



# U5-U8 Thunder Soccer Rules

Revised Spring 2025



## 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 the Novi Parks.

## DIVISION DETAILS

	Coed U5 Coed U6	Coed U7 Coed U8
Number of Players	4v4	5v5
Roster Maximum	8	10
Goalkeeper	No	Yes
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.
- Each team is provided an off-colored penny to distinguish its goalkeeper.
- 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.

## **TIMEOUTS**

Each team will be given 1 time out (60 seconds in length) per period. Unused time outs do not carry over to the next period.

## **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 on the field.
- **U7-U8:** One coach 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 & Throw-ins:**

The ball is considered out of play when it passes entirely over any sideline. Kick-ins and throw-ins are allowed. The kick/throw-in is taken by an opponent of the player who last touched the ball before going out of play.

When teaching players how to throw-in, the ball must be delivered with part of both feet on or behind the touch line within one yard of where ball went out of touch. Both feet must remain on the ground when the ball is released, with both hands on the ball and with the ball thrown from behind and directly over the head. If the ball enters the field from an improper throw-in, the other team is then awarded the throw-in.

### **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).
- Direct free kick: A goal can be scored directly following the kick.
- Penalty kick: Shall be awarded to the offended team if an opponent commits, within his/her penalty area, any of the major fouls. The kick will be taken only from the penalty mark, after the signal by the referee. The defending goalkeeper remains on his/her goal line, facing the kicker, between the goal posts, until the ball has been kicked. The goalkeeper is permitted to move his/her feet sideways, but cannot step or lunge forward until the ball is in play. All players, except the goalie and kicker, shall remain outside the penalty area until the ball is in play.

**Fouls:**

The referee has certain discretion and may exercise the "advantage rule" and therefore, not call a foul as listed below. The goalkeeper is considered to be in control of the ball by touching it with any part of his/her hand or arms.

MAJOR Fouls: A direct free kick is given to the offended team. This is signaled by the referee with arm extended horizontally.

- Tripping or kicking
- Charging or striking (hitting, spitting, or throwing an object)
- Holding or pushing
- Handling the ball intentionally (except goalie in goalie's penalty area)

MINOR Fouls: An indirect free kick is given to the offended team. This is signaled by the referee with arm extended vertically until kick is taken.

- Dangerous play (includes slide-tackle)
- Obstruction (impedes the progress of an opponent)
- Goalkeeper holding ball to intentionally waste time
- Goalkeeper handles the ball after receiving it from a throw-in from his/her own team
- Goalkeeper handles the ball deliberately kicked to him/her by a teammate
- Goalkeeper handles the ball after releasing it from possession and before it has touched another player
- A fair charge when the ball is not in playing distance
- Play of the ball by the kicker on any set-in place kick after it has gone into play and before another player has touched it

**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.***