

FOOTBALL OPERATIONS MANUAL

Playing Formats and Rules



Revision 01 | April 2025



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Version Control

Date	Name	Position	Version
23/04/2025	Todd Zeidler	General Manager	2025, U6 change to 3v3

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Under 6 Changes

3v3 Format

The 3v3 format introduces young players to football in the most engaging and enjoyable way possible. Designed specifically for Under-6s, this format prioritises involvement and maximises player participation. By reducing team sizes, children have more opportunities to interact with the ball, develop essential skills, and gain confidence as they experience the joy of the game.

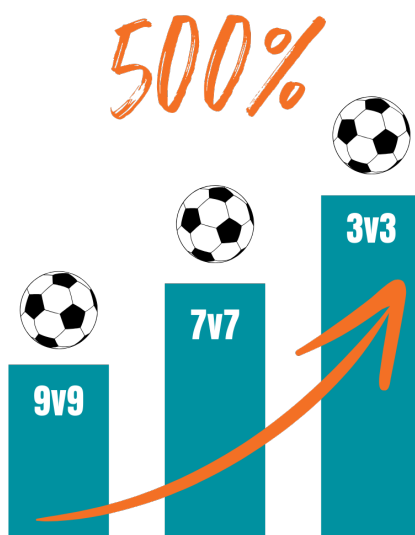
Game Structure: Quarters

In order to shift the focus from substitutions to player development, the revised structure incorporates quarter breaks. These additional intervals create more chances for players to rest and recover while offering coaches dedicated time to communicate with their teams. These conversations focus on guiding and encouraging players, fostering their understanding and love for football.

Discovery Phase (U06-U09)

This phase emphasises two key components: ball mastery and smaller player numbers on the pitch. These elements are integral to our Calves League, an internal program designed to enhance individual skills and foster a more engaging playing experience.

1. **Ball Mastery:** Emphasising the development of individual technical skills with the ball. This involves frequent and varied practice to help players gain greater control, confidence, and creativity in their play.
2. **Fewer Players on the Pitch:** By reducing the number of players on the field, each player gets more opportunities to touch the ball. This setup allows for more frequent involvement in the game, helping players improve their skills, make more decisions, and adapt to different situations.



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Playing Formats

Calves Program

	Under 6	Under 7	Under 8-9/10
The number of players	3 v 3 with no GK Max 3 subs	4 v 4 with no GK Max 3 subs	6 v 6 incl GK Max 2 subs
Field size	30m x 20m	30m x 20m	40m x 30m
Goal size	2m wide x 1m high	2m wide x 1m high	3m wide x 2m high
Ball size	Size 3	Size 3	Size 3
Duration of the game	8 min quarters 2 min break	20 min halves 5 min half-time	20 min halves 5 min half-time
Penalty area	2.5m Arc	2.5m Arc	5m deep x 12m wide

Football Queensland

	Under 6 & 7	Under 8 & 9	Under 10-12
The number of players	4 v 4 with no GK Max 3 subs	7 v 7 incl GK Max 4 subs	9 v 9 incl GK Max 5 subs
Field size	30m x 20m	40m x 30m	60m x 40m
Goal size	2m wide x 1m high	3m wide x 2m high	5m wide x 2m high
Ball size	Size 3	Size 3	Size 4
Duration of the game	20 min halves 5 min half-time	20 min halves 5 min half-time	25 min halves 5 min half-time
Penalty area	No penalty area	5m deep x 12m wide	10m deep x 20m wide

Calves Rules Overview

The rules below are unique to the Calves competitions and are different to the FFA MiniRoo Rules.

	Under 6	Under 7	Under 8-9/10
Coaches on the field	Yes	Yes	No
Throw Ins	Yes	Yes	Yes
Corner kick	No	Yes	Yes
Goalkeeper	No	No	Yes

Goal Kick

Under 6	Under 7
Opponents must retreat to the halfway line. Players can move once the ball moves past the ¼ line.	Opponents must retreat to the halfway line. Players can move once the ball is touched by another player.
Why? To allow players to get a touch and move forward without fear of players running at them.	Why? To allow players to get a touch and move forward.

Throw in Stages

Under 6	Under 7	Under 8 – 9/10
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> No foul throws. Hold the ball behind your head and throw in with both hands. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> No foul throws. Hold the ball behind your head and throw in with both hands. Feet behind the line. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Foul throws, the same player must retake. Hold the ball behind your head and throw in with both hands. Feet behind the line Both feet on the ground.

Penalty Area “Goal Tending”

Under 7
The goal box is out of bounds to all players.
Why? To encourage shooting at the goal.
Why? There are no goalkeepers.

Goalkeeper

Under 8 – 9/10
One nominated person (by the coach) can stand behind the goals to help the goalkeeper. They must wear a bib.
Why? Most goalkeepers haven't played in this position before.

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General Rules Under 6 to Under 12

The following rules apply to all matches.

