

FUTURESOCCER LEAGUE RULES

All rules are in line with those recommended for 'small sided' football by the Football Association.

Each team must be registered and affiliated with the Essex County FA, before they can participate in any league games – Futuresoccer will undertake this on your behalf on receipt of your team registration form.

During play any decision made by either the referee or the Futuresoccer management is final.

1. Players

- a. A maximum of 15 players may be registered for each season.
- b. A maximum of five players are allowed on the pitch at any one time, one of whom must be a designated goalkeeper.
- c. A minimum of three players plus a goalkeeper must be beside the pitch at the scheduled kick off time.
- d. A maximum of eight players are permitted to be named for each match.
- e. Any team found with unregistered or suspended players in their team during a match will automatically have the match awarded against them 10 – 0.
- f. All players must be attired in appropriate strips (at the very least the same colour shirts), appropriate footwear (studded, moulded or bladed boots are not permitted), shorts or tracksuit trousers, socks and shin pads – no dark coloured or black shirts are permitted.
- g. All jewellery must be removed. Plain band wedding rings that can not be removed must be taped up.
- h. Goalkeepers must wear colours which distinguish themselves from all other players.

2. Substitutions

- a. A maximum of three substitutes can be named each match.
- b. The number of substitutions made each match is unlimited.
- c. Substitutions can only be made when the ball is deemed 'dead' by the referee.
- d. The referee must be informed of any substitutions made.
- e. Teams are entitled to change their goalkeeper only once in any one game, and the referee must be informed of any change – if the goalkeeper has been sin binned this will rule will not be enforced.
- f. Substitutes may only enter the playing area once the player leaving the pitch has done so.

3. Match Play

- TEAMS MUST PAY THE MATCH FEE IN FULL AND HAND IN THEIR SQUAD LIST PRIOR TO THE SCHEDULED KICK OFF TIME. EVERY TWO MINUTES AFTER THE SCHEDULED KICK OFF TIME THAT A TEAM(S) IS LATE FOR KICK OFF THEIR OPPOSITION WILL BE AWARDED 1 GOAL – AT THE DISCRETION OF THE REFEREE. THE TIME WILL START ONCE THE REFEREE HAS ENTERED THE PITCH AND IS READY FOR KICK OFF.

- a. Each match will last 40 minutes, 2 halves of 20 minutes.

- b. The game will begin with the toss of a coin; the team winning the 'toss' will kick off. The team not kicking off will kick off the second half, and the teams will switch ends.
- c. The entire team must be behind the ball at kick off.
- d. A goal can be scored direct from kick off, but there must not be a second touch of the ball by the initial kicker.
- e. A goal is scored upon the whole ball entering the goal, over the goal line. The game is restarted by the team scored against.
- f. The ball must not travel above 'head height'. Head height is defined as six feet. An indirect free kick will be awarded against the last player to touch the ball before it went over head height, regardless of whether it comes off the kickboards, goal frame or the pitch.
- g. Heading of the ball is not permitted.
- h. If the ball leaves the field of play from rebounding off the goalkeeper, then the game will be restarted by the goalkeeper from whom the ball rebounded from.
- i. Only the defending goalkeeper is permitted to play the ball within the marked penalty area, and only he/she may handle it within this area.
- j. A goal may be scored from any point outside of the penalty area, and within the field of play. Goalkeepers cannot score in their opponent's goal.
- k. Any attacking player deliberately entering the opposing team's penalty area (save for momentum) will be penalised. The opposition goalkeeper will restart with the ball.
- l. Any defending player deliberately entering his goalkeepers penalty area and interfering with play or seeking to gain an advantage by it (i.e. quicker route to get to the ball) will have a penalty kick awarded against his/her team. Any accidental entrances into the penalty area will not be penalised.
- m. Any goalkeeper intentionally leaving his/her penalty area will have a penalty kick awarded against his/her team.
- n. The goalkeeper must return the ball into play by rolling it out of his/her area, with an underarm action. Any failure to do this will be penalised with an indirect free kick awarded against them, 2 metres outside of the area.
- o. The ball may not be returned to the goalkeeper from the player who has received it, until at least one other player has touched the ball. If the ball is returned directly back to the goalkeeper from the player, then an indirect free kick will be awarded against them 2 metres outside of the area.
- q. Referees are instructed to allow only minimal contact between players on all other kick boarded areas.
- r. If any team is reduced to 3 players due to misconduct (or the game is abandoned by the referee at his discretion), the game will be suspended and a score of 10 – 0 will be awarded to their opponents. This only relates to a permanent reduction to 3 players by sending off and does not include any sin binned players, unless 3 players have been sin binned at any one time.
- s. No player is allowed in any circumstances to 'slide tackle' an opponent in an attempt to win the ball, a direct freekick will be awarded to the opposition.
- t. All penalty kicks will be taken from the marked penalty spot, with the taker standing inside the area before approaching to take the kick. The kick must be taken in one fluid movement, hesitation to gain an advantage is deemed as unsporting behaviour and could result in the kick being taken again.
- u. If the ball hits the backboards behind the goal, this is deemed as out of play – and the game will re-start from the goalkeeper.

