

## **NYSA Baffled Parents Guide to Soccer**

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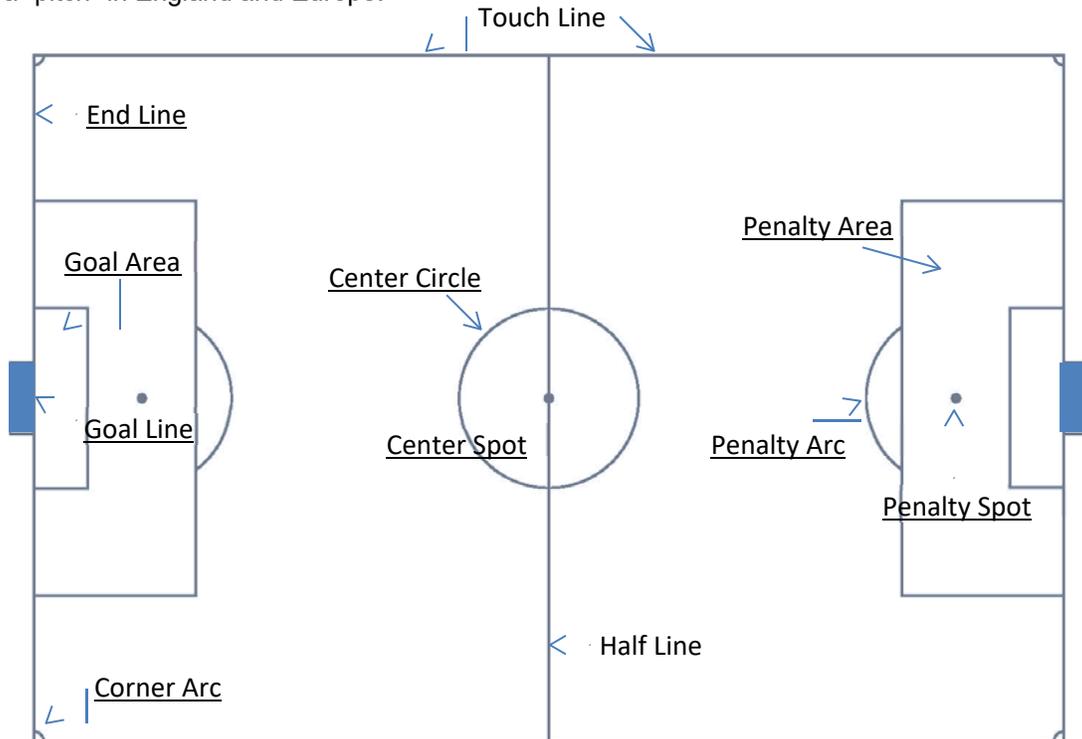
## NYSA Baffled Parents Guide to Soccer

● **Introduction** – Most parents come to the soccer fields to cheer on their kids. As parents, you want to see your kids do their best, have fun and succeed. You will probably experience more emotional highs and lows watching your children play than the players and coaches directly involved in the game.

This guide may not help you in regards to the emotional roller coaster. However, it will give you some basic rules to help you better understand the sport your kids love to play.

● **Basic Rules** – Below are the basic rules of soccer.

**Field** – Soccer is played on a rectangular field that differs in length and width according to age level. A regulation adult field can vary between 100 – 130 yards long and 50 – 100 yards wide. The field is often called a “pitch” in England and Europe.



**Equipment** – The basic equipment for soccer players are:

- jersey, shorts & socks – NYSA will provide a complete uniform, however parents may want to purchase an extra pair for practice
- shinguards – MUST be worn for practice & games and it must be completely covered by the sock
- cleats – baseball and football cleats are NOT allowed because they have a “toe” cleat, soccer cleats do not have a toe cleat. In addition, the cleats need to be rubber or plastic. Cleats with metal are never allowed.
- a ball – sizes for age groups are listed below
- water bottle – optional but recommended

NYSA provides a complete uniform (jersey, shorts and socks) for each player registered. Players/parents will receive uniforms from the team coach. NYSA orders complete sets of uniforms for each team in each age division. Each set contains the same number of small, medium, large, etc. uniforms for the age division. For example, each U8 team will have the same number of youth medium jerseys/shorts, the same number of youth large jerseys/shorts, etc. NYSA cannot place additional orders for individual players.

