



Law 18 (unwritten law): Common Sense

- Embodied in Pre-1997 Law 5, International Board Decision 8:

“The Laws of the Game are intended to provide that games should be played with *as little interference as possible*, and in this view it is the duty of the Referee to *penalize only deliberate breaches of the Law*. *Constant whistling for trifling and doubtful breaches produces bad feeling and loss of temper* on the part of the players and *spoils the pleasure of the spectators*.”

Emphasis added per **Chapter 4, The Art of Refereeing**, in Evans, Robert and Bellion, Edward, “*For the Good of the Game*”, Youth Sports Publishing, Canoga Park, CA 2002
Now in AYSO National Rules and Regulations, Section I, Clause D.5 as well

- **Common examples of trifling calls in youth soccer:**
 - Throw-in Placement and Technique
 - Free Kick Placement and Encroachment
 - Offside with no Advantage or Interference
 - Penalty Kick Infringement
 - Fouls (Tripping, Charging, Hand Ball)
- **Fouls for the Ages (or age appropriate application of the meaning of the Laws of the Game)**

Fouls For The Ages – Age Group Development Patterns

Activity / Development	U6	U8-10	U12-14	U16-19
Physical Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Runs jumps and skips well 2. Lots of energy 3. Runs, starts & stops & moves around obstacles with ease 4. Can't sit still long 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work & play hard to begin to participate in competitive activities 2. Better timing 3. Eye hand coordination improves 4. Significant improvement in agility, balance & endurance 5. U10 practice skills to perfect 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Becoming dedicated to limited number of sports 2. Athletic skills developing rapidly 3. Motor skills very well developed 4. Individual skills can be very high but will range within the group 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Specializes in limited number of sports 2. Very high athletic skills 3. Strength, speed and reactions at an adult level 4. Less differential in group skills
Social / Emotional Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Many fears persist 2. Moods changes rapidly & unpredictably 3. Tall tales 4. Need for reinforcement 5. Shows difficulty sharing 6. Lover of praise & attention 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Definite likes & dislikes 2. Friendship important 3. Afraid of failure, older will blame others 4. Starting to compare self to others 5. Self esteem a big issue 6. More outgoing 7. Peer acceptance important 8. Quick to tattler when other not obeying 9. Cooperative with adults and needs reinforcement 10. Interested in the group 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Beginning to assert their will 2. Social activities during play important 3. Has high knowledge of relative worth of teammates 4. Self esteem continues a major issue 5. Peer pressure extremely high 6. Some rebellion shown to adults 7. Requires both positive and negative reinforcement 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consistently assert their will 2. Individual performance very important 3. Critical of adults, team mates, and Self 4. Peer acceptance important 5. Strong rebellion against authority 6. Reacts to situations with little thought
Thought Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does not like to repeat 2. Judgment not adequate to own safety 3. No logic to thought 4. Asks for information 5. Fond of stories 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Internalize moral rules of behavior 2. Can solve some problems 3. Recognizes parts of a whole & older understands cause and effect 4. Understands others viewpoint 5. Needs concrete reinforcement 6. Treat every mistake as a major crime 7. Rigidly applies understanding to justice and fair play 8. Begins to rank items according to criteria 9. Older like to show off 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developing an ability to judge others behavior 2. Emotional reaction to some behavior 3. Understands logic of the game 4. Does not accept poor performance 5. Can place value on mistakes 6. Consistently ranks items to criteria 7. High degree of self promotion 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Will manipulate others 2. Keen understanding of tactics and strategy of the game 3. Well focused on actions at hand 4. Will manipulate game and laws to individual benefit 5. Justifies all individual action. 6. Will retaliate when wronged 7. High degree of self promotion





Fouls For The Ages – Called Fouls by Age Group

Penal Foul	U6	U8-10	U12-14	U16-19
Kick / Attempt (against opponent)	MAYBE , One of the first things taught: don't kick others. Should be reminded not "called for foul".	YES , Should be improving as they grow. Fouls should be called in most instances at U10.	YES , Kicking, especially at the back of the legs begins to appear at U12 and by U14 can be planned and very intentional.	YES , Kicking after the play is much more common and kicks after successfully challenging for the ball are not unusual.
Trip / Attempt (against opponent)	YES , A basic taught at U6 level.	YES , Should be improving as they grow. Fouls should be called in most instances at U10.	YES , As player speed improves trips are more common. Often this is a result of a player being beaten in a play.	YES , Tripping in the attack zone are common. At this point dives also become evident.
Jump at (against opponent)	NO , This level will jump a lot and will fall into others.	MAYBE , At U10 begin to introduce the concept as the ball is now played more frequently in the air.	YES , As the ball is played more in the air, heading is developed and jumping at an opponent is more common. Warnings are in order for this foul at this level.	YES , Jumping at when the ball in the air is not unusual. In addition undercutting (trip) is also common and the referee must learn to distinguish between the two.
Charge (against opponent)	NO , This concept is not understood at this level. They will run through anyone to get to the ball.	NO , This is still too early to introduce this concept. If there is a difference in size, unfair charges can be considered dangerous play.	YES , Tactical charging and physical one-on-one challenges for the ball are becoming common. This foul should now be called.	YES , Charges are now very strong and are often violent. They are also more prolonged as players move down the field.
Strike / Attempt (against opponent)	NO , Not applicable except in rare individual cases. Then a "time out" from the coach will help.	MAYBE , At U10 this can begin to become evident. At this level the players should know not to strike/	YES , By U12 the player should clearly know that striking is not permitted. This foul should be called.	YES , This should be called on all occasions and misconduct considered. Goal keepers striking with the ball now begins to appear.
Push (against opponent)	NO , Pushing is natural at this age. Here the referee should begin to "teach" players not to push.	YES , The concept is introduced at U8 and should be well developed by U10. This foul should be called.	YES , As player speed improves pushes are more common. Often this is a result of a player being beaten in a play.	YES , Pushing is common by both players in a challenge. Incidental contact should not be punished. However, persistent action that gives on player an advantage should be called.



