

DEVELOPING GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL

FOCUS ON FUN & DEVELOPMENT OVER RESULT



FESTIVAL RULES
2020/2021

DEVELOPING GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL

FOCUS ON FUN & DEVELOPMENT OVER RESULT

FESTIVAL RULES

Starting from the 2020/2021 Football Season



MFA Technical Centre



DEVELOPING GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL

© 2020 Malta Football Association
Millennium Stand, Floor 2, National
Stadium, Ta' Qali ATD4000

T: 23386000
F: 23386900
E: info@mfa.com.mt
W: www.mfa.com.mt

All rights reserved. No part of this
publication can be reproduced in any
form without permission from the
Malta Football Association Technical Centre.



OUR BELIEF

As a Club and Technical Centre **TOGETHER** we have one aim which is to be aware and attentive to the needs of the young player, and guide him or her to develop the right skills to fulfil their aspirations.

Our young players are not the same, they have different characters, different growth curves and clearly different abilities. We have an obligation to help every single player and impart lifelong skills and sporting values in a **FUN** and **SAFE** environment.

We believe that a qualified and responsible coach understands the importance and the difference of instilling a positive and winning mentality from that of playing only for the result.

Every child has the right to have fun and play – our job is to guide them in the most professional way possible using the right training methodologies.

OUR OBJECTIVES

These rules are intended to help us achieve the following objectives:

- **To create a culture of ‘Fun and Development over Result’;**
- **To simplify and bring uniformity in the game’s rules and regulations;**
- **To encourage organised games and festivals for children under 13 years of age;**
- **To recognise progressive games for the different age categories and adapt to the different phase of child development.**



CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

- ➊ **The right to** have FUN AND PLAY;
- ➋ **The right to** practise a sport;
- ➌ **The right to** be part of a healthy environment;
- ➍ **The right to** be surrounded and trained by competent and professional people;
- ➎ **The right to** follow training sessions according to their level and rhythm;
- ➏ **The right to** measure themselves with children who have the same possibility of success;
- ➐ **The right to** participate in competitions suitable for their age;
- ➑ **The right to** practise sport in absolute safety;
- ➒ **The right to** have the correct rest time;
- ➓ **THE RIGHT TO NOT BE A CHAMPION!**

UEFA, together with the 55 Member Associations, supports the concepts expressed in the '**Bill of Rights**'.

To give them a more meaningful scope, UEFA has collected them in a handbook we believe is useful to bring to the attention of youth football operators:

- » FOOTBALL IS A GAME FOR EVERYONE;
- » FOOTBALL MUST BE ABLE TO BE PRACTISED ANYWHERE;
- » FOOTBALL IS CREATIVITY;
- » FOOTBALL IS DYNAMICITY;
- » FOOTBALL IS HONESTY;
- » FOOTBALL IS SIMPLICITY;
- » FOOTBALL MUST BE PLAYED IN SAFE CONDITIONS;
- » FOOTBALL MUST BE PROPOSED WITH VARIABLE ACTIVITIES;
- » FOOTBALL IS FRIENDSHIP;
- » FOOTBALL IS A WONDERFUL GAME;
- » FOOTBALL IS A POPULAR GAME AND IS BORN FROM THE STREET.



RESPECT

All nursery coaches and officials play a crucial role in the development of children and young players. They have a collective responsibility to conduct themselves in an exemplary manner, and encourage and promote the fun and learning aspects of grassroots football.

Coaching is not limited to the field of play but it is also about imparting important values such as:

- Show respect for referees, opponents, coaches, all the players and spectators;
- Adopt a positive and respectful behaviour during matches by never entering the field of play and not use offensive language;
- Putting the players' interests first by prioritising the well-being, safety and enjoyment of every player above everything, including winning;
- Encouraging fair play and high standards of behaviour during and after the game;
- Win or lose, the players are to be encouraged as every experience is an important part of their development.
- Ensure that the focus is always on the player and not the coach.



COACHES, TEAM MANAGERS AND CLUB OFFICIALS

All Coaches, Team Managers and Club Officials are urged to follow these guidelines. Improper behaviour may lead to sanctions, including suspension and/or fines, as deemed appropriate by the administration of the Malta FA Technical Centre. Persistent bad behaviour may also result in the withdrawal of the MFA Coaching Licence.