NYSA players should wear the jersey given to them for that season. Players should not play in a different colored jersey from the rest of the team unless they are playing goalkeeper.

On cooler/colder days, players may wear pants instead of shorts. If wearing a t-shirt, sweatshirt, jacket, etc., during the game, it must be worn under the jersey. If wearing a hoodie, the hood must be tucked inside the shirt.

The soccer ball varies in size according to age group:

- players in U4 – U8 = size 3 ball
- players in U11 – U13 = size 4 ball
- players U15 and High School = size 5 ball

The basic equipment for soccer parents are:

- comfortable lawn chair – NYSA does not provide fan seating
- comfortable clothing – you will be in the sun, rain, heat and cold – and maybe sometimes rain
- a sense of humor and joy – especially watching the younger age groups have fun

**Game Length** – Game lengths will vary by age group. Games in the U4 – U9 age divisions follow a quarter format with a 2-minute break between quarters 1 & 3 and 3 & 4. There is also a 4-minute halftime break. Games in U11 – High School follow the half format with a 5-minute halftime.

- U4 games = four 6-minute quarters
- U5 games = four 6-minute quarters
- U6 games = four 8-minute quarters
- U7 games = four 10-minute quarters
- U8 games = four 12-minute quarters
- U9 games = four 12-minute quarters
- U11 games = two halves of 30 minutes
- U15 games = two halves of 35 minutes
- U19 games = two halves of 45 minutes

**Player & Game Etiquette** – The number of players allowed on the field during a game also varies by age group. In U4 and U5, the coach is allowed on the field with the players. In U6, the coach is on the sideline, but may move up and down the entire sideline on the bench side of the field. Beginning in U8, coaches must stay on the sideline in their own half of the field.

During a game:

- U4 = 3 field players + 1 coach on the field (no goalkeepers)
- U5 = 3 field players + 1 coach on the field (no goalkeepers)
- U6 = 4 field players (coach along touchline)
- U7 = 4 field players + 1 goalkeeper on the field (coach on touchline on his/her half)
- U8 = 5 field players + 1 goalkeeper on the field
- U9 = 5 field players + 1 goalkeeper on the field
- U11 = 8 field players + 1 goalkeeper on the field
- U13 = 10 field players + 1 goalkeeper on the field
- U15 = 10 field players + 1 goalkeeper on the field
- High School = 10 field players + 1 goalkeeper on the field

In all age groups, only one adult (other than the coach) may sit on the bench with the players. Spectators must sit on the sideline opposite the bench side of the field. No one (coach or parent) is allowed to coach from behind the goals.

Please let the coaches do the coaching during games. Shouts of instruction from the parents or other spectators only serve to confuse the players and often are contrary to what the coach told the players to do.

**First Rule of Soccer: No Hands!** – Soccer is a very simple game. The object of the game is to kick a ball into a goal using only the feet, head, chest or legs.

A hand ball is called when a player deliberately uses any part of his body from the tips of the fingers to the shoulder to control the ball. In other words, a player cannot “handle” the ball. If a ball is kicked and hits a player’s hand or arm while in “a natural position”, it is not a hand ball. (If a player’s hands are over his head and the ball is kicked into a hand/arm, this is not a “natural position” and will be called as a handball.) Please understand that the ref must use his own judgment (to some extent) in determining whether a not a hand ball is accidental contact or a purposeful attempt to play the ball.

