

FALL 2026 INDOOR SOCCER RULES

(Updated 7/14/2026)

Recent rule changes will appear in highlighted and italicized text

Rule 1: Facility

1. All games will take place in the Hawkeye Tennis and Recreation Complex (HTRC). No food or drink, other than water, is permitted in the turf area.

Rule 2: Player Eligibility

1. All Intramural Sports eligibility rules apply. Please check the [Intramural Sports Rules and Regulations](#) carefully.
2. Prior to participating, all players must check-in with the officials on their team's field. To check-in, each participant must have a photo available through IMLeagues, or must provide a University of Iowa or government-issued photo ID.

Rule 3: Team Composition

1. A game shall be played by two teams, each consisting of not more than seven players on the field at one time, one of whom shall be the goalkeeper. To start a game, the minimum number of players per team shall be four.
 - a. Teams may have any number of players on the field as long as the number falls in between the minimum of four and the maximum of seven. A team is not required to play with less players if the opposing team has a shortage of players.
 - i. Example: If Team A arrives with four players and Team B arrives with seven players then Team B is allowed to play with their seven players.
2. There is no limit to the number of players allowed on the roster.

Rule 4: Equipment

1. Teams may bring their own game ball or game balls may be checked out from the HTRC Iowa Turf Desk. Game balls must be approved by the game officials and both team captains.
2. *The Sport Programs staff retains the right to require any jewelry or items deemed dangerous to be removed prior to participation, or continued participation (Updated Summer 2026).*
3. The usual equipment of a player shall consist of a shirt, athletic shorts/pants, and footwear. The only footwear permitted shall be canvas or soft-leather training shoes, athletic shoes with rubber soles or some similar material, or rubber molded cleats. Metal cleats or studs are not allowed. The use of footwear is required.
4. Players on a team must wear the same color, numbered shirt during games. Players without matching color, numbered shirts will wear pinnies provided by the Sport Programs staff.
 1. Exception: The goalie must wear a different color shirt than the rest of the team. See 4.6.
5. The goalkeeper shall wear colors which easily distinguish them from the other players and the referee.
6. *Penalty: For any infringement, the player at fault shall be sent off the field to adjust their equipment and shall not return without first reporting to the referee, who will determine if the player's equipment is legal. The player may only re-enter the game at a moment when the ball has ceased to be in play (Updated Summer 2026).*

Rule 5: The Field

1. The field will be 64 yards by 45 yards.
2. The field closest to the turf entrance shall be referred to as Field 1 or the South Field. The field furthest from the turf entrance shall be referred to as Field 2 or the North Field.
3. Substitution Zones: At mid-field and three yards on either side of mid-field, a substitution area will be marked. Substitutes shall enter and leave through this area.

Rule 6: Substitutions

1. Substitutions can only be made during a dead ball, whether for the goalkeeper or for any other player on the field. To substitute, a player must wait at the division line (midfield line) until the ball is dead (out-of-bounds, penalty, etc.). Upon the ball being blown dead, the player must notify the official of their desire to substitute, at which time the substitution will be allowed. The entering player must wait for the exiting player to leave the field before entering.
 - a. Substitutions may only take place for the team in control of the ball during throw-ins and corner kicks. During these instances, once the team controlling the ball substitutes, the opposing team may then bring substitutes into the game during that dead ball period.
 - b. Substitutions for either team may take place during goal kicks, an injury, yellow card, red card, and after a goal.
2. All substitutes are to be made in the "substitution zone".
 - a. The player leaving the field shall do so from the touch line crossing over at the sector called the substitution zone.
 - b. The player entering the field shall also do so from the substitution zone but not until the player leaving the field has passed completely over the touch line.
 - c. A substitute shall be subject to the authority and jurisdiction of the referee whether called upon to play or not.
 - d. The substitution is completed when the substitute enters the field, from which moment they become a player and the player whom they are replacing ceases to be a player.
3. Penalty:
 - a. An illegal substitution occurs if, during a live ball, a substitute enters the field, or a replaced player leaves the field.
 - b. Play will continue as a "delayed penalty" if the non-offending team is in possession of the ball, with an advantage. Play will be stopped at the discretion of the officials when, in the officials' judgment, the advantage for the team in possession has ended.
 - c. Play will stop immediately if the team in possession of the ball is the team that committed the illegal substitution.
 - d. Once play has stopped, the referee will caution (yellow card) the offending (substituting) player. Play will resume with an indirect free kick for the non-offending team from the spot of the infringement.