RULES

LAW
01

Player safety

All the nursery organisers and participants of Festivals and friendly matches have an obligation to involve only players with regular medical approval related to their physical fitness.

LAW
02

Safety of sports facilities

All the nursery organisers of festivals and friendly matches must devote maximum attention to the health and safety aspects of the participating children when staging sports activities. These include:

- » **safe conditions of the goal post and absolute stability on the ground;**
- » **cleaning of the field and the removal of objects that could be hazardous for the children;**
- » **presence of qualified first aid personnel.**

LAW
03

No trophies but prizes for exemplary sports behaviour

Incentivise sports activities that promote sporting values and respect for the rules, the opponent, team-mates and all the staff (including the opposing team).

This set of rules are to be applied at all festivals and friendly tournaments for the categories between **U6** and **U13**.

LAW
04

Playing time

All children included in the friendly match and festival list must play. All players must have the opportunity to grow through participation in the match, ideally playing the same number of minutes. It is clearly the responsibility of the Nurseries to manage the minutes and team changes in the most responsible way for its players.

LAW
05

Serene sporting environment

All friendly matches and festivals must be held in a serene and healthy environment for children, encouraging them to express themselves and grow through competition. Parents should not be the protagonists but show support to the players taking part.

At the beginning of their sporting activity, all Nurseries are encouraged to hold a meeting with all the parents of their players to be jointly responsible of the development of their children.

LAW
06

Qualified staff and coaches

For the healthy development of its members, the Technical Centre and the MFA invites all Nurseries to recruit only coaches with a UEFA or MFA Licence specific to the relevant age-category.

RULES

LAW
07

Playing area dimensions

Under 6 2vs2

15-30m length × 10-15m width

Under 7 3vs3

15-30m length × 10-15m width

Under 8 4vs4 (3+1GK)

25-40m length × 12-25m width

Under 9 5vs5 (4+1GK)

25-40m length × 12-25m width

Under 10 & 11 7vs7 (6+1GK)

50m (maximum) length × 35-45m (maximum) width

Under 12 9vs9 (8+1GK)

60-75m (maximum) length × 40-50m (maximum) width

Under 13

9vs9

60-75m (maximum) length × 40-50m (maximum) width

11vs11

90m length × 45m (minimum) width

11vs11

100m length × 60m (maximum) width

Goal size (Goal post)

Under 6 & 7

1.20m width × 0.90m height (ideal); or

2.40m width (maximum) × 1.20m height (maximum)
(0.90m height minimum)

Under 8 to 9

4.50m width × 1.60m height (maximum)

3.60m width × 1.60m height (ideal)

Under 10 to 11 7vs7

4-6m width × 1.8-2m height (range)

4m width × 1.8m height (ideal)

Under 12 to 13 9vs9

5-6m width × 1.80-2m height (range)

6m width × 1.80m height (ideal)

Under 13 11vs11

7.32m width × 2.44m height

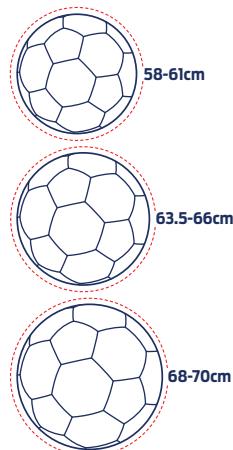


LAW 08

The ball

Under 6 to 7

Size 3



Under 8

Size 3

Under 9

Size 4

Under 10 to 12

Size 4

Under 13 9vs9 & 11vs11

Size 5



LAW 10

Players' apparel and equipment

All players must wear only kits and apparel supplied by their Nursery who guarantee the safety of the clothing supplied.

Basic Wear: Team's shirt, shorts and socks.

Pair of **shin guards** covered with socks. For the protection of the players, it is also advisable to use them in the training sessions.

Suitable **football boots**; up to 13 years only fixed studs are allowed.

The Goalkeeper should wear a shirt with a different colour from his team-mates, the opponents and the referee.