Goalkeepers are the only players who may touch the ball with their hands ... with two exceptions. First, a goalkeeper may only touch the ball with his/her hands while inside of the penalty area. If the goalkeeper picks up a ball or carries a ball outside of the penalty area, it will be called as a handball. Secondly, a goalkeeper may not pick up the ball if it was deliberately kicked to him by one of his teammates. If a teammate heads or chests the ball back to the goalkeeper, the goalkeeper may then pick up the ball.

Other fouls will be called during the course of a game. However for younger children fouls will mostly be called for handballs and pushing. Please visit the NYSA website for a complete list of rules by age division.

**Starts & Restarts** – The game starts with a kick-off at the center circle. Kick-offs are also used to restart the game after the quarter or halftime break and after a goal is scored. The kick may move the ball forward, to one side, or backwards. The kicker can’t touch the ball again until another player (from either team) has touched it. This is called the “two-touch” rule. The two-touch is also in effect for goal kicks, corner kicks, free kicks and throw-ins. However, NYSA does not enforce the rule for the U4 age group.

A throw-in is used when the ball is kicked out of play over the sideline (touchline). The ball must COMPLETELY CROSS THE LINE to be considered out of play. If the ball is on the line or touching part of the line, it is still in play. The thrower must keep both feet on the ground and bring the ball from directly behind the head with both hands on the ball and both feet must remain on the ground.

A goal kick is taken by the defensive team when the offensive team kicks the ball out of play beyond the end line. Again, the ball must COMPLETELY CROSS THE LINE to be out of play. Any defensive player may take the kick from anywhere inside the goal area. The opposing team may not be inside the penalty area when the kick is taken, and the ball must leave the penalty area before it can be played by either team. If the ball does not leave the penalty area, the kick is re-taken.

A corner kick is awarded to the offensive team when the defensive team kicks the ball out of play over their own end line. The kick is taken from the corner arc nearest to where the ball left the field. A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick.

**Scoring** – A goal is scored when the ball COMPLETELY CROSSES THE GOAL LINE. NYSA is a recreational soccer league and does not keep score or standings in any age group.

**Officials** – The referee makes sure the game is played according to the rules. The main goal of the referee is to make the game safe and fun for the players. Every NYSA referee is a U.S.S.F. (United States Soccer Federation) certified referee – meaning that they have taken a 3-day class and passed a written test (and they must recertify every year). Please recognize that the referee is doing his best, and remember that if a referee can hear your words on the field, so can the children.

In the U4-U7 age divisions, only one referee is on the field during a game. Most of NYSA’s newer referees begin in the younger age divisions so they can learn how to properly call games.

In U8 and U9, most of the time two referees are used to assist in calling offside. However, there will be occasions when only one referee is available for a U8 or U9 game.

In the U11 – High School age divisions, NYSA uses three referees when available. The center ref is the referee in charge of the game. The linesman is an assistant referee who runs the sideline on each half of the field to assist in citing fouls, offside calls and substitutions. If three referees are not available, NYSA will assign two referees to a game.

**Fouls** – A foul is a rule infraction. Please visit the NYSA website for a complete list of rules by age division. On the NYSA website, you will also find a link to the FIFA Laws of the Game.

While watching a game, keep in mind that not all rules are black-and-white and some interpretation is involved. Soccer can be a physical, contact sport, and no parent or grandparent likes to see their “little one” lose the ball and end up on the ground. Please know that bumping or going shoulder-to-shoulder while competing for a ball is not a foul until the hands or elbows come up or unless the player doing the “bumping” is not attempting to play the ball at all and is just trying to knock the other player away. There is a bit of judgment involved and not all referees will call it the same way, but please remember that the ref is ALWAYS right.

Referees may call fouls for many different reasons. After the foul is signaled, the ball is put back into play with a free kick by the team that was fouled. Free kicks are differentiated as a direct free kick, an indirect free kick or a penalty kick depending on the type of foul and where it occurred.

Direct kicks may result in a goal scored directly from the kick. These fouls result in a direct free kick: handball; kicking, striking or tripping an opponent; holding or pushing an opponent; jumping at or charging into an opponent or charging from behind.

