



11 v 11 Soccer Rules

(No Gender Rule)

Revised April 2026

NJ Coed Sports leagues generally follow **FIFA/NCAA rules** with the specific modifications below.

Game Format

Teams: 11 v 11 (10 field players + 1 goalkeeper)

Minimum to Start: 8 players. Fewer than 8 = forfeit.

Game Length: Two 28-minute halves with a 2-minute halftime.

Offside: Standard offside rules apply.

No Gender Rule: Teams can be Men's, Women's, or Coed.

The Mirror Rule

“Mirror Rule” Exception: Teams with fewer than 8 players may still participate in a “legal” game only if the opposing team faces the same situation. For example, if both teams only have 7 players available, the game may be played 7v7. A team is not permitted to remove players from the field simply to “mirror” the opposing team in order to avoid giving a forfeit win.

Team Rosters

Each team must carry a minimum roster of 15 players.

After Week 6, rosters are locked and may not be changed.

A team may replace an injured player before Week 6 only if that player is confirmed out for the season.

Player Equipment

All players must wear their assigned team jersey.

Goalkeepers must wear colors that distinguish them from all other players and referees.

Shin guards: Recommended

Cleats: Required.

Start & Restart of Play

A coin flip determines which team kicks off or referee decides.

All players must be in their own half; opponents must be at least 10 yards from the ball.

After a goal, the team that was scored on takes the kickoff.

Teams switch sides at halftime; the other team takes the second-half kickoff.

Sliding, Contact & Safety

To reduce injuries:

Slide tackling is not allowed anywhere on the field unless player is completely ALONE.

Any purposeful sliding or going to ground while challenging for the ball will be called a foul.

If a player makes a play on the ball and goes to ground, play may be stopped at the referee's discretion.

The only exception is the goalkeeper, who may slide only when making a legitimate play on the ball and not the player.

If the goalkeeper slides recklessly, makes contact with the player without making a legitimate play on the ball, or creates a dangerous play, a penalty kick may be awarded and further discipline may apply.

Using your hands or arms to grab, push, or hold an opponent to gain an advantage is not allowed.

Substitutions, Guest & Borrowed Players

Definitions

Sub/Guest Player: A person 21+ who is not a registered player in that league.

Borrowed Player: A person already rostered on another team in the same league playing for another team.

Regular Season

Subs/guest players are allowed in the regular season.

All subs/guests must:

Sign a waiver via QR

Pay a \$20 fee

Be checked in by an NJCS organizer before stepping on the field

If a captain allows a sub/guest to play without a signed waiver and check-in, the game is an automatic forfeit for that team.

A single player may sub in a maximum of 3 games per season.

A team may borrow players from another team only if they have fewer than 11 players available for that game.

A team using borrowed players may not exceed 11 total players for that game.

A team may bring guest players only to replace missing roster players and may not exceed its roster size.

A team must always have a majority of roster players on the field and available for that game.

If a team uses more subs/borrowed players than roster players, the game is a forfeit.

Playoffs & Finals

No subs, guest players, or borrowed players are allowed in playoffs or finals.

No-Show & Forfeits

Teams are expected to communicate cancellations.

Teams must notify NJ Coed Sports at jay@njcoedsports.com at least 12 hours before game time if they cannot play.

A team that does not show up and does not provide 12-hour notice will:

Enter the playoffs as the #4 seed at best, or the lowest qualifying seed, if they qualify.

Loose any prize or bar tab if they win the finals.

Likely not be permitted to return the following season with the same captain as captain, though the captain may still be allowed to play as a regular player.

If one team must forfeit, the game may still be played for fun, but all guest player waiver requirements still apply.

Referees

The referee is in full control of the game.

All decisions by the referee regarding play and discipline are final.

Dissent or disrespect toward referees will not be tolerated and may result in cards, ejection, or suspension.