LAW 09

Number of players

Under 6 2vs2 (no goalkeeper)

Under 7 3vs3 (no goalkeeper)

Under 8 4vs4 (3+1GK, rotating goalkeeper)

Under 9 5vs5 (4+1GK, rotating goalkeeper)

Under 10 & 11 7vs7 (6+1GK)

Under 12 & 13 9vs9 (8+1GK)

Under 13 11vs11 (second part of season)

**LAW
11**

The referee

The MATCHES in the under 6-7-8-9-10-11-13 (9vs9) categories must be controlled with the '**self-refereeing method**'.

This is an opportunity for the players taking part in the match to make their own decisions. The Clubs will also agree on a person who will oversee the flow of the game and intervene and mediate in any difficult situation.

The person who will control the progress of the matches must be responsible and familiar with the rules of football, authoritative in enforcing the rules of the game, but promoter of a respectful attitude and fun environment for the children.

The following can be supervisors of friendly matches and festivals:

- » **Nursery members with regular MFA registration;**
- » **Coaches participating in the MFA/UEFA C-B courses;**
- » **Upon request, the Nurseries can request the use of an Association Referee;**
- » **Former Referee.**



MAIN TASKS OF REFEREE

- » On the field, there can only be the registered players involved in the game, only the staff on the official list, the qualified first aid staff;
- » the dimensions of the fields comply with the MFA standards;
- » the size of goal post is according to MFA standards and placed in maximum safety;
- » the size of the ball is suitable for the category according to MFA standards;
- » that the field is clear of objects that can harm the children's health;
- » that the pitch is totally safe (side lines not close to walls, etc.)
- » make sure that all players on the field of play wear shin guards;
- » that the equipment supplied by the nurseries protects the safety of the players.



GAME RULES

- » Does not suffocate play but gives advantage in favour of the team suffering from a foul or any other breach of regulations;
- » Controls the match in co-operation with the other coach in case the leader is a team coach;
- » Enforce the rules of the game;
- » Control the correct duration of the game;
- » Encourage and monitor the **rapid** substitutions to enhance game effectiveness (attention to the number of players on the field);
- » Controls the Play and takes the necessary decisions in conformity with Fair Play.

The Malta FA reiterates the importance of focusing on the growth of young players and not the result. ‘The referee’ can make mistakes like every player and coach on the pitch. It is your duty to help the player to accept decisions... this is also part of the development.

YELLOW & RED CARDS

Under 6 to 9 no cards

Maximum collaboration between the coaches is recommended.

The Malta FA encourages the use of the Green Card to players who uphold the values of respect and fair play during the match.

Under 10 to 12 Green card

Under 13 9vs9 Green card

Under 13 11vs11 Sin Bin

(refer to next page)

SIN BINS

Temporary Dismissals – otherwise known as ‘sin bins’ – have become mandatory for matters of dissent across all of grassroots football from the 2020/21 season.

HOW DO YOU FIND YOURSELF IN THE SIN BIN?



Players will only go into the sin bin for dissent cautions.



- » Delay restart of play
- » Time-wasting tactics



For use of words or gestures questioning or undermining the ref's decisions.



EXAMPLES OF DISSENT

- » Shouting at the ref
- » Questioning ref's ability
- » Slamming the ball into the ground
- » Sarcastically applauding a decision

DURATION OF A SIN BIN



For matches of 90 minutes, players spend 8 minutes in the sin bin.



For matches lasting less than 90 minutes, players spend 6 minutes in the sin bin.



If the sin bin period has not expired at the end of:

1st half: Continues into 2nd half

2nd half: Continues into extra time

Extra time: Player can participate in penalties

THE MATCH DAY PROCESS



- » Dissent
- » Delay restart of play



- Ref issues a yellow card and directs the player to the touchline



- Player can't be substituted until period expires and not if all subs have been made



Whilst in the sin bin, if the player commits a yellow or red card offence, they can't take any further part in the game and can't be substituted



- If the player commits a 2nd dissent caution and has already been booked, they will take no further part in the game and can't be substituted



- If the player commits a 2nd dissent caution and no other offences, they will receive a 2nd sin bin. After which they can't take any further part in the game but can be substituted



- If the player commits a yellow-card offence on the field of play in addition to a period in the sin bin, they will continue to play



- Ref decides when player returns to play

FOUL AND ABUSIVE LANGUAGE IS STILL A RED CARD OFFENCE!