Indirect kicks require that another player (from either team) touch the ball before a goal can be scored. These fouls result in an indirect free kick: playing dangerously, obstructing an opponent, goalkeeper taking more than 6 seconds to release the ball and offside.

Penalty kicks are a type of direct kick. The ball is placed on the penalty spot in front of the goal. All players must remain outside the penalty area and the penalty arc until the ball is kicked. The goalkeeper must have both feet on the goal line until the ball is kicked. The player taking the kick must wait until the referee's signal and then kick the ball forward. The player who kicked the ball may not play the ball again until it has been touched by another player.

A penalty kick results from a contact foul or handball by the defending team inside the penalty area.

In the U4 – U9 age groups, all free kicks are indirect kicks, except for penalty kicks in U8 and U9. (A penalty kick may be awarded in U8 and U9 only for intentional handling of the ball in the penalty area or, in the discretion of the referee, when a foul is committed to prevent an obvious goal scoring attempt.) Penalty kicks are given in U8 and above.

Offside is probably the most difficult soccer rule to explain and the least understood by parents and coaches alike. Offside is introduced at NYSA in the U8 age division.

The FIFA Laws of the Game explains offside as this: “A player is in an offside position if he is nearer to his opponents’ goal line than both the ball and the second last opponent.” (The goalkeeper counts as one of the two “last opponents”.)

A player receiving the ball cannot be offside on a throw-in, a corner kick, a goal kick or in his own half of the field. Also, it is not an offense for a player to be in an offside position. The player must be involved in active play (either by playing the ball or impeding an opponent) as determined by the referee, to be called offside.

Another confusing part of the rule is that the offside rule applies when the ball is KICKED, not when the player receives the ball.

Feel free to ask a referee (before or after a game) or our Director of Referees for further explanation.

• **NYSA Information** – Here is basic information about soccer at NYSA.

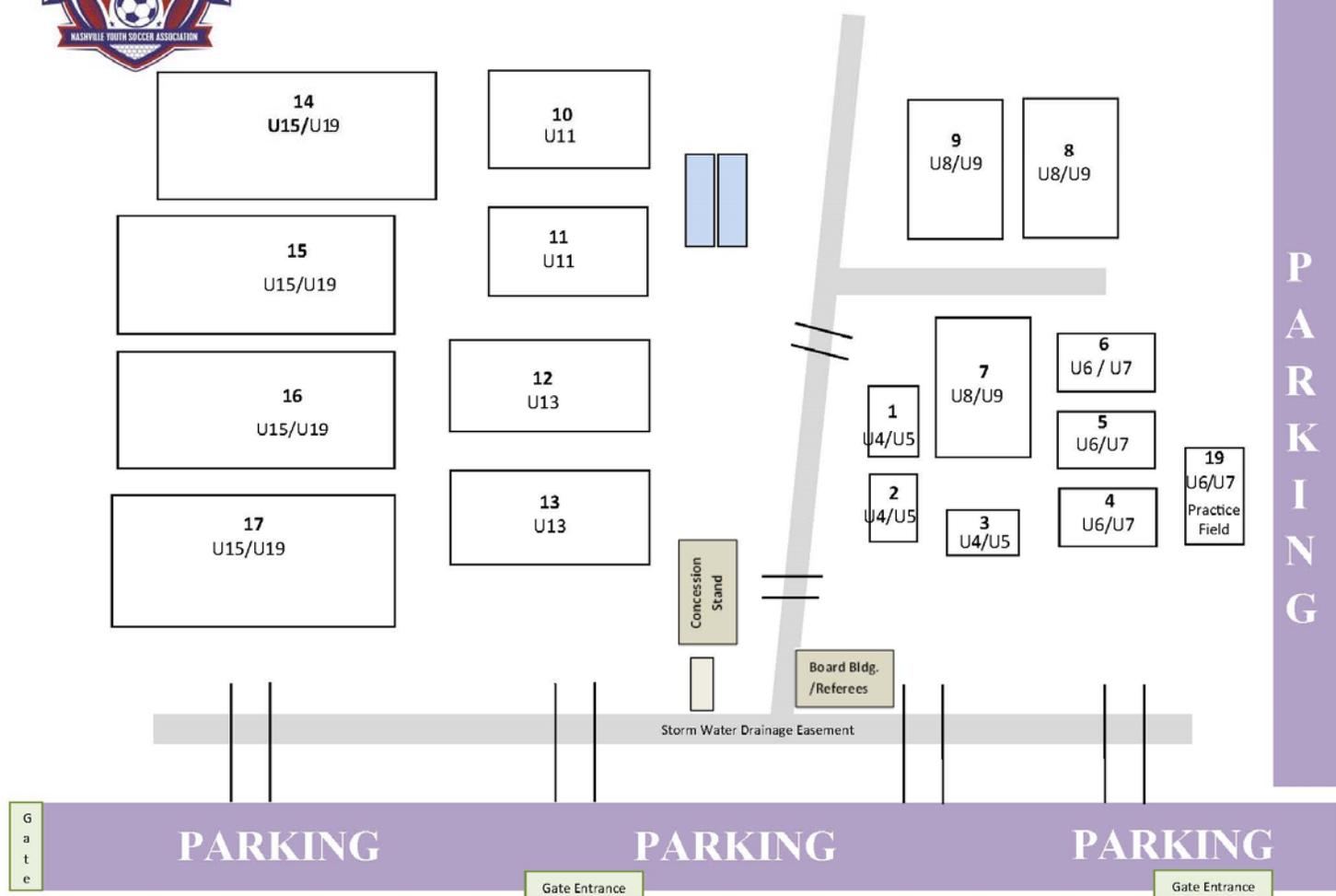
**Park Rules** – No pets or alcoholic beverages are allowed at Heartland Park.

