

RULE 3 – THE NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Number of Players

A match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than six players, one of whom must be a goalkeeper.

A match may not start or continue if either team consists of fewer than four players.

Number of Substitutions

Teams may also dress up to 14 substitutes; a maximum of 20 named players on the game sheet.

Substitution Procedure

In all matches the game sheet listing the names of all of the players must be given to the referee prior to the start of the match. Any player or substitute whose name is not given to the referee at this time may not take part in the match.

To replace a player by a substitute, the following conditions must be observed:

- the player must first leave the field. A player is considered to have left the field if he is inside the restart line between the ends of his team's bench area, and as long he is not intentionally interfering with play. The player must then leave the field through either gate of the team's bench.
- a player is also considered to have left the field if he has been given permission to do so by the referee, through an outside gate, for any reason.
- once the player has left the field, the substitute may enter the field from either gate of the team's bench.
- a substitution is completed when the substitute enters the field of play.
- All substitutes are subject to the authority and jurisdiction of the referee, whether called upon to play or not.

Guaranteed Substitution Opportunity

Play will be held up for reasonable time to allow teams to substitute:

- after a time penalty has been awarded
- on a serious injury to a player
- after a goal has been scored

In these circumstances a team cannot be penalized for too many players.

Changing the Goalkeeper

Any of the other players, including the alternate goalkeeper may change places with the goalkeeper provided that:

- the referee is notified before the change is made
- the change is made during a guaranteed substitution opportunity, or during the halftime interval

Infringements and Sanctions

If a substitute enters the field of play without a player having first left the field, or the player being replaced intentionally interferes with play after the substitute has entered the field:

- play is stopped, unless the advantage clause is applied and a delayed penalty is called (see page 31)
- the team is penalized by a 2-minute technical offence penalty for 'too many players' * **see page 46 for U9/11 exception.**
- play is restarted with a free kick to the opposing team at the place the ball was located when play was stopped

If a player changes places with the goalkeeper without the referee's permission before the change is made:

- the referee allows play to continue
- the referee cautions the players concerned when the ball is next out of play, but not if the change occurred at halftime, (including extra time, or the period between the end of the match and the start of extra time and/or kicks from the penalty mark).

Players sent off before the Start of the Match

The team of a player who has been sent off before the start of a match is not penalized with one fewer player to start the match.

No additions may be made to the game sheet to replace a player who is sent off prior to the start of the match.

Team Officials

- The number of officials permitted to occupy the bench area is defined by the competition rules.
- All officials must be listed on the game sheet given to the referee prior to the start of the match.
- The coach may convey tactical instructions to the players during the match.
- The coach and other occupants of the bench area must behave in a responsible manner and are subject to the authority of the referee