Club Referee

The main role of the Referee is to keep the game moving fluently, limit stoppages and assist players with all match restarts. The Referee should:

- Encourage all children to have fun and different children to take re-starts.
- Ensure the correct number of players are on the field.
- Use a “Ready, Set, go” prompt to encourage quick decisions when restarting play.
- Ensure the opposing team is at least 5 metres outside the penalty area for all goal-line restarts.
- Award free kicks as appropriate to help children learn the rules and consequences of committing fouls.
- Explain the rules to players and why a free kick has been awarded.
- Let the game flow and give instructions to all players on the run where you can.
- Be enthusiastic and approachable.

Offside

- There is no offside rule.
- The Coach and Referee should strongly discourage children from permanently standing in blatant offside positions.

Start of play (KO) and re-start after a goal

- Pass to a teammate from the middle of the halfway line.
- All players must be in their own half of the field of play. Opponents must be at least 5 metres away from the ball until it is in play.
- The ball must touch a teammate before a goal can be scored.

Ball in and out of play

The ball is out of play when it has wholly crossed the goal line or the touch line on the ground or in the air, or when play has been stopped by the Club Referee.

Method of scoring

A goal is scored when the whole of the ball passes over the goal line, between the goalposts and under the crossbar.

Shin guards

Shin guards must be worn by all players without exception.

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Concussion

Any player suspected of suffering from concussion should be examined by a medial practitioner before returning to play. As a general rule, “If in doubt, sit it out”.

Substitutions

- Players may be rotated on and off the field at any time during the game.
- A coach may make substitutions while the ball is in play, ensuring the player is off the field before the substitute goes on.
- Substitutions are to be made at halfway.

Equal playing time should be a priority ensuring all players regardless of age, gender and/or ability get to take the field. Regular rotation of players is key. Kids do not register to watch football – they just want to play!

Fouls and misconduct

Indirect free kicks are awarded for all acts of handball or fouls and misconduct. Opponents must be at least 5 metres away from the ball when the indirect free kick is taken. An indirect free kick is where a goal can be scored only if the ball subsequently touches another player before it enters the goal.

For deliberate or serious acts of handball or fouls and misconduct in the penalty area, a penalty kick is awarded from an 8 metre penalty mark with only a goalkeeper in position. All other players must be outside the penalty area and be at least 5 metres behind the penalty mark.

Fouls and misconduct are:

- kicks or attempts to kick an opponent;
- trips or attempts to trip an opponent;
- jumps at an opponent;
- charges at an opponent;
- strikes or attempts to strike an opponent;
- pushes an opponent;
- tackles an opponent from behind to gain possession of the ball;
- makes contact with the opponent before touching the ball;
- holds an opponent;
- spits at an opponent;
- handles the ball deliberately;
- plays in a dangerous manner; and
- impedes the progress of a player.

PLEASE REMEMBER



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Calves Under 6 Playing Formats and Rules

Playing Formats

The table below summarises the national playing formats for boys and girls aged Under 6:

	Under 6
The number of players	3 v 3 with no GK Max 3 subs
Field size	30m x 20m
Goal size	2m wide x 1m high
Ball size	Size 3
Duration of the game	8 min quarters 2 min break
Penalty area	2.5m Arc

Rule Differences

The rules below are unique to the Calves competitions and are different to the FFA MiniRoo Rules.

	Under 6
Coaches on the field	Yes
Throw Ins	Yes
Corner kick	No
Goalkeeper	No

Coaches

- One coach per team is allowed on the field to help the children and encourage children to be involved in all aspects of the game, attacking, and defending.
- Encourage children to dribble or pass ball to teammates rather than kick the ball long.

Goalkeeper

- There are no goalkeepers.

Ball crossing the sideline

Throw-in

There are NO foul throws, the idea is to introduce kids to the concept.

1. Player faces the field of play.
 2. Hold the ball behind your head and throw in with both hands.
- The thrower must not touch the ball again until it has touched another player.
 - Opponents must be at least 5 metres away from the ball until it is in play.
 - A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw in

Ball crossing the goal line.

There are no corner kick for under 6, whenever the ball crossed the goal line it will result in a goal kick.

Goal Kick

- The ball is to be placed inside the arc and passed to another player on the same team.
- The defending team must retreat to halfway and cannot move until the ball is touched by a second attacking player.
- Referee should not restart play until they are satisfied all player are ready.
- The ball is in play once it is kicked directly out of the penalty area.

Fouls and misconduct

- Indirect free kicks are awarded for all acts of handball or fouls and misconduct.
- Explain to the child they have done the wrong thing and that they should not do this again.
- Handball should only be played if a player picks up or catches the ball.
- Most fouls and misconduct at this level are caused by a lack of coordination, with no intent. In this case try and give the advantage to the attacking team and continue play. If you decide a deliberate or serious act award a free kick.
- Opponents must be at least 5m away from the ball when the indirect free kick is taken.
- A goal cannot be scored directly from a free kick.

