



# **A PARENT'S GUIDE TO NEPEAN DISTRICT JUNIOR FOOTBALL (SOCCER)**

*A GUIDE TO ASSIST PARENTS AND CARE PROVIDERS  
WHO ARE NEW TO THE SPORT OR WHO ARE INTERESTED IN  
ENROLLING A JUNIOR PLAYER IN THE SPORT*



**NEPEAN DISTRICT SOCCER F.A. Inc.  
SMALL SIDED FOOTBALL**



## *WELCOME TO THE ROUND BALL GAME*

This booklet is designed to provide as much information about football (soccer) in the Nepean district as possible so that parents interested in their children participating will have some idea of the structure of the game, how it is managed and what the various options are when their child is first involved in "The World Game".

### **Football or Soccer?**

Most of the global population refers to the round ball game as football rather than soccer. After Australia qualified for the 2006 World Cup in Germany, there was a new passion at all levels of the sport and many people believed the time was right for Australia to embrace the notion of football rather than the lesser used term of soccer. The campaign for change was led by the sport's governing bodies, and with the support of many media outlet, clubs across the nation began altering their names from soccer club to football club and more "in step" with the other 205 nations that play this particular sport.

Our association has not followed this particular trend. We recognize that we live in an area with a huge interest in NRL and it was felt that a move towards the exclusive use of the term "football", may cause further confusion. We carry both names in the association title and most persons are willing to refer to the sport using either identifier, as long as we understand we are talking about THE ROUND BALL GAME.

### **What is Small Sided Football?**

The adult version of the sport is played on a field approximately 100 metres long and 60 metres wide. The goals are over seven metres wide and two and a half metres high. It was recognized many years ago that these dimensions are not suitable for junior players and so a modified version of the game was born.

It is a well established fact that children are able to absorb new concepts as they grow and develop and therefore most teaching methods employ a structure of building blocks, starting with foundation stones and then as the child develops, the additional blocks are laid and the child has a greater understanding of the subject.

Football is no different. A player in their first year of playing is not expected to understand complex rules or signals. The game is about sharing a ball and helping it to travel from one end of a field to the other. The field is reduced in size and the ball used is a size 3 which is easier for a junior player to control and kick.

Current thinking in football circles around the world recognizes the need for junior players to receive as much time using a football as possible and to use the time with the ball in a small space. This often reflects living conditions in many cities. However, the main purpose is for a player to acquire greater degrees of ball control and skills from playing in an area that favours "long kicks and large kids".

In Australia, the concept is referred to as small sided football, and the next few pages will attempt to provide the basics of the game.



Figure 1 shows a diagram of a full size football pitch complete with markings. A junior player beginning the game would not benefit from being subjected to these strange markings and definitely not the field size. An appropriate size field has been created and in figure 2 below, you will see it is possible to fit as many as eight small sided fields inside one full size football field.

