Soccer: Basics How to Play and Rules

Number of players- A match is played with up to 11 players, one of whom is the goalkeeper and may not start with fewer than 7. The two teams must wear clothing that distinguishes itself from the opposing team.

Referee- The referee has the full authority to enforce the rules of the game and his/her decision is final. The referee controls the match in cooperation with the assistant referees.

Duration of match- Matches consist of two 45 minute halves. There is a half time, which may not exceed 15 minutes. A referee may play added time because of substitutions, assessment of injuries, removal of injured players from the field of play, time wasting and any other cause.

The start of play- A kick off is the way of starting or restarting play to begin a match, if a goal has been scored, to begin the second half or to begin a period of extra time.

The ball in and out of play- The ball is OUT of play when: it has crossed the goal line or touchline, play has been stopped by the referee. The ball is IN play at all other times, including when it rebounds off a goalpost, crossbar or corner flag and stays on the field, or when it hits a referee.

Scoring- A goal is score when the whole ball crosses the entire goal line between the posts and crossbar. The team that scores the most goals wins the match.

The Offside- If a player is in an offside position when the ball is played to him or touched by a teammate, he may not become actively involved in the play. A player is in an offside position if he is closer to the goal line than both the ball and the second to last defender, but only if he is in the opposition half of the field.

Throw Ins, Goal Kicks and Corner Kicks- When the ball goes out of play over the touchline, a throw in will be taken by a player from the team who did not touch the ball last. When the whole of the ball goes over the goal line, a goal kick or corner is awarded, depending on what team touched the ball last. If the defending team touched it, a corner is awarded to the opposition. If the attacking team had the last touch, a goal kick is awarded.

The Touchline- The touchline is a white chalk line that defines the perimeter of the field. If the ball goes out on either of the long lines, it is put back into play with a throw. If it goes out along one of the goal lines, the referee will award either a goal kick or a corner kick, depending on which team touched the ball last.