3. Ages 9-10 & 11-12: Opponents must be outside the penalty area on all goal kicks & goalie possessions.
4. Ages 5-6 & 7-8: Opponents (defense) must retreat to the halfway line on all goal kicks.

CORNER KICK

1. The attacking team is awarded a corner kick when the ball passes completely over the goal line outside the goal area after last being played by a member of the defending team.
2. Opponents must be five yards away from the ball.