- v. Once the ball is deemed to be under control of the goalkeeper, the goalkeeper has a maximum of 5 seconds to play it out of the area.
- w. If a player shows dissent by word or action towards a referee's decision once a freekick has been awarded, the ball will be moved 5 yards forward, in any direction towards the goal, at the discretion of the referee.

4. Disciplinary Rules

a. In matters pertaining to a specific game, the refereeing of that game and the application of the rules during that game, the referee's decision will be final.

Indirect Free kicks

- b. The awarding of an indirect free kick will occur for the following offences:
- ball played over head height.
 - goalkeeper not returning the ball underarm.
 - obstructing or impeding an opponent.
 - heading the ball.
 - player returning the ball directly back to the goalkeeper after receiving the ball from him/her.

Direct Free kicks

c. A player committing any of the following offences will have a direct free kick awarded against them:

- charges an opponent.
- body checks or slide tackles.
- holding the fences or the kickboards.
- any contact by a player against another player whilst in the corners of the pitch.
- kicks or attempts to kick an opponent.
- trips or attempts to trip an opponent.
- jumps at an opponent.
- pushes or holds an opponent.
- strikes or attempts to strike an opponent.
- deliberately handling the ball, other than the goalkeepers in their penalty areas.

If any of the above are committed inside the penalty area, then a penalty kick will be awarded.

d. A player may not stand closer than 2 metres from the ball when defending a free kick (direct or indirect); if this rule is contravened then the kick will be re-taken, from the place the defending player was stood when the kick was taken. All free kicks must be taken 2 metres from the kickboards and the penalty area.

e. Penalty kicks will be taken with a one fluid motion starting inside of the area, and the goalkeeper must remain on his goal line until the ball is touched by the attacker.

f. Only outfield players are permitted to take free kicks during normal time, only in the advent of a penalty shoot-out can goalkeepers take penalties.

Sin Bin/Temporary Timed Suspensions

- g. Referees have the use of a sin bin, match officials will use these temporary timed suspensions in all instances in which are traditionally regarded as cautionable offences (previously yellow card offences). The standard time for a visit to the sin bin is 2 minutes.
- h. The length of the sin bin time of any one player is at the discretion of the referee, the player will be informed as to the length of the temporary timed suspension, the offending player must stay off the playing area for the time indicated, and not before they are indicated to by the referee, are they allowed to re-enter the playing area.
- i. The player is obliged to leave the playing area, and remain to the side of the pitch, in a position in which they can be seen by the referee for the duration of the temporary suspension.
- j. If a player is sin binned and temporarily suspended from play, an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team, to be taken from where the infringement took place. If the offence took place inside the penalty area, then an indirect free kick is awarded on the penalty area line at the nearest place to where the infringement occurred.
- k. A player is sin binned for any of the following offences:
- is guilty of unsporting behaviour.
 - shows dissent by word or action.
 - persistently infringes the Laws of the Game.
 - delays the restart of play.
 - fails to respect the required distance when play is restarted with a corner kick, kick in, free kick or goal clearance.
 - enters or re-enters the pitch without the referees permission or infringes the substitution procedure.
 - deliberately leaves the pitch without the referee's permission.

A PLAYER RECEIVING 3 SIN BINS/BLUE CARDS DURING ONE SEASON WILL BE IMMEDIATELY BANNED FOR ONE MATCH.

ANY PLAYER RECEIVING A FURTHER 3 SIN BINS/BLUE CARDS AFTER COMPLETING THE AFOREMENTIONED BAN WILL BE BANNED IMMEDIATELY FOR TWO MATCHES.

EVERYTIME A PLAYER RECEIVES A FURTHER 3 CARDS, AFTER RECEIVING 6 SIN BINS/ BLUE CARDS THEY WILL HAVE THEIR LAST BANNED DOUBLED.'

Red Cards/Sending Off

l. Futuresoccer operates its own disciplinary code in respect of red card offences in excess of the minimums as set out by the Football Association. Any incident of misconduct involving registered players reported to the Essex County Football Association will result in at the least an immediate 14 day suspension pending any charges being brought – the player, depending on the decision of FS , may be banned until the relevant charge is made by the ECFA

- m. A player is sent off and shown the red card if he commits any of the following offences:
- is guilty of serious foul play.
 - is guilty of violent conduct.
 - spits at an opponent or any other person.
 - denies the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by deliberately handling the ball (this does not apply to a goalkeeper within his/her own penalty area).