Rule 7: Duration of the Game

1. The duration of the game shall be two equal periods of 20 minutes.
 - a. The duration of either half shall be extended to enable a penalty kick to be taken.
 - b. The half time interval shall not exceed five minutes.
2. If a team is ahead by eight goals or more at any point during the last 10 minutes of the second half, the game shall end.
3. The clock will run continuously throughout each half as well as the golden goal overtime period.
4. There will not be injury time added to the length of a half. The clock will be stopped in the case of an extended injury at the discretion of the referee.

Rule 8: Start of Game

1. At the beginning of the game, the choice of ends and kickoff shall be decided by the toss of a coin. The team winning the toss shall have the option of choice of ends or to kick off the first half. If the team winning the toss chooses to kickoff, the team losing the toss will choose which side it wishes to defend. If the team winning the toss chooses which side it wishes to defend, the team losing the toss will kick off.
2. Kickoffs: All players shall be in their own halves and the players of the team opposing that of the player taking the kick shall remain at least 10 yards from the ball until it is kicked; it shall not be deemed in play until it has been moved from its stationary position.
 - a. The kicker shall not play the ball a second time until it has been touched or played by another player.
 - b. A goal cannot be scored directly from a kickoff.
 - c. After a goal has been scored, the game shall be restarted with the kickoff being taken by a player of the opposite team to the one that scored.
 - d. After the half time interval, the teams shall change ends and the kickoff shall be taken by a player of the team that did not kick off the first half.
 - i. Penalty: For any infringements of points a, b, c, or d above, the kickoff shall be retaken.
3. When restarting the game after a temporary suspension of play from any other cause not mentioned elsewhere in these rules, when no team has an advantage, provided that immediately preceding the suspension the ball has not passed over the touch or goal lines, the referee shall drop the ball at the place where it was situated when play was suspended. If, however, it crosses over the touch or goal lines after it has been dropped by the referee, but before it is touched by a player, the referee shall drop it again. No player shall play the ball until it has touched the ground. If this last provision is not met, the referee shall re-drop the ball.
 - a. Exception: If the ball was in the penalty area, it shall be dropped outside the penalty box at the spot nearest to the position of the ball when the game was suspended.

Rule 9: Free Kicks

1. Free kicks shall be classified under two headings; "direct" (from which a goal can be scored directly against the offending side) and "indirect" (from which a goal cannot be scored unless the ball has been played or touched by a player other than the kicker before entering the goal).
2. When a player is taking a free kick, all opposing players shall be at least ten yards from the ball until it is in play. The ball shall be in play after it has been moved from its stationary position.
3. If a player of the opposing side approaches within ten yards of the ball before a free kick is taken, the referee shall order the free kick to be retaken. The ball must be stationary when a free kick is taken, and the kicker shall not play the ball a second time until it has been touched or played by another player.
 - a. Penalty: If the player taking the free kick, after having kicked the ball, plays it a second time before it has been touched or played by another player, a violation has occurred, and the game shall be restarted by an indirect free kick by the opposing team.

Rule 10: Scoring

1. Except as otherwise provided by these rules, a goal is scored when the entire ball has passed over the goal line, between the goal posts and under the crossbar, provided it has not been thrown, carried, or intentionally propelled by hand or arm, by a player of the attacking side.

2. The team scoring the greater number of goals during a game shall be the winner. If no goals, or an equal number of goals are scored, a 5-minute “Golden Goal” overtime period will be played; then, if needed, a penalty kick shoot-out will be used to determine the winner.