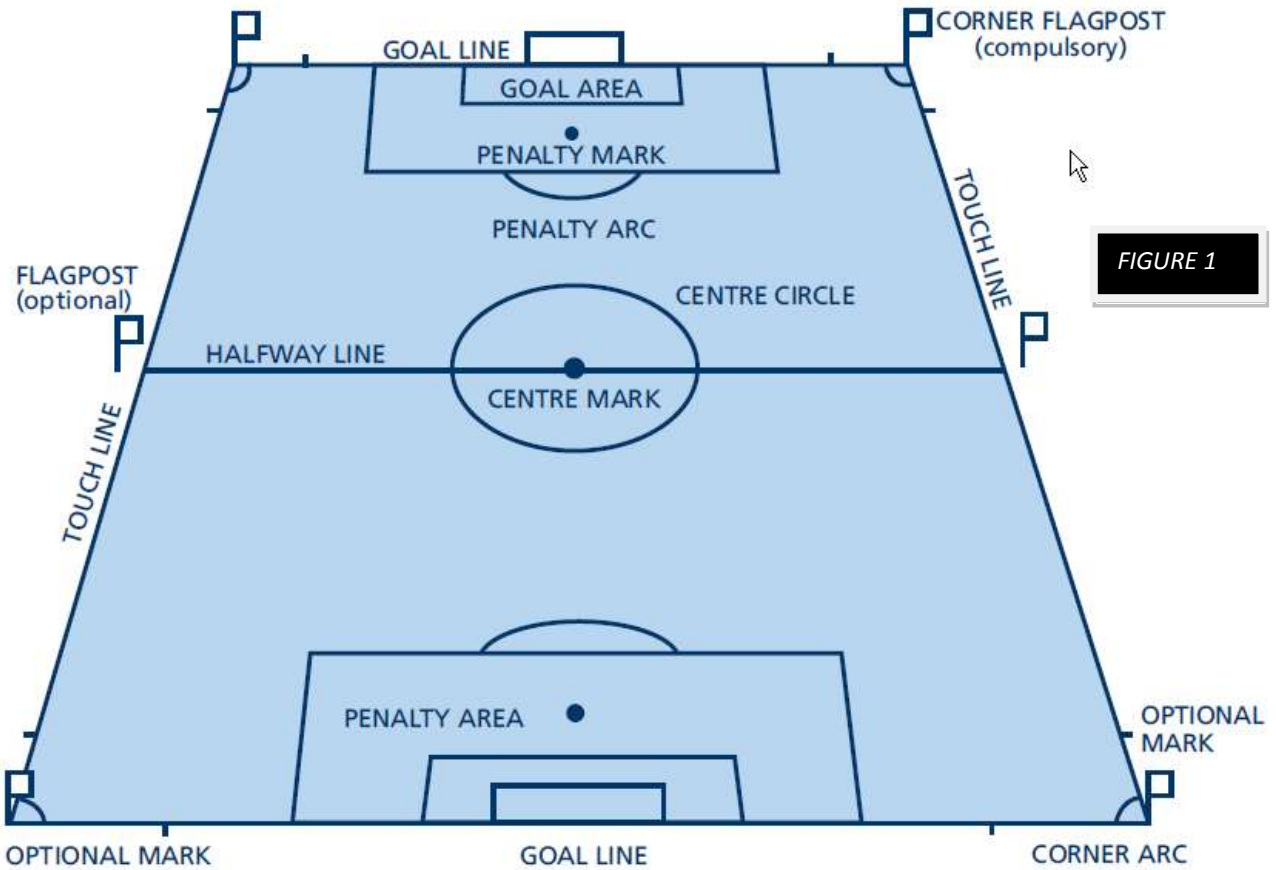


FIGURE 1

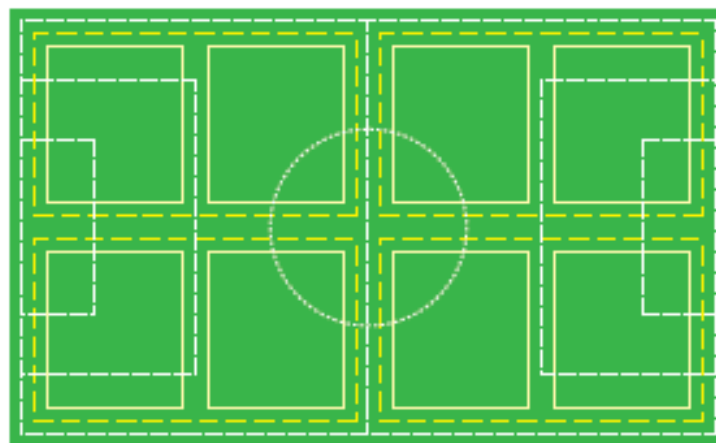


FIGURE 2



Figure 3 shows a small sided football game taking place. All that is required is a space approximately 30 metres x 20 metres for under 5/6/7 and a set of goals. The boundaries may be painted lines or domes/cones. The main point to note is that it is simply a rectangle with two cones/poles or pop up goals and a ball for the players – it's that easy.



FIGURE 3

The SSF program has now been mandated by the FFA covering up to (and including) U11 age group. Field sizes alter every two years in line with the expected growth and development of children. Beginning on a field 30 metres x 20 metres and using the absolute basics of the game, the small sided football program allows time for the players and team leaders to learn new rules, acquire new skills through three distinct phases before arriving on a full size field to play competition football when players reach under twelve.

For more information on small sided football, visit [www.smallsidedfootball.com.au](http://www.smallsidedfootball.com.au)





