



GBAC Football League and Tournament Rules 2025 -

- All Football Association [rules](#) and regulations for the 2024/2025 academic year (AY) apply with GBAC variations.
- Coin flip to determine who has possession at kick-off.
- There is no limit on substitutions. Substitutions can only be made during a break-in-play situation.
- In the event of any dispute, the decision of the League/Tournament Director will be final.
- Coaches are to ensure players display sportsmanship throughout the tournament/league and to discipline players accordingly for rough play.
- Coaches must show respect to all players, opposition coaches, officials and referees.
- Tournament Rules May Vary - GBAC Committee has the final decision on these.
- **Mr Bung** can organise referees for you. His number is **+66816842652**. Mr Bung's Line account is linked to that number.
- Please confirm referees the day before a fixture. Referees are normally paid £500 per league game.

GBAC League and tournament scoring system procedures are outlined below.

Win = 3 points Draw = 2 points Loss = 1 point Forfeit = 0 points - Forfeits will result in a 5 - 0 victory to the other school.

*Postponed fixtures due to pollution will be counted as 0-0 draws until these games are played.

Higher Game Goal Difference (HGGD)

To ensure enjoyment for all participants, goal difference **doesn't count** in games including schools out of medal positions contention.

If two or more teams have the same number of points in the league standings or tournament groups, the order of the two teams shall be decided based on the higher game goal difference of the games between those teams (**scored goals – conceded goals**). This is referred to as '**HGGD**'. If this process still does not decide the placings of teams then scored goals between those teams will decide final league positions.

If **HGGD** occurs during a **tournament** and this process **does not** determine which teams progress to the medal playoff matches, then a x3 person penalty shootout will take place to identify the winner.

If **HGGD** occurs during a **league** campaign and this process **does not** determine the winner of the conference, then a rematch should be arranged prior to the conference final. If a three-way tie occurs, then a triangular fixture playoff should be held at one school where each school plays each. The duration of these matches will be identical to one-half of the normal league game with no halftime; for example, Under 19 Boys will have a 25 minute total match duration with no halftime. Playoff hosts with superior natural grass playing areas will take precedence. After this hosts will be drawn out of the hat. This draw will be organised by a Committee Member whose school is not involved in the triangular fixture.

To save time and reduce the number of additional fixtures when **HGGD** occurs, teams will be awarded joint positions when they are not able to reach the top position during a **league** campaign. In **tournaments**, placements will be decided by a coin toss for those teams not eligible for the medal playoff matches.

Age Gender		Under 9 Boys/Girls	Under 11 Boys/Girls	Under 13 Girls	Under 13 Boys	Under 15 Girls	Under 15 Boys	Under 19 Girls	Under 19 Boys	
Time	Game Duration (league)	8 minute thirds	8 minute thirds	10 minute thirds	10 minute thirds	14 minute thirds	14 minute thirds	14 minute thirds	17 minute thirds	
	Game Duration (A tournament)	12 minute half. No HT	12 minute half. No HT	7 minute halves	7 minute halves	8 minute halves	8 minute halves	10 minute halves	10 minute halves	
	Clock Stoppages	Running clock with injury time.								
	Extra Time Tournament knock-out stages only	Duration: U9/U11 - 3 minute half x1 U13/U15/U19 - 5 minute half x1 Golden goal rule applies (Under this rule, the game ends when a goal is scored in extra time). Coin toss should be taken before the start of overtime. If still tied, the game goes through a 3 player penalty shoot-out with normal FIFA rules.								
	Penalties	Best of 3 players, then sudden death until a winner is declared.								
	Break Interval	Tournament matches: 3 mins. League matches: 5 mins. Additional time is permitted for higher temperatures.								

Safety

Safety apparel	Shin pads	All players must wear shin pads that are fully covered by socks. If a player does not have the correct equipment, they will not be allowed to play. Both goalkeepers and outfield players are encouraged to wear baseball caps. Coaches of their own school teams are responsible for upholding this H&S standard.
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Age Gender		Under 9 Boys/Girls	Under 11 Boys/Girls	Under 13 Girls	Under 13 Boys	Under 15 Girls	Under 15 Boys	Under 19 Girls	Under 19 Boys
Player Rules	Number of players on field	7 Where suitable to increase participation some 'B'/'C' competitions may be reduced to 5 players.							
	Dressed players	Minimum number of pupils: 9 Maximum number of pupils: 12				Minimum number of pupils: 7 Maximum number of pupils: 12			
	Shirt numbers and team wear	Please see ' Member schools' uniforms/kit requirements for GBAC fixtures ' of GBAC Handbook. gbacsports.com <input type="checkbox"/> More <input type="checkbox"/> Handbook							