Rule 11: Ball in and Out of Play

1. The ball is out of play:
 - a. When the entire ball has crossed the goal line or touch line, whether on the ground or in the air.
 - b. When game has been stopped by the referee(s).
2. The ball is in play at all other times from the start of the game to the finish, including:
 - a. If it rebounds off a goal post or the crossbar into the field.
 - b. If it rebounds off either referee when they are on the field.
 - c. In the event of a supposed infringement of the rules, until a decision is made.

Rule 12: Throw-In

1. When the entire ball passes over a touch line, either on the ground or in the air, it shall be thrown back into the game, in any direction, from the place where it crossed the touch line, by a player on the opposing team to that which last touched it. It shall be deemed in play immediately after it has been released from the thrower’s hands, but the player taking the throw-in shall not play the ball a second time until it has been touched or played by another player. The players of the opposing team shall be at least five yards away from the spot where the throw is being taken.
2. A goal shall not be scored directly from a throw-in. The thrower must face the field of play and have both feet touching the ground out-of-bounds when the throw is made. The thrower must also use both hands equally and shall deliver the ball from behind and over the head.
3. Penalties:
 - a. If the ball is improperly thrown-in, a throw-in will be awarded to the opposing team.
 - b. If the throw-in is taken from any position other than the point where the ball passed over the touch line, it shall be retaken.
 - c. If the player taking the throw-in plays the ball a second time before it has been touched or played by another player, an indirect free kick shall be taken by a player of the opposing team from the place where the infringement occurred, unless it was committed within the penalty area, in which case the indirect free kick shall be taken from outside the penalty area at the point nearest to the spot where the infringement occurred.

Rule 13: Goal Clearance Throw

1. When the entire ball passes over the goal line excluding the portion between the goal posts, either in the air or on the ground, having last been played by a member of the attacking team, the goalkeeper, standing within their own penalty area, must throw it back into play, beyond their own penalty area. The ball shall be deemed in play as soon as it has been released by the goalkeeper.
2. Once the ball has been released into play on a goal clearance throw, the goalkeeper may not touch it again with the hands until it has been played or touched by another player outside of the penalty area.
3. A goal cannot be scored on a goal clearance throw.

4. The goalkeeper may not kick the ball on a goal clearance throw.
5. During a goal clearance throw, the goalkeeper can throw the ball as far as they want.
6. Penalties:
 - a. If, after having cleared the ball, the goalkeeper touches it again before it has been touched or played by another player, an indirect free kick shall be awarded to the opposing team from the place where the infringement occurred.
 - b. If, after having cleared the ball, the goalkeeper receives it back from a teammate and controls it with their hands before it has been touched by an opponent, an indirect free kick shall be taken by the opposing team outside the penalty area at the point nearest to the spot where the goalkeeper controlled the ball with their hands.

Rule 14: Corner Kick

1. When the entire ball passes over the goal line, excluding that portion between the goal posts, either in the air or on the ground, having last been played by a player of the defending team, a corner kick shall be awarded.
2. The corner kick shall be taken by kicking the ball, which is placed exactly on point of intersection of the goal line and the touch line.
3. Players opposite the team taking the corner kick shall not approach within ten yards of the ball until it has been moved from its stationary position. The player taking the corner kick shall not play the ball a second time until it has been touched or played by another player.
4. A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick.
5. Penalties:
 - a. If a corner kick is not taken correctly, it shall be retaken.
 - b. If the player taking the corner kick plays the ball a second time before it has been played by another player, the referee shall award an indirect free kick to the opposing team, to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred.

Rule 15: Fouls and Misconduct

- 1) A player who commits any of the following offenses shall be penalized, and the other team will be awarded a direct free kick from the spot of the foul. Should a player of the defending team commit one of the offenses listed below inside the penalty area, they shall be penalized, and a penalty kick will be awarded, regardless of the position of the ball, as long as it is in play.
 - a) Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent.
 - b) Trips an opponent, i.e. throwing or attempting to throw an opponent by using the legs or by stopping in front of or behind them.
 - c) Jumps at an opponent.
 - d) Charges an opponent in a violent or dangerous manner.
 - e) Charges an opponent from behind unless the latter is obstructing.
 - f) Strikes, attempts to strike, or spits an opponent.
 - g) Holds an opponent.
 - h) Pushes an opponent.
 - i) Charges an opponent with the shoulder.
 - j) Handles the ball, i.e. carries, strikes or propels the ball with their hand or arm (this does not apply to the goalkeeper within their own penalty area)
 - k) In the case of a hand ball that occurs on the goal line in any attempt to prevent the ball from entering the goal, the offending player will be assessed a red card and ejected
- 2) Slide tackling