**LAW
12**

Game duration & rest period

Under 6 to 7

3 × 10' + 10' optional (Rest 10 minutes maximum)

Under 8 to 9

3 × 12' + 12' optional (Rest 10 minutes maximum)

Under 10 to 11

4 × 15' (Rest 10 minutes maximum)

Under 12 to 13 9vs9

3 × 20' (Rest 10 minutes maximum)

Under 13 11vs11

2 × 30' (Rest 10 minutes)

It is advisable to stage more than one match or activity simultaneously on adjacent pitches to involve all the players and try to maintain a more uniform playing time.

**LAW
13**

Substitutions

For all categories, Under 6 to Under 13 (9vs9 and 11vs11), the coach can make unlimited substitutions and can involve all the players on the competition list.

Players who are substituted can no longer take part in the game.

**LAW
14**

Kick-off

Start and Restart of Play conform to the FIFA rules.

On resumption of play for both periods of the matches and after each goal, a kick-off is taken from the centre of the pitch and all opposing players must be at least 9.15 metres away from the ball.

Exception: 8 metres away from the ball from Under 7 to 9.

**LAW
15**

Ball in & out of play

Conform to the FIFA rules.

**LAW
16**

Throw-in

Under 6 to 9

Kick-in – but player also has option to dribble-in after the ball has been placed and is static on the ground. Encourage a rapid restart of the game.

Under 10 to 11

Kick-in – no dribbling option.

Under 12 to 13

Throw-in – encourage a rapid restart of the game.

**LAW
17**

Free-kick

Conform to the FIFA rules.

Under 6 to 9

All the free-kicks must be played indirect. The opponent has to be at least 5 metres away from the ball.

Under 10 to 11

All the free-kicks must be played indirect. The opponent has to be at least 8 metres away from the ball.

All free-kicks must be played with a short pass (no long pass towards opposing box).

**LAW
18**

Penalty kick

Conform to the FIFA rules.

Under 6 to 8

This law does not apply.

Games with penalty matches are recommended (during technical skill games and mini games).

Under 9 to 11

Normal penalty kick minimum 8 metres away from the goal line.

Under 12 to 13

Normal penalty kick minimum 8 metres away from the goal line.

**LAW
19**

Corner kick

Conform to the FIFA rules with the following exceptions:

Under 6 to 7

Without the goalkeeper (2vs2 and 3vs3) no corner kick and the team in possession of the ball from its own bottom line restarts play.

Under 8 4vs4

At distance of 5 metres from the ball.

Under 9

The opponent must stay at a distance of 5 metres from the ball.

Under 11

The opponent must stay at a distance of 8 metres from the ball.

Under 13

Normal.

**LAW
20**

Scoring

Conform to FIFA rules.

**LAW
21**

Offside

Conform to the FIFA rules with the following exceptions:

Under 6 to 11 Offside law is not applicable.

Under 12 to 13 9vs9 13 metres from the goal line.

**LAW
22**

Goalkeeper rules

Conform to the FIFA rules with the following exceptions:

Under 6 to 8

All players can rotate and go in goal during a stoppage in play. Incentivise short passing with hands.

Under 9 5vs5 to 13 9vs9

Incentivise short passing with hands, it is not possible to play ball beyond the half pitch with the hands. The goalkeeper cannot (handle) grab the ball from a back pass coming from a team-mate.

The goalkeeper can receive the ball normally and has to play it with the feet – goalkeeper can be put under pressure.

**LAW
23**

Player participation principle

Players can participate in festivals or friendlies only in the relevant category. Players who can play over age are not allowed.

Consciously, for the healthy growth of the players, if the physiological age is earlier than the biological one, the displacement or the insertion of events by smaller players of a single category are allowed.