Fouls, Cards & Discipline

Standard soccer fouls (kicking, tripping, charging, pushing, holding, deliberate handball, etc.) are enforced.

Free kicks may be direct or indirect depending on the offense, consistent with standard soccer rules.

A penalty kick is awarded for a direct free kick offense committed inside a team's own penalty area.

Yellow Cards

A player may receive a yellow card for:

Unsporting behavior

Dissent by word or action

Persistent infringement of the rules

Delaying restart of play

Failing to respect the required distance at free kicks/corner kicks

Yellow Card Penalty

Player must leave the field for 2 minutes.

Team must play down one player for that full 2 minutes (no replacement).

Red Cards

A player may be sent off for:

Serious foul play

Violent conduct or fighting

Spitting on a player or any person

Denying an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by deliberate handball or foul

Offensive or abusive language/gestures

Receiving a second yellow card in the same match

Red Card Penalties

2 Yellow Cards in one game = Red Card.

1 Red Card: Ejection from the game + minimum 1-game suspension (more if warranted).

2 Red Cards in one season: Ejection from the league, no refund.

Fighting, or responding to a fight violently, will almost always result in ejection from the league with no refund.

Sportsmanship

We are an adult recreational league. NJ Coed Sports expects all participants to:

Show respect toward teammates, opponents, referees, and staff.

Avoid abusive language, taunting, intimidation, or excessive dissent.

Serious unsportsmanlike behavior may result in:

Ejection from the game

Suspension from current and/or future NJCS leagues or events

Any player who is ejected must leave the premises immediately. Refusal to leave may result in a team forfeit and/or additional suspension.

Please also clean up after yourselves so we can continue using the facilities. If you see bottles, tape, or trash after a game, throw it away or recycle it.

Free Kicks

Free kicks may be direct or indirect depending on the offense.

Opponents must be at least 10 yards from the ball.

Penalty Kicks

Awarded for direct free kick fouls inside a team's own penalty area.

Taken from the penalty mark.

All players except the kicker and goalkeeper must remain outside the penalty area and at least 10 yards from the ball until it is kicked.

Corner Kicks

Awarded when the defending team last touches the ball and it wholly crosses the goal line, but no goal is scored.

Taken from the corner on the side where the ball went out.

A goal scored directly from a corner kick counts.

Goalkeeper Restrictions

The goalkeeper may not handle a deliberate back pass from a teammate's foot.

The goalkeeper may not receive the ball directly from a teammate's throw-in with their hands.

Goalkeepers may not waste time while controlling the ball.

Violations result in an indirect free kick from the spot of the infraction.

Regular Season Results

If a regular season game ends tied, the result stands as a tie.

Playoffs & Tiebreakers

Playoff formats (Top 4 or Top 6, depending on league size) are single-elimination.

Standings Tiebreakers

If two or more teams are tied on points, tiebreakers are applied in this order:

Goal Differential (goals scored – goals conceded)

Head-to-Head Result(s) between tied teams

Most Wins

Most Goals

Fewest No-Show Forfeits

If a team had a no-show forfeit during the season and is involved in a tiebreaker for playoff seeding or qualification, that team is automatically seeded lower.

A no-show team that still qualifies for playoffs may be capped at the #4 seed or lower, depending on the playoff format.

Playoff / Finals – Penalty Kicks

If a playoff or finals match is tied at the end of regulation:

Teams go directly to penalty kicks.

Each team selects 5 players to take alternating kicks.

The team with the most goals after 5 kicks each wins.

If still tied, teams go to sudden-death penalty kicks:

The same 5 kickers must be used in the same order.

One team scores and the other misses in the same round = game decided.

All other playoff situations will be handled case-by-case by the NJCS Manager on site.

The NJCS Manager has the final say on any disputes and will act in the fairest and most logical way.

Rule Updates & Contact

Rules are subject to review and change by NJ Coed Sports directors following incidents or for safety concerns as needed.

For questions or clarifications, please contact:
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