Other Rules	Referees	Officiated by staff member				One external referee			
	Size of Ball	4				5			
		Footballs must be of FIFA Basic standard or above. These can purchased from Decathlon .				Footballs must be of FIFA Basic standard or above. These can purchased from Decathlon .			
	Size of goals	U9 between 1.52m (5ft) - 1.8m (5.91ft) × 91 (3ft) - 1.2m (3.94ft) or U11 - U19 sized U11 - 1.83m × 3.66m (6ft × 12 ft) or U13 - U19 sized U13, U15 & U19 - between 2.10m (6.89ft) - 2.5m (8.2ft) × 5m (16.4ft) - 6m (16.4ft) Starting from the 2024/2025 AY , all U13, U15 & U19 fixtures must be played in between 2.10m - 2.5m × 5m - 6m sized goals. Failure to do so will result in a 3 - 0 victory being awarded to the visiting school.							
	Pitch markings	The penalty area may be marked by either a semi-circle or a squared penalty box. Example pitch markings.							
	Minimum and recommended pitch size (m)	M: 45 × 35 R: 50 × 36	M: 45 × 35 R: 50 × 36	M: 45 × 35 R: 55 × 36	M: 45 × 35 R: 55 × 36	M: 45 × 35 R: 55 × 36	M: 55 × 36 R: 55 × 36	M: 59 × 40 R: 64 × 45	M: 59 × 40 R: 64 × 45
	Goal Kicks	Goal kicks may be taken anywhere in the penalty box. U9 Boys/Girls, U11 Boys/Girls, U13 Girls goalkeepers are permitted to throw the ball from a goal kick.							
	Multiball system	×9 match balls in total for each fixture. ×1 ball in play. ×8 balls distributed around the pitch. The ×8 balls will ideally be placed on a cone, with ×2 behind each goal and sideline. Substitutes collect balls continuously. Alternatively, both coaches must keep a minimum of ×2 balls with them at all times, which they distribute.							
	Offside	No offside rule in both league and tournament play.							
	Throw Ins	Dribble or pass in from floor	A throw-in will be awarded if the ball goes out of play over a touchline. In U7, U9 and U11 fixtures, players should be given one chance (and if necessary, taught/demonstrated) by the referee or nearest coach to throw the ball in properly. If players continue to make a foul throw the throw-in should be retaken by the opposition.						
	Shooting from Kick Offs and Goal Kicks	No shooting directly from kick off or a goal kick is permitted. The ball must be touched by the team responsible for these two types of set piece a minimum of three times before a goal is scored. Conduct of this nature results in a retake of the set piece and the referee speaking privately to the coach away from pupils/spectators about upholding the integrity of the game. Fixtures which incorporate the 'Retreat Line' have this additional rule when a goal kick takes place: After the kicker has taken the goal kick, the ball must either bounce or first be touched by another player within the first two thirds of the pitch and not in the final third. This is to encourage player's technical development. In the event of this occurring, the referee will instruct the team in possession to retake the goal kick. Common sense will be used if coaches or pupils are attempting to find loopholes in these rulings, as this is unsporting and undermines the competition, opposition school relationships and the conference.							
	Mercy Rule	If the goal difference reaches 5 goals, the score remains the same and is the final score; however, the game continues until full time. This is the score uploaded to the 'GBAC Football Schedule'. Adults responsible for the leading team should rotate more dominant pupils in their squad with less dominant pupils to ensure the teams are more even in ability and to protect the GBAC's aim and vision .							
	Retreat Line	See the separate 'Retreat Line' page for explanation. Please clearly mark using red/yellow cones.							
Retreat Line used	Retreat to half way	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	



Late Kick Offs Tournaments

If a team is not deemed ready by the referee at kick off time they will begin with a 2 goal deficit. If a team is 5 or more minutes late, the result will be recorded as 5:0. Play can take place for the remainder of the time with no further scoring recorded.

Player Tournament Suspensions

Players who receive 2 yellow cards will miss the following match, and an additional match for each additional yellow card thereafter. A yellow card followed by a red card in the same game will result in missing the next game. A straight red card will result in missing the next 2 games.

Specific unsportsmanlike conduct

Whilst all Football Association rules can be found [here](#). Please be aware of these specific GBAC directives.

Players speaking with match officials

Only one player from each team is permitted to speak to the referee at a time; ideally, this player should be the team captain.

Time-wasting

Players are not allowed to undermine any fixture by taking the ball into an area of the pitch, for example, the corner flag near the end of the game to 'run down the clock'. Blatant time wasting tactics serve to irritate players, coaches and spectators. This is not befitting of GBAC's Aims and contradicts the feeling of goodwill amongst our community. A free kick will be awarded to the opposition team if this takes place.

