



## **EDMSL REFEREE GUIDE 2023-24**

This is a brief guide for anyone who is being asked to referee a mini soccer game (Appointed or Parent) and for Managers who have to provide a referee. The current FA Laws for mini soccer may be found on our Website or on the League App. Being a mini soccer referee is about educating children in the rules of the game without being too heavy handed. Explain why decisions are made and make sure everyone understands it's not a Wembley Cup Final, so everyone, including the referee should enjoy the experience.

### **BEFORE THE MATCH**

Unless one is appointed by Hampshire FA, the "home" team is responsible for providing a referee, who must NOT be a team manager, though a coach may referee providing he/she remains completely impartial and does not "coach".

### **EQUIPMENT**

The referee will need to be provided with a good whistle, stop watch/timepiece, pencil, and a notebook or card to record the scores, also a coin for the toss up. Try to ensure you wear footwear appropriate for the conditions and surface (Astros or Plastic Studs for 3G) It is not necessary to wear a black referee kit (unless FA appointed), but appropriate clothing does enhance the match day experience for the players: in other words try to look the part. Red and yellow cards are applicable in Mini Soccer and can be used when absolutely necessary. The home team should provide at least 2 match balls for the game: size 3 for U7/8/9/10.

### **TIMINGS**

Matches are 1 match of 4Qtrs for all age groups. Timings are 10 minutes each Qtr for Under 7/8, and 15 minutes for Under 9/10. There should be no more than a 5 minute break between Qtrs. **MATCHES MUST FINISH ON TIME**, If you start late you finish early - make up time on breaks.

### **SUBSTITUTES**

Substitutes are interchangeable (termed Rolling Subs); a player who has been subbed can come back on the pitch. Substitutions can only be made during a stoppage in play and when the referee has been notified. Referees should ensure the correct number of players is on the FOP at all times. U7/8 play 5 a side, (with 5 rolling substitutes), Under 9/10 play 7 a side (7 rolling subs).

### **BEFORE KICKOFF**

The match referee should inspect the pitch to ensure it is safe for play; no dangerous items on the pitch, no dog mess etc. If there are and they can be safely removed then this should be done, if they cannot and the referee deems the pitch unplayable then the match **MUST NOT** take place and the matter referred to the League. The same applies if the pitch is waterlogged or frozen: the safety and enjoyment of the players is paramount, and pressure from managers/parents should not affect that judgement. The referee is the sole arbiter in that case and his/her decision is final. However it is good practice to discuss the state of the pitch with both managers and get an overall decision.

### **POWER PLAY - TEMPORARY DISMISSALS - No Header Trial**

Power Play is mandatory for use within League matches, in that a manager cannot object to a player/players being brought on if the opposition is 4 or 6 goals down. Temporary Dismissals (Sin Bins) are part of the FA rules for the game and has to be managed by the referee. Power Play cannot operate when a Temporary Dismissal is in progress. The League takes part in the FA No-Header trail and all matches are to observe this.

### **GOAL SAFETY**

The Referee should check both goals to ensure they are secure and are anchored firmly where required. The goals should have some reasonable downward pressure applied to the crossbar to ensure the goal is stable and will not topple over. (too much pressure will pull the anchors out so common sense should prevail.)

### **GETTING STARTED AND RULES OF PLAY**

**A toss of a coin should decide who kicks off.** Choice of ends is not appropriate. FA guidelines expect Respect handshakes at the beginning and end of matches

**Every match must commence at the scheduled time** – the referee is responsible for ensuring the teams are ready to kick off at the allotted time, any delay in kick off time has a knock on effect for the remaining games during the day.

**Do not add on time for injury or fetching balls etc** - in case of a serious injury where the player cannot be moved the match is to be abandoned. Substitutes can come on and off so a player who needs treatment should be taken off the FOP and a substitute brought on.

**A player cannot score directly from a kick off** \_ Opposing players must be 5 yards away and in their own half, attacking players must also be in their own half , the ball may now be played backward. Markings on the pitches do vary so make sure you know the pitch you are playing on.

### **There are no offsides.**

**All free kicks are direct. There are no indirect free kicks:** please consider the age of the children when awarding a free kick and try to explain why you have awarded one. In open play all defending players must be 5 yards away from the ball at all free kicks.

**Penalties:** A deliberate foul or hand ball inside the penalty area by a defender results in a penalty taken from a mark 7 yards from the goal line.

**Back pass rule** If the goalkeeper picks up the ball when it is deliberately played back to him by one of his own team, or from a throw in by his own team, without touching an opposing player, this is deemed a **Back Pass**. It is penalised with a direct free kick taken from the edge of the penalty area nearest to where the offence took place. **However** for the younger age groups we would encourage referees to give goalkeepers at least two warnings for this offence, explaining to the keeper what he has done wrong, but if he persists then award a free kick as above. At Under 9's one warning should be sufficient, at Under 10's they should know better.

**Throw In** The Ball should be delivered over the head, with both feet on the floor outside the FOP. if these criteria are not met then the throw should be retaken, at U7/8 do not penalise the re-take and allow play to continue. At Under 9 we would suggest a similar approach to try and let the game flow. If it really is a bad throw in then explain and try again but if it persists then award to the opposition. At Under 10's they should have it right and foul throws should be penalised. The rule to allow U7/8 to kick the ball in has been removed.

**Goal Kicks and the Retreat Line** Goal kicks Can be taken anywhere inside the penalty area. The ball is in play for the opposition when it leaves the penalty area or has been touched by a player other than the goalkeeper. At goal kicks the opposing team must retreat to the halfway line until the ball is in play. This does not stop the team from taking a quick kick before all players have retired, however all opposing teams must attempt to retire as quickly as possible. For Corner kicks opponents must be 5 yards away from the ball.

### **DISCIPLINE**

Once you are accepted as the official for a match you assume all the rights of an official referee, in other words your decision is final and the county FA authority will assume as much. It is important to emphasise that the Referee is responsible for the safety of the children whilst on the FOP by controlling the match, do not be afraid to halt proceedings if you think that safety is at risk.

**Players:** If you feel a player is getting out of control and they will not listen to you, speak to the manager and get him to speak to the player and if necessary remove him from the FOP until he/she calms down. In extreme circumstances especially where dissent is involved you have the option of a Yellow card and Sin Bin, or in rare cases a Red Card. incidents of physical abuse, fighting and spitting may warrant a card. **BE FIRM WITH THE PLAYER AND THE MANAGER.**

**Parents:** Avoid confrontation – do not get involved in discussions or disagreements with spectators, if you find the situation is out of control then speak to the RESPECT Match Day Delegate which all teams should have or the manager of that team and tell them that unless they can bring the parent under control then you will report them to the FA. If they still persist, then you have the ultimate sanction of abandoning the game. In which case you will need to advise the League and send a report to the County FA. You should not, and do not have to tolerate abuse of any kind.

**Managers:** If the manager is giving you abuse then try and speak to him/her warn them you will discipline them if it continues, you now have the option of awarding a Yellow or Red card. The chances of having any problems as above are extremely rare, but if you do have a problem and need to report it, keep a note of the names of the people involved if you can, and write a report as soon after the event as possible. You may have to attend a hearing and be asked questions about your report so stick to the facts only. The League will always support you if you decide that a match needs to be abandoned or if you are being abused. Please remember that managers and spectators are NOT ALLOWED onto the FOP unless invited by you.