- a) *A slide tackle is defined as a tackle or attempted tackle in which any part of the player's leg between the hip and the knee makes contact with the ground while attempting to play, or not play the ball, regardless of whether contact is made with the ball or an opponent. (Updated Summer 2026).*
 - i) *It is legal for a player to lunge in an attempt to tackle the ball if their knee incidentally contacts the ground, provided no part of the leg above the knee touches the ground.*
 - ii) **Note:** *If the player's momentum causes them to slide along the ground while lunging for the ball, the action is considered a slide.*
 - b) A slide tackle with no contact will be assessed a minimum of a yellow card.
 - c) Sliding to control the ball in the open field, with no players near, does not constitute a slide tackle.
 - d) If any contact with another player is made during a slide tackle, an automatic red card will be assessed to the offending player.
- 3) A player committing any of the following offenses shall be penalized, and the other team will be awarded an indirect free kick from the spot of the foul. If the foul was committed inside the penalty area, the indirect free kick shall be taken from outside the penalty area at the point nearest to the spot where the foul occurred.
- a. Playing in a manner considered by the referee to be dangerous, i.e. attempting to kick the ball when it is being held by the goalkeeper;
 - b. When not playing the ball, intentionally obstructing an opponent i.e. running between the opponent and the ball, or interposing the body so as to form an obstacle to the opponent.
 - c. Charging the goalkeeper except when they have passed outside the penalty area.
 - d. When playing as the goalkeeper and within their own penalty area:
 - i. After a goal clearance, the ball is returned by a teammate and the goalkeeper controls it with their hands again before it has been touched or played by an opponent, or
 - ii. Indulging in time-wasting tactics
 - e. Substituting illegally
1. Yellow Card
- a. A player shall be cautioned if they:
 - i. Commit a substitution violation.
 - ii. Persistently infringe the laws of the game.
 - iii. Show, by word or action, dissent with any decision of the referees.
 - iv. Are guilty of unsporting behavior.
 - v. Indulge in excessive time-wasting tactics in the judgment of the referee.
 - vi. Violate the equipment policy.
 - vii. Slide tackle.
 - b. A player that receives two yellow cards will be ejected from the game.
 - e. A player shall receive a red card and be ejected from the game if, in the opinion of the referees, they:
 - i. Are guilty of serious foul play.
 - ii. Are guilty of violent conduct.
 - iii. Persistently use foul or abusive language.
 - iv. Are guilty for the second time of a caution-able offense.
 - f. Once ejected, the player concerned may not re-enter the game in course, nor may they sit on the reserves' bench. The ejected player may not be replaced, and the team will play down a player for the remainder of the game.

- g. If play is stopped for a player to be sent off the field without any additional law infringements, the game shall be restarted by an indirect free kick awarded to the opposing team from the place where the infringement occurred. However, if the penalty is committed within the penalty area, a penalty kick shall be taken from the penalty mark directly in front of the goal.

