

Parents Guide to Soccer Basics

Are you the parent or guardian of a child who is just beginning to play soccer, and you never played the game yourself? Don't be afraid. Soccer is the international sport, and its basic rules are very simple. It is often called "the beautiful game". We hope this brief overview will help you to understand the basics of the game, and allow you to better share in what we hope will be an enjoyable experience for your child, for years to come. So relax, read on, and share with your child the fun of "the beautiful game".

Soccer Basics

Purpose of the game: To score goals

How: Two teams face each other and try to put the ball in the opponent's goal, or net.

Where: The game is played on a level field (called a pitch), similar in size and shape to a football field, with goals at each end. The size of the field, the goals, and the ball will vary, depending on the age of the players.

The Team: In a regulation game, there are 11 players per team on the field. For younger children, smaller-sided games are played, with teams usually ranging from 6 – 9 per side.

Positions: There are four basic positions in soccer; *goalkeeper, defender, midfielder & forward*. At older levels of play, you may hear other positional names used, such as a sweeper, stopper, or striker, which are really just variations of the four basic positions previously mentioned.

- ◆ **Goalkeeper:** Unique from the other players, in that he/she may use their hands (within the area defined as the "penalty area") to defend the goal area, to prevent the other team from scoring.
- ◆ **Defender:** Primary role is to close down space and the attack of the opposing team. Secondary role is to take the ball away and start the attack in their team's favor.
- ◆ **Midfielder:** Play the most complete game in that they must be offensive and defensive players at all times. The midfield is where the attack begins.
- ◆ **Forward:** Their job is to finish, or score. They also must be able to come back and help at the midfield, to start an attack.

Equipment: Soccer is a simple sport. Little special equipment is needed. Shoes, shin guards (covered by socks), shorts and a shirt. For male players, use of an athletic supporter is also recommended.

Officials: In a regulation game, there are three officials; a referee and two assistant referees. The referee is responsible for enforcing the laws of the game, acting as timekeeper, stopping & restarting play, cautioning or ejecting offenders and ending the game, if necessary. The assistant referees are responsible for indicating when the ball is out of play, and which team has the right to put the ball back into play, and raising their flags to indicate an infringement. The AR may also help specify if a goal has been scored, a goal kick, or a corner kick.