The player in possession of the ball when this occurs will receive a caution (yellow card) for this action. The referee will speak privately to the coach, away from pupils/spectators about upholding the integrity of the game.

The Retreat Rule is for Under 9 Boys/Girls, Under 11 Boys/Girls, Under 13 Boys/Girls, Under 15 Girls and Under 19 Girls only.

Why are GBAC using a Retreat Line?

The Retreat Line has been introduced to allow our young players to learn and gain confidence in how to play the ball out from the back and play forward to attack, as opposed to the goalkeeper "sending it" aimlessly down the field.

Please remember this is a positive change for the development of the children's learning and improving playing football.

Where will the Retreat Line be?

The retreat Line will be 1/3 distance of the field from each end (see picture below). The Retreat Line will be signified by off-field raised cones or by a permanent marked coloured line.

When will the Retreat Line come into effect?

The Retreat Line will come into effect at two points during the game:

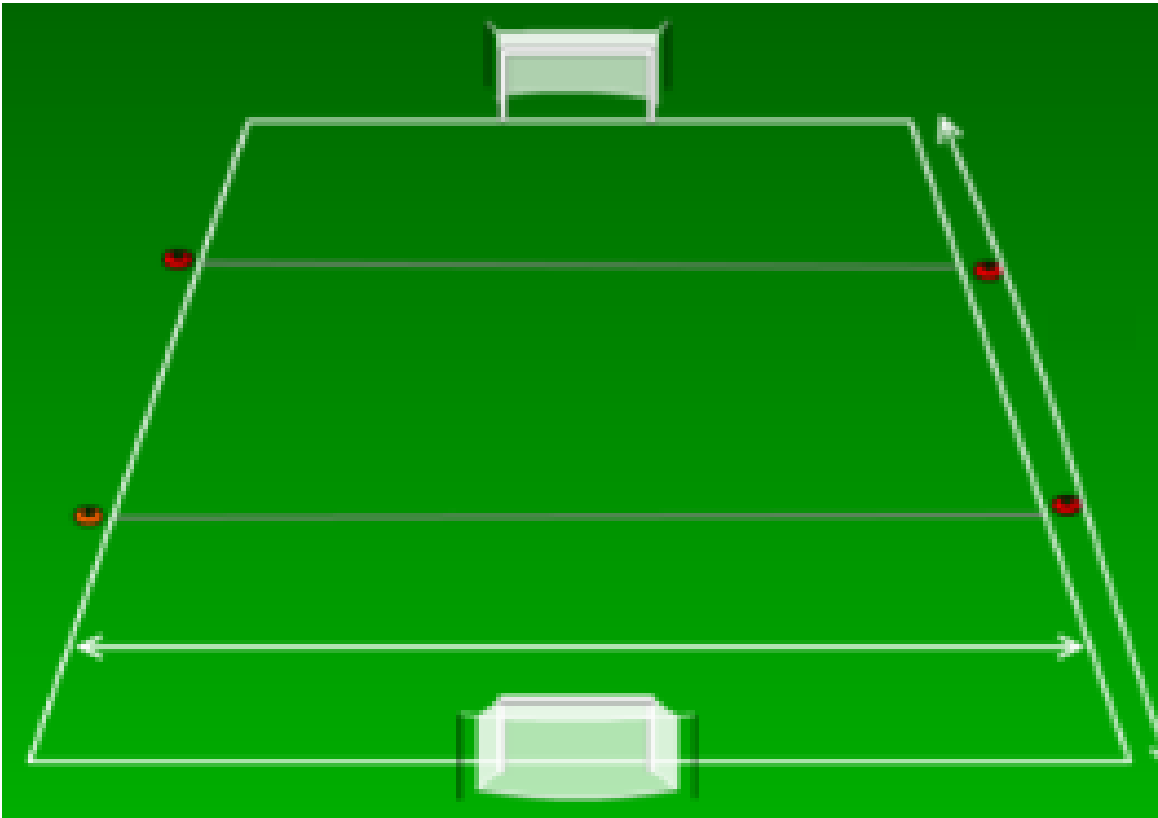
1. At a goal-kick
2. When the goalkeeper has the ball in their hands after a save.

At these times, the "attacking" team is required to drop back behind the Retreat Line. The goalkeeper (who has 5 seconds) can then pass the ball to one of their teammates without the pressure of an opposing player nearby. When the team-mate touches the ball, play will resume as normal, and the "attacking" team can move inside the Retreat Line.

When will the play be stopped by the referee?

Should a member of the 'attacking' team come inside the Retreat Line too soon (and interfere with the play) or touch the ball inside that area before the goalkeeper's teammate, the referee will blow their whistle and the initial distribution re-taken.

Please note that if the goalkeeper puts the ball into play quickly, then regular play resumes as normal.



Updated August 2024