



U5-U8 Thunder Soccer Rules

Revised Fall 2026



PHILOSOPHY

Novi Parks' leagues and activities are formed and operated on the principles of good sportsmanship, fair play, and healthy activity. Our community atmosphere allows players and coaches to focus on fundamental player development and fun. The success of the program is made possible with the great support of volunteer coaches. This program is strictly recreational; therefore, all players are to receive equal playing time in games.

Note: Any child who is not registered is NOT allowed to participate in any practice or competition for reasons of liability both for you and Novi Parks.

DIVISION DETAILS

	Coed U5 Coed U6	Coed U7 Coed U8
Number of Players	3v3	4v4
Roster Maximum	6	8
Goalkeeper	No	No
Playing Times	4 x 8 min.	4 x 10 min.
Ball Size	3	3
Offside	No	No

**Formats may change based on registration numbers.*

REQUESTS

Novi Parks makes every attempt to honor requests based on the questions asked during registration. However, due to the amount of registrations received along with other variables, **requests are not guaranteed**. Refunds will not be issued when preferred practice nights are not available and refunds will not be issued for players who request specific teams/coaches and do not get assigned according to their requests.

Coaches: Please do NOT tell children, especially friends & neighbors, that there is space on the team. All teams are full unless coaches have been given notification stating that Novi Parks is trying to pull players from the waitlist. Interested players should check with Novi Parks for openings. They will be placed on a team that has an opening.

UNIFORM

- Team uniforms (jersey, shorts, socks) will be distributed prior to, or at, the first game
- Players must wear their Novi Parks uniform during games and team pictures.
- The uniform must be worn outside of any additional clothing (sweatshirt, pants, windbreakers, etc.) for the purpose of distinguishing teams.
- Soft cleat soccer shoes or tennis shoes shall be the only acceptable footwear. METAL CLEATS AND SCREW-IN CLEATS ARE NOT ALLOWED.
- Shin guards are mandatory for all players.
- Players are not allowed to wear jewelry (including earrings)
- Casts and other potentially dangerous protective devices may be allowed with proper padding, but must be approved by the referee prior to the game.

OFFICIALS

Please keep in mind that our referees are learning to officiate, just as the players are learning the fundamentals of playing soccer. There is a Zero Tolerance policy with regards to arguing with refs or unsportsmanlike conduct. Referees and Site Supervisors reserve the right to eject any players, coaches, or spectators that are not adhering to the Novi Parks Zero Tolerance policy.

A “judgment call” by an official is not subject to question. However, in the case of “rule interpretation” by an official, only the coach or assistant coach may speak to the official. Due to the nature of our recreational athletic programs, this should be done at an appropriate time (i.e. after the game, between quarters, at a timeout) and in an appropriate manner (do not yell, speak in a calm and non-confrontational tone).

MISCONDUCT (COACHES, PLAYERS, AND SPECTATORS)

A caution (yellow card) is issued at the discretion of the referee for dissent and/or unsportsmanlike conduct. An ejection (red card) is exercised at the discretion of the referee for violent conduct, foul or abusive language, and persistent misconduct.

NOTE: All players and coaches formally cautioned or ejected must be reported to the Site Supervisor. An ejected player cannot play in his/her team's next scheduled game and is subject to additional suspension as determined by Novi Parks.

COACHING FROM SIDELINES AND ON THE FIELD

- Coaches and parents must not interfere with play or enter goal areas at any time.
- Coaches, players, and spectators must maintain a 3 yards minimum back from the sideline, running from corner flag on either end of the field.
- **U5-U6:** Two coaches maximum on the field.
- **U7-U8:** One coach maximum on the field.

SUBSTITUTIONS

There shall be unlimited substitution anytime as long as the player coming off the field leaves before the substitute comes on. This must be during a stoppage.

GAME RULES

Heading the ball:

All participants are prohibited from heading the soccer ball at practice or in the games. Heading the ball in the game will be treated as a minor foul and the opposing team will receive an indirect free kick.

Kick-off:

A coin toss will determine who kicks off first. The winner of the toss kicks off the first and third periods. The other team kicks off the second and fourth periods. When a goal is scored, the game is restarted with a kick-off from center field by the team that gave up the goal.

Kick-ins:

The ball is considered out of play when it passes entirely over any sideline. The kick-in is taken by an opponent of the player who last touched the ball before going out of play. The ball can be dribbled or passed back into play.

Corner kick:

If the ball passes over the goal line (outside the actual goal) when last touched by a defending player, then a player from the attacking team will take a kick-in from the corner nearest where the ball went out of play.

Goal kick:

A goal kick will be awarded to the defending team, when the entire ball crosses the end line having last been touched by an attacking player. The ball will be kicked from the ground at the corner of the goal box, on the half of the field nearest to where the ball left the field of play.

Scoring:

A goal is scored when the entire ball crosses the goal line between the goal posts and under the crossbar.

- Indirect free kick: A goal can be scored only if a second player (either team) touches the ball after it has gone into play (traveled circumference).

Fouls:

The referee has certain discretion and may exercise the "advantage rule" and therefore, not call a foul as listed below.

All fouls are restarted with an indirect free kick given to the team who was fouled.

There are no Penalty Kicks. If a player prevents a goal with a handball, the ball will be placed 10 feet from the goal for an indirect kick.

SPORTSMANSHIP

Please keep in mind that the purpose of this organization is to provide a safe instructional experience for the enjoyment of each player, and to further sportsmanship and understanding of the game.