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Calves Under 7 Playing Formats and Rules

Playing Formats

The table below summarises the national playing formats for boys and girls aged Under 7:

	Under 7
The number of players	4 v 4 with no GK Max 3 subs
Field size	30m x 20m
Goal size	2m wide x 1m high
Ball size	Size 3
Duration of the game	20 min halves 5 min half-time
Penalty area	2.5m Arc

Rule Differences

The rules below are unique to the Calves competitions and are different to the FFA MiniRoo Rules.

	Under 7
Coaches on the field	Yes
Throw Ins	Yes
Corner kick	Yes
Goalkeeper	No

Coaches

- One coach per team is allowed on the field to help the children and encourage children to be involved in all aspects of the game, attacking and defending.
- Encourage children to dribble or pass ball to team mates rather than kick the ball long.
- Discourage players from permanently over-guarding the goal.

Goalkeeper

- There are no goalkeepers.

Penalty Area “Goal Tending”

- Encourage children not to be inside the penalty area.
- Encourage children to shoot from outside the penalty area, this is to introduce **‘striking the ball’**.

Ball crossing the sideline

Throw-in

There are NO foul throws, the idea is to introduce kids to the concept.

1. Player faces the field of play.
 2. Hold the ball behind your head and throw in with both hands.
 3. Feet behind the line.
- The thrower must not touch the ball again until it has touched another player.
 - Opponents must be at least 5 metres away from the ball until it is in play.
 - A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw in

Ball crossing the goal line after touching the attacking team last.

Goal Kick

- The ball is to be placed inside the arc and passed to another player on the same team.
- The defending team must retreat to halfway and cannot move until the ball is touched by a second attacking player.
- Referee should not restart play until they are satisfied all player are ready.
- The ball is in play once it is kicked directly out of the penalty area.

Ball crossing the goal line after touching the defending team last

Corner kick

- The ball is to be placed inside the arc and passed to another player on the same team.
- The defending team must retreat 5 metres away from the ball until it is in play.
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves.
- A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick.

Fouls and misconduct

- Indirect free kicks are awarded for all acts of handball or fouls and misconduct.
- Opponents must be at least 5m away from the ball when the indirect free kick is taken.

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Calves Under 8 & 9/10 Playing Formats and Rules

Playing Formats

The table below summarises the national playing formats for boys and girls aged Under 8 & U9/10:

	Under 8-9/10
The number of players	6 v 6 incl GK Max 3 subs
Field size	40m x 30m
Goal size	3m wide x 2m high
Ball size	Size 3
Duration of the game	20 min halves 5 min half-time
Penalty area	5m deep x 12m wide

Rule Differences

The rules below are unique to the Calves competitions and are different to the FFA MiniRoo Rules.

	Under 8-9/10
Coaches on the field	No
Throw Ins	Yes
Corner kick	Yes
Goalkeeper	Yes

Coaches

- Coaches are not permitted on the field.
- Encourage children to dribble or pass ball to team mates rather than kick the ball long.

Goalkeeper

- The goalkeeper is allowed to handle the ball anywhere in the penalty area.
- To restart play after a save or gathering the ball with their hands, the ball may be thrown, rolled from the hands or played from the ground with their feet but **cannot be kicked or drop kicked** directly from their hands.
- The goalkeeper has 6 seconds to restart play.
- Opponents must be at least 10 metres outside the penalty area and cannot move inside the penalty area until the ball is in play.

- The ball is in play once it moves out of the penalty area or when the goalkeeper places the ball on the ground.
- An indirect free kick is awarded if the goalkeeper touches the ball with their hands after it has been deliberately kicked to them by a teammate.

Goalkeeper help

- One nominated person (by the coach) can stand behind the goals to help the goalkeeper. They must wear a bib.

Ball crossing the sideline.

Throw-in

There are foul throw ins. If this happens the same player is to retake.

1. Player faces the field of play.
 3. Hold the ball behind your head and throw in with both hands.
 4. Feet behind the line.
- The thrower must not touch the ball again until it has touched another player.
 - Opponents must be at least 5 metres away from the ball until it is in play.
 - A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw in.

Ball crossing the goal line after touching the attacking team last.

Goal Kick

- Goal kick from anywhere within the penalty area.
- Opponents remain at least 10 metres outside the penalty area until the ball is in play.
- The ball is in play once it is kicked directly out of the penalty area.

Ball crossing the goal line after touching the defending team last.

Corner kick

- A player from the attacking team places the ball inside the corner arc nearest to the point where the ball crossed the line.
- Opponents must be at least 5 metres away from the ball until it is in play.
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves.
- A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick.

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Fouls and misconduct

- Indirect free kicks are awarded for all acts of handball or fouls and misconduct.
- Explain to the child they have done the wrong thing and that they should not do this again.
- Handball should only be played if a player picks up or catches the ball.
- Most fouls and misconduct at this level are caused by a lack of coordination, with no intent. In this case try and give the advantage to the attacking team and continue play. If you decide a deliberate or serious act award a free kick.
- Opponents must be at least 5m away from the ball when the indirect free kick is taken.
- A goal cannot be scored directly from a free kick.

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