## *Small sided football development program*

### *Grass Roots Clubs*

1. A grass roots club is a term used to denote that the club plays local sport only. It usually offers families the opportunity to train and play locally, often in friendship groups, and when teams compete they play against other local teams.
2. Clubs are run by volunteers. There are a few clubs who employ an administrator to assist with specific areas of the sport, but in the main it is important to note that all committees, coaches, managers, and team leaders are volunteers who give a great deal of time to serve the community by providing local sports clubs an opportunity to play organized sport.
3. Grassroots clubs are more concerned that sport is about fun, fitness and friendship rather than competition and winning although it would be a mistake to believe that clubs are not competitive. However, competition is not a major concern when managing small sided football in the younger age groups.
4. Club size may be important to you as you seek the right "fit" for your child. There are 30 clubs within the district and clubs range in size from around 80 members up to 1100 and there is a large range in between.
5. Club facilities vary enormously. There are clubs that have plenty of room and several pitches to use, or even a spare field, whereas other clubs have many players who have to use a relatively small space or are limited in their training and playing options.
6. Club philosophy: It is important to note that clubs will not offer you exactly the same experience. Each club has its own particular focus, and skill sets. Each club is required to appoint a small sided football co-ordinator and before joining a club, it is a good idea to talk to the coordinator or a senior club official to understand the philosophy of the club and how the club is managing small sided football and assisting with player development. The club at the end of your street may not always provide you with the type of experience you are seeking for your child and in a similar vein; the cost of registration does not necessarily reflect the value you may receive from a particular club. Before signing up for a season, it is a good idea to have a look around and see what is available that appears to offer what you are looking for from a grass roots or community club.

### *The Nepean District program*

7. Small sided football is about developing players and helping to build skills and knowledge of the game in an environment that is fun. The priorities for young players are to build skills, develop teamwork and allow fitness to develop as a part of the game rather than be a separate program that is run in conjunction with coaching football. Roughly translated, this means team leaders and coaches are encouraged to use many types of games to develop players' skills and by ensuring that wherever possible, all players have a suitable ball to use. In working in this manner, the subject of fitness is addressed all the time.
8. The association's football manager has developed a program for all club coaches to follow. It is designed to assist skill acquisition and to show which areas of the game should receive priority each year. The program is available on the association web site in an easy to download format and is available for anyone interested in this important aspect of the game.
9. The association contributes towards player and coach development through a program of coaching courses. As many persons engaged in small sided football are new to the game, the association runs what are referred to as "grass roots" coaching courses. This particular course is invaluable to new coaches or anyone who is interested in becoming involved in small sided football who may have grown up at a time when children were treated as small adults and placed on a full size field with all the rules of the game to deal with from day one. The association offers three other coaching courses, all designed to place a coach firmly in touch with the principles of the modern game and the use of small sided football in all development programs.
10. The association's football manager visits clubs, providing demonstrations for coaches and assisting wherever requested by member clubs.



## ***What your local club will offer***

The association permits two models for small sided football for the six and seven age groups. It is left to each club to determine what they believe is best for their members and new customers each season. The two models are listed below. If you have a preference for a particular model, you should find out whether the club you intend to join offers that particular program before you sign up your child.

### **1. In House Development Program.**

- ✓ Players in U6 & U7 play and develop together "in house". This usually means each Saturday, SSF sessions are held at the club ground at pre-determined times. The team leaders and coaches may spend time on a particular coaching aspect before the children play games or the morning may simply be a series of games between the various teams in an age group. However all the activities are usually held at the club's home ground
- ✓ There are some clubs that collaborate to run an "In house" program together. These clubs will alternate the venue each week. However, it is just the participating clubs and their members that are involved each week.
- ✓ Additional training and coaching may be undertaken midweek. This is common practice. A team leader or coach will be assigned a training area and a timeslot and will usually spend approximately an hour working with the players on an aspect of the development program.
- ✓ The In house program is more likely to be available at larger clubs. However, Medium and Smaller clubs often combine their resources and run a successful program in the same way.

### **2. Home and Away program**

- ✓ Players in U6 & U7 are placed in teams within the relevant age groups and a volunteer coach (team leader) is appointed to each team.
- ✓ The team plays a match each Saturday against another team from a club that has opted for the home and away program.
- ✓ The association collects a list of team names from the member clubs and then arranges fixtures for the season. Wherever possible, teams are placed in their local geographic area. However, this is determined by the number of clubs who opt for the home and away program.  
(example – if your club is the only club in the mountains opting for home and away – teams will have to travel to the Penrith area and beyond)

## ***Association Gala Days***

- ✓ The association and member clubs host several gala days in the course of the season. A gala day is a festival of small sided football, with a chance for players and teams to meet and mingle with other participants from across the association.
- ✓ The main objective for gala days is for coaches and teams to engage with the broader community and to provide an opportunity to demonstrate their skill acquisition in a more competitive environment although there are no prizes, trophies or records kept.
- ✓ All teams in the district are expected to participate in gala days. This includes teams from "in house" and "home and away" programs.
- ✓ Each team will play two games on gala days.
- ✓ Dates for gala days will be announced prior to the start of the 2011 season.