SECTION TWO

SUMMARY

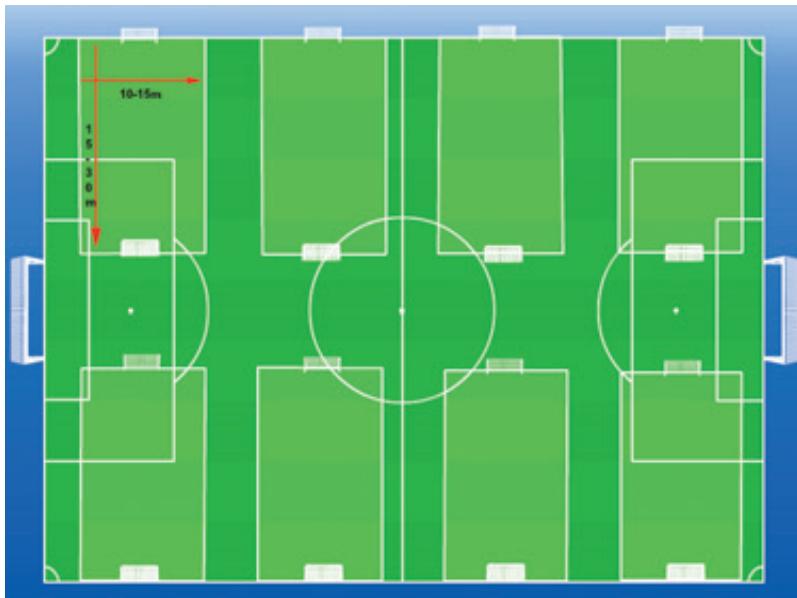
CATEGORY	BORN	GAME	DURATION AND REST	PITCH LENGTH	PITCH WIDTH	GOAL POST	BALL SIZE
Under 6	2015	Technical skill games and mini games 2vs2	3×10'+10' optional Alternative to skill game 10' REST	15-30m	10-15m	1,20×0,90m	N.3
Under 7	2014	Technical skill games and mini games 3vs3	3×10'+10' optional Alternative to skill game 10' REST	15-30m	10-15m	1,20×0,90m	N.3
Under 8	2013	Technical skill games and mini games 4vs4 (3+1GK)	3×12'+12' optional Alternative to skill game 10' REST	25-40m	15-25m	4,50×1,60m or 3,60×1,60m	N.3
Under 9	2012	5vs5 (4+1GK)	3×12'+12' optional Alternative to skill game 10' REST	25-40m	15-25m	4,50×1,60m Preferably: 3,60×1,60m	N.4
Under 10 to 11	2011-2010	7vs7 (6+1GK)	4×15' 10' REST	50-60m	35-45m	5×1,80m or 4-6×1,80-2m	N.4
Under 12	2009	9vs9 (8+1GK)	3×20' 10' REST	60-75m	40-50m	5-6×1,80-2m or 6×1,80m	N.4
Under 13	2008	9vs9 (8+1GK) 11vs11 (10+1GK)	2×30' 10' REST	60-75m 90-100m	40-50m 60-50m	5-6×1,80-2m or 7,32×2,44m	N.5

OFFSIDE	PENALTY KICK	THROW-IN	SUBSTITUTION DURING A STOPPAGE IN PLAY	YELLOW-RED CARD	DISTANT FROM THE BALL
-	During technical skill games and mini games	Kick-in + option	Free	-	Indirect Opponent 5m
-	During technical skill games and mini games	Kick-in + option	Free	-	Indirect Opponent 5m
-	During technical skill games and mini games	Kick-in + option	Free	-	Indirect Opponent 5m
-	Normal penalty kick minimum 8m away from the goal line	Kick-in + option	Free	-	Indirect Opponent 5m
-	Normal penalty kick minimum 8m away from the goal line	Kick-in	Free	-	Indirect Opponent 8m
Yes 13m from the goal line	Normal penalty kick minimum 8m away from the goal line	Normal	Free	-	Indirect Opponent 8m
Yes 13m from the goal line; Conform FIFA rules 11vs11	Normal	Normal	Free	Sin Bin	Normal 9.15m



PITCH SIZES

UNDER 6



Goal Post Ideal

1,20m width
0,90m height

Option:

2,40m maximum width
1,20m maximum height



Ball Size

N.3



Playing Time

3 × 10' + 10' option
Rest: 10'

