

U6 Rules – Updated 2024

The Greenhaven Soccer Club has adopted the Small-Sided Games Format recommended by the US Youth Soccer Association for all Under 6 programs. The small sided format is designed to increase the number of touches each player has with the ball, while promoting an active, engaged, fun soccer experience. Small sided games keep players involved by limiting the number of players on the field, (the GHSC utilizes a 3 v. 3 format), and playing on a much smaller field with limited play stoppages. The action is designed to teach the basics of soccer and team play in a non-competitive environment. U6 is a cooperative program, and GHSC expects all coaches to do their best to ensure that all players, not just those on their team, have a positive experience.

FIELD: Each field should be approximately 20 yards long by 15 yards wide. The field boundaries can be established with lines or cones. There shall be a 4 foot by 6 foot goal at either end that can be a Pugg goal, flags or cones.

FIELD EQUIPMENT: 2 Pugg goals (or the other options outlined above for the goals) and 4 soccer balls for each field (size 3 balls). All the players for the home team wear pinnies, which are provided by the GHSC and can be obtained from the Field Marshal prior to the game. Alternatively, teams may wear their own team supplied alternate jersey.

BALL: U6 players play with a size 3 soccer ball.

PLAYER EQUIPMENT: The GHSC will provide players with a jersey that will serve as their uniform. If desired, teams may create their own jerseys at their own expense. Parents are responsible for providing their child with shorts, shin guards, socks and cleats. The players must wear shin guards that are fully covered by their socks. No jewelry of any sort is allowed, including hair beads. No hard shell braces or splints are allowed.

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: Team rosters will have teams comprised of between 10 and 13 players. However, U6 AGCs have discretion to add players depending on registration demographics and other issues that may occur. The rosters are co-ed, and the minimum number of players of each gender will be established by the GHSC each year based on registration demographics.

COACH: Each coach (head and assistant) will be provided training from the GHSC Director of Coaching (DOC), to enable them to provide an age appropriate environment for the team. The DOC also provides practice plans, exercises, games and other age appropriate activities. During the games, the head coach and the assistant coach will each monitor a game. During the game, offer encouragement to all players, but please try to refrain from offering too many instructions. Coaches need to wear their GHSC supplied coach shirt or an alternate team shirt that identifies them as the coach.

FIELD MARSHAL: The Field Marshal is designated by the GHSC Board of Directors. He or she will bring the necessary equipment to the fields, supervise the set-up of the fields, issue and collect pinnies, and keep time of play. The Field Marshal uses an air horn to designate the start and end of each quarter. The Field Marshal will give teams a “one minute until play” signal prior to the start of each quarter. The Field Marshal is in charge of the games and their decisions are to be respected.

GAME FORMAT: When you are on the field during games, please remember that as U6 is cooperative, you are acting as a game “official” for all players on the field regardless of team or

affiliation. Whether it is encouragement, praise or a reminder to not stand in front of the pugg, it is expected and appropriate for you to address **any** player on the field.

Teams play two concurrent 3 v. 3 games on two parallel fields. In other words, each team sends three players at a time to each of the two fields laid out next to each other to play against three players from the opposing team.

Each game is divided into 4 quarters (each 8 minutes in length); with a 3 minute break in between each quarter. The coaches of the home teams for the first scheduled games are asked to arrive 20 minutes before game time to assist the field marshal with set up. All games will follow the same time line; as in all games will start and end play at the sound of the air horn. The time allotted for each quarter begins whether or not teams are ready to play.

Each game will have a coach from each team present on the field to assure the flow of game occurs smoothly. In a pinch, one coach can manage the game. The coach will follow play by moving along the side line of the field, and will have access to 4 balls. Ideally, each coach on the field will hold 2 balls and “patrol” one half of the field. U6 is the only age group where coaches can be on the playing field. Position yourself so that you are out of the way. Most often, coaches find themselves a few yards inside of the sideline.

Play begins with teams lined up on opposite sides of the mid line, in the middle of their half of the field and the coach rolls the ball onto the field along the midline.

If the ball goes out of bounds, a coach immediately rolls another ball onto the field to continue play and then retrieves the errant ball. If a goal is scored, the coach rolls another ball immediately onto the field towards the opposite goal, and retrieves the ball from the net. Taking time to “re-set” the players on their half of the field may result in losing too much playing time while the kids get back to their starting positions. There are no kick offs. No scores are kept.

At both coaches discretion, teams may utilize a dead ball situation to “re-set”; as in slow the pace of play by setting up as they would for the beginning of the game. Specifically, each team lines up in the middle of their half of the field and the coach rolls the ball along the midline to begin play. This can be helpful if coaches observe players being a bit reckless and struggling to listen.

Substitutions can occur at any time.

The coaches for the home teams for the last scheduled games are also responsible for assisting the Field Marshal with field breakdown and clean up.

GAME STOPPAGE/MISCONDUCT: Games should only be stopped when a player is injured or a player is exhibiting out of control or reckless play. Balance and coordination are a challenge for some of the players, as they develop at different rates. Since U6 players tend to bunch, when one player loses their balance and/or falls, there is a domino effect (literally) and the other players often fall as well. This is common and expected in U6 soccer, but can be dangerous and it falls on all of us to do what we can to mitigate the risk of injury.

Please know that we are not labelling any player as “bad” or a “bully”. We also are not assigning intent to the player’s behavior. Again, coordination varies among our players and our purpose here is to empower all coaches to keep the game safe and enjoyable for everyone. U6 is cooperative in every way, by us all working together, we can give the players a fun, positive experience.

Below is the protocol developed to help coaches manage situations where a player is knocking other players down or kicking wildly (at the ball, at the air or others):

1. Either coach on the field can and should immediately remove any player who is playing out of control (knocking over players or kicking wildly).
2. The player's coach should have a conversation, aka a teaching moment with the player, explaining that the behavior is dangerous and not how soccer is played. The player should sit on the bench for the rest of the quarter.
3. Upon re-entrance to the game, If the player continues to play out of control, the player should be removed and not allowed to play in the remainder of game. The coach should again explain that the behavior is dangerous and not how soccer is played. The player's parent should also be informed.

BENCH AREA: Only players and registered/cleared coaches and team parents may be in the bench area. All spectators must sit along the sidelines behind the spectator line (a painted line on the field) or along the goal line behind the spectator line.

If a player is upset, sick or injured, the parent may be invited to the bench area to tend to their player. However, if the player requires lengthy attention, the parent should take their player back to the spectator area.

Players should keep their water in the bench area. The team parent may bring the game day snack to the bench area and distribute the food/drink, but then they must exit the area.