#### **Goals for the first day:**

* **To introduce players and coaches to the basics of soccer, from the rules to the positions.**
* **To promote teamwork, sportsmanship, and understanding of the game.**
* **To make soccer enjoyable and to help everyone feel comfortable and confident on the field.**

**We hope that after this Introduction Day, both players and coaches will have a solid foundation to build upon for the rest of the season. Let's play, learn, and enjoy soccer! ⚽**

**The Basic Rules of Soccer**

* + **Game Duration:** Matches are typically divided into two halves, each lasting 25 minutes (for youth games) with a 10 minute halftime. U8’s have four 12 minute quarters
  + **Kick-Offs & Restarts:** How the game begins and restarts after goals.
  + U8’s & Below will start/restart the game with a tussle (One player from each team starts with their heel on the ground and toe on the ball, when the whistle is blown both players try to roll the ball back to their teammates)
  + **Fouls and Free Kicks:** Basic fouls like tripping, pushing, or handling the ball intentionally and offsides results in a free kick; which is placing the ball where the foul occurred and playing from there. The team with the player who was fouled gets the ball.
    - **Advantage** is when the referee allows play to continue when an infringement or offense occurs and the non-offending team will benefit from the advantage and penalizes the infringement or offense if the anticipated advantage does not ensue at that time or within a few seconds.
    - **Offside** is when an attacker receives a pass closer to the goal than the last defender. The referees will usually not call it if it is very close, but when obvious they will call it and a turnover of possession will take place. Play will resume with a free kick for the other team.
      1. **Offside Rule Explained**
         1. **Offsides rules only apply to age groups U10 and above**

**Positioning:** A player is offside if they are closer to the opponent’s goal than both the ball and the second-to-last defender (usually the last defender is the goalkeeper) when the ball is passed to them.

**When it matters:** A player can only be offside if they are involved in the play (meaning they’re trying to get the ball or interfering with an opponent). If they’re not involved, they are not offside.

**Timing:** The key is when the ball is passed/kicked, not when the player receives it. If they are in an offside position at the moment the ball is passed to them, they are offside.

* + - * 1. **Exceptions: A player cannot be offside if:**

They’re in their own half of the field.

They receive the ball from a goal kick, corner kick, or throw-in.

* + **Corner Kicks & Goal Kicks:** When they occur and how they restart play.
    - **Corner kick:** When the ball goes passes the goal line and is last touched by the defending team
      1. Player on the offensive team starts play from the corner by passing the ball to their teammate
    - **Goal Kick:** When the ball goes passes the goal line and is last touched by the offensive team
      1. Goalkeeper / Defending teams player starts play from inside the goalie box by passing the ball to a teammate.
  + **Throw ins/Kick ins:** When the ball goes out of the sidelines, the team who didn’t touch it last gets to restart play from the point where the ball left the field.
    - **Kick in:** U8 and under perform kick ins. The player places the ball on the sideline where it went out of bounds and kicks it to another player on their team.
    - **Throw in:** U10 and older perform throw ins. The player picks up the ball with both hands, and steps to the sideline where it went out of bounds. They bring the ball behind their head and throw it with both hands to another player on their team. Both feet must remain on the ground. If they do not, possession will be given to their opponents to do the throw in.

**Positions on the Field**

* + **Soccer positions are broken down into four main areas:** Goalkeeper, Defenders, Midfielders, and Forwards. Here’s a quick overview:
  + **Goalkeeper (GK):** The last line of defense. The goalkeeper’s main job is to protect the goal and stop the opposing team from scoring. They are the only players allowed to use their hands, but only inside the penalty box. **No Goal Keepers for U8 & Under!**
  + **Defenders (DF):**
    - **Center Backs (CB):** Play in the middle of the defense. They help prevent the other team’s forwards from getting close to the goal.
    - **Fullbacks (RB/LB):** Play to the left or right of the center back. They’re primarily there to play defense, however when their team has the ball they need to focus on getting wide (playing closer to the sidelines) to support teammates.
  + **Midfielders (MF):**
    - **Central Midfielders (CM):** Play in the middle of the field. They are key to both defending and attacking and often control the tempo of the game by passing the ball.
    - **Wingers (RW/LW):** Play on the left and right sides of the midfield. They are important for attacking, as they help create chances to score by getting open to receive passes.
  + **Forward (FW):** The main goal-scorer. The striker's job is to get in position to score goals, whether through powerful shots, headers, or passes.