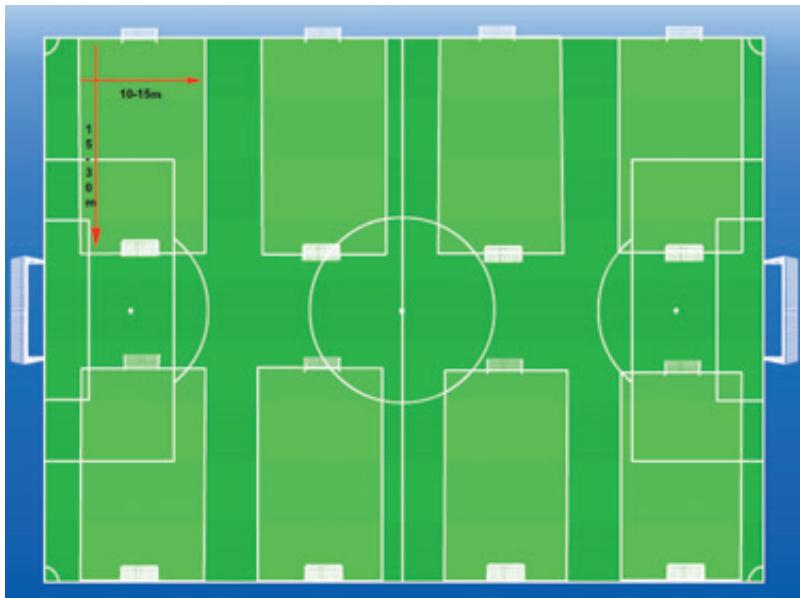


2 vs 2

1. 2vs2 no goalkeepers (Unlimited Substitutions)
2. No offside
3. Kick-in + dribble-in option
4. No corner and restart from goal line
5. Free-kick indirect and must be played with short pass
6. Technical skills before the match
7. Game – Fun – No Points – No Trophies

PITCH SIZES

UNDER 7



Goal Post Ideal

1,20m width
0,90m height

Option:

2,40m maximum width
1,20m maximum height



Ball Size
N.3



Playing Time
3 × 10' + 10' option
Rest: 10'



3 vs 3

1. 3vs3 no goalkeepers (Unlimited Substitutions)
2. No offside
3. Kick-in + dribble in option
4. No corner and restart from goal line
5. Free-kick indirect and must be played with short pass
6. Technical skills before the match
7. Game – Fun – No Points – No Trophies

UNDER 8



Goal Post Ideal

3,60m width
1,60m height

Option:

4,50m maximum width
1,60m maximum height



Ball Size

N.4



Playing Time

3 × 12' + 12' option
Rest: 10'

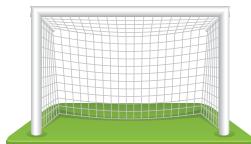


4 vs 4

1. 3+1 GK vs 3+1 GK (Unlimited Substitutions)
2. Option to rotate goalkeeper
3. No offside
4. Kick-in + dribble-in option
5. Free-kick indirect and must be played with short pass
6. Corner with opponent 5m from the ball
7. Technical skills before the match
8. Game – Fun – No Points – No Trophies

PITCH SIZES

UNDER 9



Goal Post Ideal

3,60m width
1,60m height

Option:

4,50m maximum width
1,60m maximum height



Ball Size
N.4



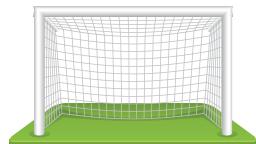
Playing Time
3 × 12' + 12' option
Rest: 10'



5 vs 5

1. 4+1 GK vs 4+1 GK (Unlimited Substitutions)
2. Option to rotate goalkeeper
3. No offside
4. Kick-in + dribble-in option
5. Free-kick indirect and must be played with short pass
6. Corner with opponent 5m from the ball
7. Technical skills before the match
8. Game – Fun – No Points – No Trophies

UNDER 10 TO UNDER 11



Goal Post Ideal

5,80m width
1,80m height

Option:

4 to 6m maximum width
2m maximum height



Ball Size
N.4



Playing Time
4 × 15'
Rest: 10'

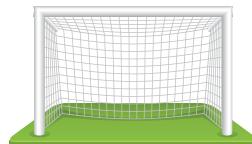


7 vs 7

1. 6+1 GK vs 6+1 GK (Unlimited Substitutions)
2. No offside
3. Kick-in
4. Free-kick indirect and must be played with short pass
5. Corner with opponent 8m from the ball
6. Game – Fun – No Points – No Trophies