Fouls For The Ages – Called Fouls by Age Group

Penal Foul (cont)	U6	U8-10	U12-14	U16-19
Tackles Opponent w/contact before contacting the ball	NO , Not a concept that is understood. Players should be kept on their feet whenever possible. Often the act of falling to the ground or sliding will be considered dangerous play.	NO , Still unknown. Players should be kept on their feet whenever possible. Dangerous play (even if ball hit first) or Tripping, as appropriate.	YES , Playing on the ground under some control begins to appear at the U12 level. Players should be warned before fouls are called.	YES , Slide tackles are common at this level. Players will often hit the ball and body at the same time. This should be called. After the player will "get" the ball and then hit the attacker. This should be called as either dangerous play or kicking.
Hold (Against Opponent)	NO , Like pushing this is a common social activity at this age. Here the referee should begin to "teach" players not to hold.	YES , This activity should begin to be reduced at U8 and eliminated by U10. This foul should be called, especially at U10.	YES , Tactical holding is now becoming evident.	YES , Holding is common by both players in a challenge. Or when attempting to gain an advantage. Incidental contact should not be punished. However, persistent action that gives one player an advantage should be called.
Spit at (Against Opponent)	NO , Many children at this age are beginning to learn to spit. Usually it is not directed at the opponent or intended to be a objectionable act. The act should be discouraged through teaching and, if necessary, a "time out" from the coach will help.	YES , Highly unlikely except in accidental cases. However, players should understand the foul. This foul should be called. Misconduct should not be used except in extremely rare circumstances.	YES , Like striking the player should understand this foul and its implications.	YES , Spitting at this level is malicious and should be considered misconduct.
Handle Ball (Deliberate)	MAYBE , Only call a foul if they catch or pick up the ball. Otherwise a quiet reminder. Want the players to understand that they do not play with the hands. It is natural for this age to try to touch the ball.	MAYBE , At U8 we begin to introduce the deliberate nature of handling. By U10 the players should be well aware of the foul. However, hand and arm positions are often not natural at this age so make sure deliberate AND advantage gained (unfair).	YES , Players at the U12-14 level begin to employ handling as a tactic, especially the chest trap. Hand to ball (deliberate) should be called at this level.	YES , Handling as a tactic, continues. Hand to ball should be called at this level. However, trifling should be avoided.



Fouls For The Ages – Called Fouls by Age Group

	Non-Penal Foul	U6	U8-10	U12-14	U16-19
By Goalkeeper	Six Seconds	NO , Generally no goalkeepers	NO , Goalkeeping begins to be introduced at U8 and goalkeeper skills are introduced at U10. Goalkeeper is usually a rotated position with limited skill development. MAYBE , At U10, a reminder should first be made, followed by a warning and then a foul on persistence and unfair advantage.	MAYBE , Goalkeeping is now a primary position for a player. Warnings should begin at U12 and if time wasting persist a call should be made.	YES , Goalkeeping is now a nearly exclusive position for a player. No more than one warning (if any) should be given to the goalkeeper.
	Second Touch			YES , Goalkeepers at this level should be very aware of this and it should always be called.	
	Plays ball with hands after kicked back by teammate			MAYBE , Goalkeepers at this level should be very aware of this. Call if the kick was clearly intended for the keeper. Kicking skills are not developed to a high level and miss-kicks are common.	YES , Goalkeepers at this level should be very aware of this and it should be called. Kicking skills should be well developed and miss-kicks uncommon.
	Plays ball with hands after throw-in by teammate			YES , Goalkeepers at this level should be very aware of this and it should always be called.	
Prevents Keeper from Putting Ball into Play	NO , Referee should remind players of rule.		YES , It is rare at this level and warnings usually are effective.	YES , The players now know this is a foul. Usually a warning will be sufficient.	
Dangerous Play	YES , A catch-all at this level. If it looks dangerous should probably call it.	YES , Continues to be a catch-all. However, other fouls should now be called and identified.	YES , Becomes less common as other fouls are called. After high kicks; dangerous play on the ground is now most common.	YES , Dangerous play is now more rare. Most of the time this can be seen when challenging for the ball.	
Impeding	NO , Concept not understood.		MAYBE , The concept should begin to be understood. At this time warnings will be most effective. The is controversial and heavily dependent on the level of play.	YES , Impeding is now done in a tactical situation to control the ball by a player or for a teammate. Impeding is also common on plays around the goalkeeper. This foul should be called.	