**Field Assignments** – All games and practices are held at the Heartland Soccer Fields.

- U4 – U5 use fields 1, 2 and 3
- U6 – U7 use fields 4, 5, and 6
- U8 – U9 use fields 7, 8, and 9
- U11 uses fields 10 and 11
- U13 uses fields 12 and 13
- U15 primarily uses field 14, but may also use fields 15, 16, or 17
- High School/U19 primarily uses field 16, but may also use fields 14, 15, or 17



## HSC: NYSA Map of Fields



**NYSA Contact Information** - You may contact the league via phone, postal mail or email; however email is the best contact method.

League Phone Numbers: (615) 268-6349  
(615) 944-4271

Web Address: [www.nysa-soccer.org](http://www.nysa-soccer.org)

Email Address: [info@nysa-soccer.org](mailto:info@nysa-soccer.org)

Postal Address: Nashville Youth Soccer Association  
P.O. Box 140454  
Nashville, Tennessee 37214

Rain Out Text Alerts: NYSA participates in rained out text alerts via RainedOut™. To receive SMS text alerts or emails for rain out notices, you may sign up through link on the NYSA homepage (in the “Contacting NYSA” section).

Social Media: [www.facebook.com/NYSASoccer](http://www.facebook.com/NYSASoccer)

**NYSA Board of Directors** – The Board of Directors of NYSA oversees of the administration of the league. Contact information for the Directors may be found on the NYSA website. There are currently several open positions. If you are interested in joining the NYSA Board, please contact any board member or send an email to [info@nysa-soccer.org](mailto:info@nysa-soccer.org).

Commissioner	Director of Fields
Assistant Commissioner	Director of Safety & Security
Secretary	Director of Special Events & Volunteer Services
Treasurer	Director of Concessions
Registrar	Assistant Director of Concessions
Director of Coaches (U4 – U9)	Referee Assignor
Director of Coaches (U11 – High School)	Referee Training & Development
Director of Community Relations	Web Page Developer & Coordinator
Director of Player Services	Board Member-at-Large