- denies an obvious goal scoring opportunity to an opponent moving towards the players goal by an offence punishable by a free kick or a penalty kick.
- using offensive, insulting, or abusive language.
- receives a second sin bin in the same match, at the discretion of the referee.

n. If a player is sent off during a game, he/she must leave the playing area, and retire to the changing rooms: he/she may not stand at the side of the pitch until they have changed out of their playing kit. The referee has the power to abandon the game if this rule is not adhered to.

o. As with rule 3r. any team reduced permanently to 3 players due to misconduct will mean the game ending with immediate affect. The opposing team will be awarded the game 10 – 0, unless the score is greater in terms of goal difference at the time of abandonment in the opposing teams favour. If both teams are deemed to be at fault for the abandonment then both teams will forfeit the match 10 – 0.

General Disciplinary Scale for Red Card Offences –

These are entirely at the discretion of the Futuresoccer management and referee.

OFFENCE CODE	OFFENCE	SUSPENSION
A1	Violent conduct, including: kicking, elbowing or striking an opponent	10 WEEKS
A2	Serious foul play including attempting to kick a player	4 WEEKS
A3	Spitting or similar unseemly behaviour.	6 WEEKS
A4	Use of foul and abusive language to another player	4 WEEKS
A5	Foul or abusive language or gestures directed at a referee	6 WEEKS
A6	Threatening physical harm to a referee	10 WEEKS
A7	Assault on any referee, or any Futuresoccer employee	LIFE BAN

p. Any player sent off for violent conduct will immediately be suspended for at least 10 weeks (A1) from all leagues run by Futuresoccer, and will be reported to the Essex County FA. Two points will be deducted from the offending player's team in these circumstances.

r. All suspensions are carried into subsequent seasons.

s. Any player playing whilst suspended will be banned for a further 3 weeks and his/her team will have 2 points deducted. The offending team will forfeit the match and have a score line of 10 – 0 awarded against them.

Repetition of Red Card for Violent Conduct

u. Any player returning from a period of suspension for violent conduct will be placed on a 20 weeks probationary period.

v. If any player receives a red card for violent conduct within 20 weeks of returning from their first offence they will automatically receive a 20 week ban from all Futuresoccer leagues.

x. On returning from this ban, the player will once again be placed on a 20 week probationary period. If the player receives a red card for violent conduct within this period of probation they will automatically receive a ban for life from all Futuresoccer leagues and its premises.

y. Any player serving a suspension of 10 weeks or more will be banned from all Futuresoccer leagues and its premises for the duration of the suspension.

z. Any intent to harm a referee or futuresoccer employee by a player will result in the whole team being withdrawn from the league.

aa. Futuresoccer reserves the right to ban any individual or team from all future participation in leagues or tournaments for violent conduct.

bb. Any player or team sent off for violent conduct towards a referee or any member of Futuresoccer management or staff will not only receive a life ban from all Futuresoccer sites, but also be reported to the Essex County FA, who have the power to enforce a ban from all forms of competitive football. In these instances the police may also be involved.

Alcohol/ Drugs

cc. Any player suspected to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be allowed to participate in any match, and will be asked to leave Futuresoccer premises.

Supporters

dd. All teams are responsible for the supporters of their team, whether they are team members or not. Point deductions and exclusion from the league may result for teams with supporters who consistently cause a nuisance. Referees and Futuresoccer employees reserve the right to remove any unruly supporters from the pitch side and Futuresoccer premises.

ee. If any supporter is guilty of any form of verbal abuse to a referee or Futuresoccer employee they will be removed from the premises, and the game will be stopped until this happens. If the abuse continues the game will be abandoned and the points awarded, with a 10 – 0 score line to the opposing team.

Team Disciplinary Points – Please contact Futuresoccer management

Appeals

- ff. All league teams have the right to appeal a sending off providing that an accurate and factual written appeal is submitted. All appeals must be made in writing and submitted to Futuresoccer management within 48 hours of the fixture – unless the offence has been reported to the ECFA
- gg. All communication relating to complaints or grievances will be dealt with exclusively between Futuresoccer management and the team organiser.
- hh. The decision of the referee is final in all matters pertaining to the playing rules of an individual game.
- ii. The decision of Futuresoccer management is final in matters pertaining to the administration of the leagues.
- jj. Futuresoccer management may overturn a rule(s) with immediate effect if they think that a team is deliberately using an interpretation of the rules to gain an unfair advantage.
- kk. Futuresoccer management has no power to overrule any bans/fines issued by the Football Association; therefore all appeals have to be made directly to the Football Association.
- ll. Futuresoccer management will decide on any matters of discipline not covered by the above rules.
- mm. Futuresoccer management reserves the right to ban any individual or team from all future participation in the leagues.
- nn. Futuresoccer reserves the right to alter any of the aforementioned rules without prior consultation.