## **Format for U6 & U7**

There are no expected FFA changes to the format for 2011.

1. On field players - 4 per team
2. Maximum number of players registered to each team – 6 per team.
3. No goal keeper
4. Field Size – 30m x 20m
  - Field may be permanently marked, but this is not considered necessary. FFA encourages the use of cones or markers to define field areas to allow clubs to
    - Be flexible in where they locate the fields within their venue
    - delay the cancellation of activities due to “regular field area” being unplayable
    - reduce wear & tear on playing surfaces
    - make better use of small spaces
    - place SSF fields within the area of a larger field.
5. Ball Size – 3
6. Game duration – 2 x 15 minute halves
7. Referee – No. A game leader will be in place at each game to control kick offs, kick-ins etc.
8. Goal Size – Min: 1.5m x 0.90m - Max: 2.0m x 1.00m.
9. \*\*\* Coaches permitted on the field for U5/6 only for the first half of the season\*\*\*

The general belief is that adults on the field cause confusion for young children and it is likely to be a better experience with as few obstacles as possible. The FFA recommendation is that the game leader should be a junior or young player and coaches should be encouraged to stay on the touchline for the duration of the match.

## **Rules – Under 6-7**

It's important to remember that as this age group is playing a modified form of the game, they also need to have some modified rules that they can follow. When coaching and leading these games, please remember that the main objective is to aid development and assist in the enjoyment of the game, and “enforcing” the rules should be done with the player's intent in mind; ie 5,6 & 7 year old players rarely mean to play unfairly or to foul players on purpose, so was it an accident? If yes, play on if players are safe and able to do so.

### **Starting the game**

- ⚽ The game is started from the centre of the half way line by kicking the ball forwards towards the opponents goal. If the ball goes directly over the goal line from the kick off without touching any other player then no goal is awarded. Play restarts as a goal kick (covered later).
- ⚽ Which team kicks off at the start of play is decided traditionally by either tossing a coin and one team player calling either heads or tails. Other methods can include choosing which hand the whistle is in or even a game of scissor, paper, rock. Whichever team kicks off at the start of the first half does not restart the game for the second half.

### **Re-starting the game.**

- ⚽ After a goal is scored, the game restarts from the half way line by the team that conceded the goal.
- ⚽ The ball is out of play when the whole of the ball has crossed the whole of the line. If this happens on the side line, the team that didn't kick it out has a kick in from where the ball crossed the line. The player can either kick it to a team mate in any direction or may choose to dribble it in themselves. Opposing players should stand a minimum of 4.5 metres from the ball to ensure they are safe.
- ⚽ If the ball goes over the end line a goal kick is awarded regardless of who kicked it out. Once again the ball is placed on the end line where the ball crossed the line and the player can either kick it to a team mate or dribble the ball back into play. Opposing players need to go back to the half way line before the ball is played.



### **Free Kicks.**

- ⚽ As previously mentioned free kicks will only need to be awarded for hand balls and serious fouls. All free kicks are indirect, which means that the ball has to be touched by 2 different players from either team before a goal can be scored. If the ball goes over the line between the goals with only 1 player touching the ball, then a goal kick is given.
- ⚽ If a foul has been awarded, the ball is placed as close to possible to where the foul occurred and the opposing team need to stand a minimum of 4.5 metres from the ball. The ball can then be kicked into play.
- ⚽ If a foul is committed close to the defending team's goal, an indirect free kick is given and the ball should be placed approximately 8 metres from the goal line.

### **PLEASE NOTE:**

- ⚽ There are NO corners – all balls kicked over the end line are given as kick ins to the defending team
- ⚽ There are NO throw ins – all balls kicked over the side line are given as kick ins to the other team
- ⚽ There are NO penalties – there is no penalty area, all fouls are awarded as indirect free kicks
- ⚽ There are NO goalkeepers – players should be discouraged from standing in front of goal and "goal tending"
- ⚽ There are NO offsides – players should be discouraged from standing in front of goal and "goal poaching"

### **End of Game Shoot Out**

- ⚽ At the completion of the game, players from both teams line up at one end of the field to take part in an end of game shoot out.
- ⚽ The referee or game leader creates a kicking spot, by pacing out approximately 8 metres from the goal, mid-way between the goalposts. Adjust this distance to ensure all players are able to score.
- ⚽ Each player is given the opportunity to score a goal by taking a single kick from the spot.
- ⚽ Goalkeepers are not used for the end of game shoot out.
- ⚽ No player is allowed to stand between the kicking spot and the goal being used for the shoot out.