PITCH SIZES

UNDER 12 TO UNDER 13 (9vs9)



Goal Post Ideal

6m width
1,80m height

Option:

5 to 6m maximum width
2m maximum height

Ball Size

N.5

Playing Time

3 x 20'
Rest: 10'

9 vs 9

1. 8+1 GK vs 8+1 GK (Unlimited Substitutions)
2. Offside: 13 metres from the Goal Line
3. Throw-in (with the hands)
4. Corner with opponent 8m from the ball
5. Game – Fun – No Points – No Trophies

UNDER 13 (11vs11)



Goal Post Ideal
7,32m width
2,44m height

Ball Size
N.5

Playing Time
2 x 30'
Rest: 10'

11 vs 11

1. 10+1 GK vs 10+1 GK (Unlimited Substitutions)
2. Offside conform to FIFA rules
3. Throw-in (with the hands)
4. Free-kicks normal as per laws
5. Corner conform to FIFA rules
6. Game – Fun – No Trophies
7. Sin Bin Rules

SECTION FOUR

HOW TO MAKE MATCH DAY ENJOYABLE FOR EVERYONE

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

- » Hand out a Code of Conduct to everyone involved in the Nursery at the start of the season;
- » Encourage punctuality from all stakeholders;
- » Encourage a minimum playing time for all players (50%);
- » Parents are to stay clear of the field of play and no spectators behind goals;
- » Encourage parents to applaud and encourage BOTH teams;
- » Respect the role of the coach who is the only person authorised to issue instructions to the players;
- » Respect the referee's role – no shouting at the referee.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES FOR COACHES

Coaches are directly responsible for creating an enjoyable matchday environment, and be positive role models for their players. The following are some ideas aimed at enhancing the players' sense of belonging and excitement for the game:

- » Encourage your players to choose the formation and the team;
- » Encourage all players to share playing time – you can plan substitutions before the game;
- » Set individual and team targets, don't just focus on the score;
- » Use simple language and coaching cues – let players solve problems, don't feel like you must constantly say something;
- » Use positive language and applaud effort not just ability;
- » Be constructive after the game – keep coaching points for your next training session.



Malta FA President **BJORN VASSALLO**

"Grassroots and youth development play a fundamental role in football. We all have fond memories of our childhood kickabouts with family and friends, and all the training sessions along with the matches played with our football nursery teams. Football is meant to bring joy, football is fun and these principles will continue to guide our efforts not only to boost participation at grassroots level but more importantly to ensure that our children develop and grow as persons as well as footballers in a safe and enjoyable environment. It is for this reason that the creation of the *Inhobb il-Futbol* Foundation represents one of the key projects of the new Malta FA strategy as we are committed to increasing accessibility to the game across the country and establish a clear pathway from grassroots to elite football. Finally, a word of gratitude to all the officials, coaches, parents and volunteers as their dedication and commitment are essential for the growth of the game at grassroots level."



Head Coach of National Teams **DEVIS MANGIA**

"In the youth sector, the objective is not to win a match. The most important thing is that our children enjoy themselves and are followed by qualified instructors who advocate and adopt an altruistic approach. This means that the instructors and coaches must think only about the development of the young players rather than pursuing futile wins."



Technical Co-Ordinator **ALESSANDRO ZINNARI**

"Grassroots is all about the development of the young player. All persons forming part of local clubs must work in a serious and professional manner to enable the child to have fun and develop through the application of the correct principles and the right information. The instructor must give priority to the needs of the player and dedicate themselves to this mission. Don't ask your sons and daughters if they have won or lost the game, ask them if they have enjoyed themselves and what have they learned."



Grassroots Manager **IVAN WOODS**

"For many, grassroots football is the first taste of the beautiful game and a positive experience at this level will usually hook you for life. Not only does it bring people together and provide the opportunity to many boys and girls to play football in an organised, fun and safe environment under the guidance of competent coaches, it is also serves as a pivotal pathway to develop elite players who may go on to compete at higher levels. With healthy grassroots, the game will flourish as more people will be inspired to play and remain passionately involved in the game throughout their lives."



READ THE ONLINE VERSION
www.mfa.com.mt