



REGULATIONS UNDER 12

2026



Rationale for Change

As per the FFA National Football Curriculum, children in the under 12 age group are identified as being in the Skill Acquisition Phase. The Skill Acquisition Phase emphasises the teaching of the core skills of football above tactical development. In recent years many of the worlds top footballing nations as well as the FFA, FNSW and other local associations have moved the under 12 age group to smaller fields to allow a focus on skill development.

Some of the identified benefits of playing on a smaller field include:

1. More touches for each individual player
2. Encouraging faster decision making due to more limited space
3. More decision-making opportunities as they are more heavily involved throughout the entirety of the game
4. The smaller field favours players developing technical skills instead of just physical skills
5. Playing in smaller spaces with smaller numbers of opposition defenders encourages players to be creative with the ball
6. Less opportunities for players to “hide” or dominant players to control the match by themselves
7. The smaller field encourages more shots on goal while the smaller goal means there is not a significant increase in the goals scored
8. The smaller field allows a more simplified version of the game for new or less experienced coaches
9. The smaller field also provides opportunities for new or less experienced referees to develop their skills

Age Comparisons

Playing Format	Under 11	Under 12	Under 13
Points and Finals	No	Yes	Yes
Number of Players	9v9	9v9	11v11
Goalkeeper	Yes	Yes	Yes
Field Size	60m-70m Long x 40m-50m Wide	60m-70m Long x 40m-50m Wide	Full Field
Exclusion Zone on goal kicks	Halfway Line	20m from goal line/ 10m from goal box	None
Exclusion Zone on kicks offs	5m	5m	10 yards
Penalty Area	20m x 10m	20m x 10m	18 yard box
Offsides	No	Yes	Yes
Goal Size	5m x 2m	5m x 2m	Full Goal
Ball Size	4	4	4
Playing Time	50 Minutes	50 Minutes	60 Minutes
Half Time	5 Minutes	5 Minutes	5 Minutes
Referee	Game Leader	Referee	Referee

Special Rules

As per the competition regulations

- a) The under 12 age group will play competitive football on a smaller field
- b) The field size will be between 60-70 metres long and 40-50 metres wide
- c) Goals will be 5 metres wide and 2 metres high
- d) Teams will consist of a maximum of 9 players on the field from each team, including a goalkeeper
- e) Teams must always maintain a minimum of 6 players on the field including a goalkeeper
- f) A maximum of 5 reserves may be used by each team
- g) Under 12 games will be officiated by referees where possible with yellow/red cards being permitted
- h) Unless specifically listed below, all rules will be as per the BDSFA regulations and Laws of The Game for an 11v11 full field match
- i) Defending teams must remain 5 metres from the ball during a kick off until the ball has been touched by the attacking team
- j) An exclusion zone of 20 metres from the goal line must be marked with either a painted line on the field or by placing marking on the sideline. On goal kicks, the opposition team must retreat beyond this line until
 - i. The ball has been passed to and touched by a second player within the exclusion zone
 - ii. The ball has left the exclusion zone
 - iii. The ball has left the field of play
- k) After a save the goalkeeper is permitted to distribute the ball via a throw, roll, kick from their hands or kick from the ground.
 - i. The ball may be taken by the opposition once released from the goalkeepers hands as per the rules of 11v11.
 - ii. Opposition players cannot restrict the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from their hands
- l) The offside rule will be the same as an 11v11 full field match

It is at the discretion of each club whether their field will be set up to run goal box to goal box or across the field from sideline to sideline.