If your child is joining the sport as a slightly older player, the following rules apply. Under 8, 9, 10 age groups play home and away each week, working to an association fixture list. The association does not collect data from these games. They continue to be about player development and recording results and tables will not be to the benefit of player development.

### **Format for U8 & U9 Age Group**

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1. On field players - 7 per team
2. Maximum number of players registered to each team – 10 per team
3. Goal Keeper - Yes  
Field Size 40m-50m x 30m-40m  
Field may be permanently marked, but this is not considered necessary. FFA encourages the use of cones or markers to define field areas to allow clubs:
  - to be flexible where they locate the fields within their venue
  - delay the cancellation of activities due to “regular field area” being unplayable
  - reduce wear & tear on playing surfaces
  - make better use of small spaces
  - place SSF fields within the area of a larger field
4. Penalty area – 12m x 5m<sup>1</sup>
5. Ball Size – 3
6. Game duration – 2 x 20 minute halves & 5 minute half time break
7. Referee – Instructing Referee
8. Goal Size – 1.8m x 3m. This goal size was introduced in 2010.<sup>2</sup>
9. Under 8 & 9 age groups will play a “home & away” format in regional zones where possible.
10. The association will endeavour to eliminate byes in this age group by moving teams from what might be considered to be the regular zone, to an adjacent zone in order to maintain an even number of teams.
11. No coaches permitted on the field during the game, unless invited by Instructing Referee to treat an injured player.

### **Rules – Under 8&9**

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It's important to remember that as this age group is playing a modified form of the game, they also need to have some modified rules that they can follow. When coaching and refereeing these games, please remember that these games are about the development of and enjoyment of players.

#### **Starting the game.**

- ⚽ The game is started from the centre of the half way line by kicking the ball forwards towards the opponents goal. If the ball goes directly over the goal line from the **kick off** without touching any other player then no goal is awarded. Play restarts as a goal kick (covered later).
- ⚽ Which team kicks off at the start of play is decided traditionally by either tossing a coin and one team player calling either heads or tails. Whichever team kicks off at the start of the first half does not restart the game for the second half.

#### **Re-starting the game.**

- ⚽ After a goal is scored, the game restarts from the half way line by the team that conceded the goal. The ball is **out of play** when the whole of the ball has crossed the whole of the line. If this happens on the side line, the team that didn't kick it out has a **throw in** from where the ball crossed the line. The player faces the field of play and has part of each foot on or behind the side line, uses both hands and delivers the ball from



behind and over his head. Opposing players must stand a minimum of 5 metres from the ball until it is in play. A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw in.

- ⚽ If the ball goes over the end line a **goal kick** is awarded if it was last touched by an attacking player. The ball is placed anywhere within the penalty area and opponents must stand at least 5 metres from the ball until it is in play. The ball is in play once it has left the penalty area.
- ⚽ If the ball goes over the end line a **corner kick** is awarded if it was last touched by a defending player. The ball is placed at the corner of the end line and sideline. Opposing players need to stand a minimum of 5 metres from the ball.

#### **Free Kicks.**

- ⚽ Free kicks are awarded for handball or fouls and misconduct. All free kicks are **indirect**, which means that the ball has to be touched by 2 different players from either team before a goal can be scored. If the ball goes over the line between the goals with only 1 player touching the ball, then a goal kick is awarded.
- ⚽ For deliberate or serious acts of handball or fouls and misconduct inside the penalty area, a penalty kick is awarded from a penalty mark 8 metres from the goal line with only a goalkeeper in position. All other players must be outside the penalty area and be at least 5 metres behind the penalty mark.
- ⚽ If a foul has been awarded in general play, the ball is placed as close to possible to where the foul occurred and the opposing team must stand a minimum of 5 metres from the ball. The ball can then be kicked into play.

#### **PLEASE NOTE:**

- ⚽ There **ARE** throw ins – these have been introduced as new skills to acquire from under 8 upwards.
- ⚽ There **ARE** penalties – refer to section marked free kicks.
- ⚽ There are **NO** offsides – players should be discouraged from standing in front of goal and “goal poaching”



## U10 Age Group

### Format

The NDSFA will comply with most of the FFA mandates in 2011.

