U5/U6 MICRO RULES & "NEW BALL" METHOD

(Gulf Coast Soccer Supplement to the STYSA General Rules of Play 9-4-2026)

Restarts: Restarts only occur to kick off a half or after a goal is scored. Free kicks, throw-ins, goal kicks, and corner kicks WILL NOT be used.

Substitutions: unlimited and can occur at any time, including on the fly "hockey style".

New Ball Continuous Play Method

The idea behind the 'new ball method' is to keep the flow of the game constant and increase the number of ball touches by all the players. The 'new ball method' eliminates restarts such as throw-ins and corner kicks and keeps the ball in play continuously. Restarts might be important to the game results at the highest level of play, but they have no relevance or developmental benefits at the U-6 Micro level. **Since the objective of the Micro Program is to teach players to dribble, score, and enjoy the game every aspect of the traditional game that reduces the opportunity to dribble and score is removed.**

Why New Ball? The basic principle of this method is that, when a ball goes out of bounds, the coach puts a new ball into play. Experiments with this method, conducted by Georgia YSA at Richmond Hill, GA found that the players caught on to the method very quickly and loved it. The parents and coaches at Richmond Hill embraced the concept as soon as they witnessed it first-hand. The experiments also proved that, on average, players' ball touches increased two and threefold. This was determined by counting the number of touches per player under the traditional rules and comparing to the number of touches under the 'new ball method'. Tracking the amount of actual playing time revealed that the ball was in play for only 45% of the time under the traditional rules, and almost 100% of the time under the 'new ball method'.

How to run it - To implement the 'new ball method', use a coach to roll the balls in and help manage the flow of the game. If using two coaches, they could alternate at half time. The coach should hold a few balls, ready to be rolled in, one at a time.

- When a ball goes out of bounds, the coach yells "new ball!" to get players attention and **roll** a new ball into a neutral area from the midline area to create a 50/50 opportunity. The players will learn quickly to react to the new ball. A 50/50 ball is one in which players from both teams have an equal opportunity to win the ball.
- Always roll the ball on the ground into the neutral or unoccupied space. Players will learn to move towards the ball. Do not throw the ball too high in the air since the players are not yet skilled enough to control a bouncing ball.
- Coaches can also use this method to get the non-assertive players involved, by rolling the ball towards them. This will help bring them out of their shell. If the players are shy, simply place the ball at their feet.
- If one team is dominating the game, the advantage can be shifted to the other team by rolling the ball into an area that favors the disadvantaged team.
- This method can also be used to break up a 'beehive'. If all the players are bunched up around the ball, shout "new ball" and roll the ball into the open space.
- Remember to always praise the players for every attempt. Keep them excited and motivated.
- **Parents or siblings not specifically trained in the New Ball Method SHOULD NOT be used to manage the games restarts**.

This method will speed up the game, will produce more goals and more excitement. **For more information or assistance in implementing it, please contact the Recreational Director of Coaching or Club Director of Coaching at questions@gcysc.com.**