Rule 16: Goalkeeper Privileges

1. Privileges: Within their own Penalty Area, the goalkeeper has certain privileges which are not given to any other player. These privileges include:
 - a. Handling– the goalkeeper may carry, strike, or propel the ball with hands or arms.
 - b. The goalkeeper may not be charged, interfered with, or impeded in any manner by an opponent while in possession of the ball. Possession includes the act of bouncing the ball in preparation for throwing it into play, tossing the ball in the air and re-catching it, throwing the ball out to be played, dropping the ball for a kick, and intentionally parrying. Possession includes contact with the ball.
 - c. The goalkeeper may slide in the box only to make a play on the ball but may not lead with their feet towards the opposing player. If their momentum carries them outside the penalty area, they shall not be called for sliding if the ball stays inside the goalie box. However, if the goalkeeper gains possession of the ball and leaves the penalty area, illegal handling shall be called. Illegal handling only occurs if the entire ball crosses completely over the penalty line area.
 - d. Outside the penalty area, the goalkeeper has no more privilege than any other player.
 - e. On saves during live play the goalie may drop the ball and kick it while it is on the ground. The ball must hit the ground and settle meaning that it should not be bouncing high off the ground. Punting the ball will not be allowed.
 - f. On saves during a live play, the goalkeeper can throw the ball as far as they want.
2. Violations: With the goalkeeper's privileges comes the possibility for certain violations of these privileges which could not be applied to any other player. These violations include:
 - a. From the moment the goalkeeper takes control of the ball with the hands within goalkeeper's own penalty area, the goalkeeper is to be penalized if, after releasing the ball into play, they touch it again with the hands before it has been touched or played by another player of the opposing team either inside or outside the penalty area.
 - b. If played by a player of the same team, a pass cannot be handled by the goalkeeper if it has been kicked back to them intentionally.
 - c. The goalkeeper must put the ball in play within six seconds of taking possession.
 - i. Penalty: Indirect free kick from the nearest point of infraction outside the penalty area.
 - d. The goalkeeper may not intentionally strike any player with malicious intent by throwing the ball vigorously at a player or push a player with the ball while holding it.
 - i. Penalty: Automatic Yellow Card or Red Card depending on severity. Indirect free kick from the nearest point of infraction outside the penalty area. If offense occurred in penalty area, it will result in a Penalty Kick.

Rule 17: Penalty Kick

1. A penalty kick shall be taken from the penalty mark, and when it is being taken, all players, except for the player taking the kick and the opposing goalkeeper, shall be on the field behind the numbers. The keeper must have at least part of one foot touching, in line with, or behind the goal line, between the goal posts, until the ball is in play. The player taking the kick must kick

the ball forward; they shall not play the ball a second time until it has been touched or played by another player. The ball shall be deemed in play when it has moved from its stationary position. A goal may be scored directly from a penalty kick.

- a. Penalty: For any infringement of this law:
 - i. By the defending team, the kick shall be retaken if a goal has not resulted.
 - ii. By the attacking team, an indirect free kick will be awarded to the defending team. If a goal is scored it shall be disallowed.

Rule 18: Overtime

1. Overtime will consist of one 5-minute “Golden Goal” period. The first team to score a goal will win the game.
2. A coin toss shall determine who kicks off and choice of ends. The team winning the toss shall have the option of choice of ends or to kick off the overtime. If the team winning the toss chooses to kickoff, the team losing the toss will choose which side it wishes to defend. If the team winning the toss chooses which side it wishes to defend, the team losing the toss will kick off.
3. The clock will run continuously during the “Golden Goal” overtime period stopping only for injuries and unforeseen circumstances.
4. If the game remains tied at the end of the overtime period, the game will proceed into a shootout.

Rule 19: Penalty Shoot-Out

1. If penalty kicks have to be taken to determine which team is the winner of a game, the following conditions shall be applied:
 - a. The referee shall choose the goal at which all the kicks shall be taken.
 - b. The referee shall toss a coin to decide which team shall take the first kick.
 - c. All kicks shall be made from the penalty mark.
 - d. Five kicks shall be taken alternately by each team, by any five eligible players. In the event either team finishes the game with less than five players, the same alternating order of kickers shall continue to make up the number of penalty kicks to five.
 - e. If, after both teams have taken five kicks, both have scored the same number of goals or have not scored any goals, the taking of kicks shall continue in the same alternating order, until such time as both have taken an equal number of kicks (not necessarily five more kicks) and one has scored a goal more than the other.
 - i. These additional kicks shall be taken by the players who have not yet attempted a kick. All players checked in for a team must kick before any player can kick a second time.
 - f. Any eligible player may change places with their goalkeeper after any attempt has ended.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

If there is inclement weather and Intramural Sports are scheduled, check the [Intramural Sports website](#) for cancellation information. The Sport Programs Staff will also attempt to notify participants scheduled to play that night. You can also sign-up for Intramural Sports notifications through the [Recreational Services app](#).