12. On field players - 9 per team
  - Maximum number of players registered to each team – 12 per team
13. Goal Keeper - Yes
14. Field Size 60m-70m x 40m – 50m
  - Field may be permanently marked, but this is not considered necessary. FFA encourages the use of cones or markers to define field areas to allow clubs
    - flexibility in where they locate the fields within their venue
    - delay the cancellation of activities due to “regular field area” being unplayable
    - reduce wear & tear on playing surfaces
    - make better use of small spaces
    - placement of SSF fields within the area of a larger field
15. Penalty area – 12m x 5m<sup>3</sup>
16. Ball Size – 4
17. Game duration – 2 x 25 minute halves & 5 minute half time break
18. Referee – Instructing Referee
19. Goal Size – 1.8m x 5m.
20. Under 10 age group will play in graded divisions using a home & away format throughout the district. This is not part of the FFA mandate for this age group.

### Rules - Under 10

It is important to remember that this age group is still playing a modified form of the game and they require some modified rules that they can follow. When coaching and refereeing these games, please remember that these games are still primarily concerned with the development of and enjoyment of players.

#### Starting the game.

- ⚽ The game is started from the centre of the half way line by kicking the ball forwards towards the opponents goal. If the ball goes directly over the goal line from the **kick off** without touching any other player then no goal is awarded. Play restarts as a goal kick (covered later).
- ⚽ Which team kicks off at the start of play is decided traditionally by either tossing a coin and one team player calling either heads or tails. Whichever team kicks off at the start of the first half does not restart the game for the second half.

#### Re-starting the game.

- ⚽ After a goal is scored, the game restarts from the half way line by the team that conceded the goal.
- ⚽ The ball is **out of play** when the whole of the ball has crossed the whole of the line. If this happens on the side line, the team that didn't kick it out has a **throw in** from where the ball crossed the line. The player faces the field of play and has part of each foot on or behind the side line, uses both hands and delivers the ball from behind and over his head. Opposing players must stand a minimum of 5 metres from the ball until it is in play. A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw in.
- ⚽ If the ball goes over the end line a **goal kick** is awarded if it was last touched by an attacking player. The ball is placed anywhere within the penalty area and opponents must stand at least 5 metres from the ball until it is in play. The ball is in play once it has left the penalty area.



- ⚽ If the ball goes over the end line a **corner kick** is awarded if it was last touched by a defending player. The ball is placed at the corner of the end line and sideline. Opposing players need to stand a minimum of 5 metres from the ball.

#### **Free Kicks.**

- ⚽ Free kicks are awarded for handball or fouls and misconduct. All free kicks outside of the penalty area are **indirect**, which means that the ball has to be touched by 2 different players from either team before a goal can be scored. If the ball goes over the line between the goals with only 1 player touching the ball, then a goal kick is awarded.
- ⚽ For deliberate or serious acts of handball or fouls and misconduct inside the penalty area , a penalty kick is awarded from a penalty mark 8 metres from the goal line with only a goalkeeper in position. All other players must be outside the penalty area and be at least 5 metres behind the penalty mark.
- ⚽ If a foul has been awarded in general play, the ball is placed as close to possible to where the foul occurred and the opposing team must stand a minimum of 5 metres from the ball. The ball can then be kicked into play.

#### **PLEASE NOTE:**

- ⚽ There **ARE** throw ins – these have been introduced as new skills to acquire from under 8 upwards.
- ⚽ There ARE penalties – see under free kicks.
- ⚽ There are NO offsides – players should be discouraged from standing in front of goal and “goal poaching”



## **SMALL SIDED SUMMARY**

*The aim is to introduce the full game of football in building blocks over the course of several years. The youngest age groups begin with the basics of ball control (touches on the ball) and learning to play as a team.*

*The game should be fun with lots of goals being scored.*

*At the end of the game, team leaders are encouraged to organize a "shoot out". Every player has the opportunity of scoring a goal, kicking the ball from around eight metres out. More players scoring goals helps build self confidence and finishes the session on a high note.*

*Results and league tables have no place in this area of the sport. There are no official records kept. Small sided teams are not graded and are fully interchangeable within club.*

**REMEMBER – SMALL SIDED FOOTBALL IS ABOUT DEVELOPMENT  
"FUN FITNESS AND FRIENDSHIP"**

**WHEN THE PLAYERS ARE NOT PRACTICING THEIR SKILLS  
THERE IS A FANTASTIC INTERACTIVE WEB SITE TO VISIT  
IT'S A GREAT PLACE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE GAME**

**[www.smallsidedfootball.com.au](http://www.smallsidedfootball.com.au)**

**HAVE FUN & SEE YOU ON THE FOOTBALL FIELD SOON!**