



Appendices 2025-2026

July 2025

MHL LEAGUE RULES 2025-2026 APPENDICES

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APPENDIX 1

Match Delegate

Role of the Match Delegate

Both Clubs home and away, must nominate a responsible adult/member of their club to act as Match Delegate on the day of the game. This should NOT be the team manager, coach or club assistant referee, but another adult who is at the match. The Match delegate must wear a "Match Delegate" bib with MHL emblem on.

Responsibilities of the Match Delegate

- Upon arrival at the venue, the match delegate from the home team will ask their opponents, who their match delegate is and make introductions to one another.
- Together, they will then report to the match referee at least 15 minutes before the start of the game and introduce themselves to him or her.
- The primary responsibility of the home team match delegate is to look after the Referee before, during and after the game until he or she leaves the ground. It would be appropriate if the home and away team delegates did the job together.
- This would include, showing the referee where the changing rooms and toilets are, directing them to the correct pitch, and possibly offering them a drink at half time and after the game and ensuring that their fees are paid.
- During the game, each delegate will be responsible for the behaviour of all Club members and spectators. If the referee needs to, he/she will, during a stoppage in play, approach the match delegate to assist him/her in dealing with any problems that may occur. The match delegate is not exempt from being reported for misconduct.
- The FA RESPECT programme must be considered by the delegate at all times, and a report form is provided for any issues to be reported to the County FA.
- The Mid Herts League is totally committed to equality and the County FA Equality Policy must be emphasised and observed at all times.

APPENDIX 2

9 v 9 Rules 2025-2026 Season

PLAYING RULES – 9 v 9 U11 & U12

All matters not provided for in the foregoing Rules shall be governed by the Rules of the MHL. The League Management Committee shall deal with any matters not covered by these rules. All decisions of the League Management Committee shall be final and binding on all parties.

Except where other provisions in these 'Laws' are made, the Laws of Association Football apply. Each Law is numbered to correspond with the appropriate Law of the Game.

These Laws are **mandatory** unless the Football Association grants special permission.

Law 1 – Playing Area

- **Playing Area** - 80 yards length x 50 yards wide **Maximum Width (Minimum Width 70 x 40)**
- **Halfway Line** - The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line. The centre mark is indicated at the mid point of the halfway line
- **Goal Size** - The distance between the posts is either 16ft and the distance between the lower edge of the crossbar and the ground is 7ft.
- Corner Flags must be provided

FA RESPECT barriers must also be used alongside the pitch for each Match.

Law 2 – The Ball

- Size 4 for U11-U12. It should be safe and made of leather or another suitable material. The ball should be the MHL sponsored match ball

Law 3 – Number of Players

- Under 11 and Under 12 – Maximum number per team, including a goalkeeper is 9. The above indicates the maximum number of players per team at that age group.
- A match may not start if either team consists of fewer than six players.
- The minimum number of players in a team required for a match to continue is also six. Should a team fall below this, normal rules apply, as per the Laws of the game.

Players must play with and against players only from their own age range, as per Football Association and Competition rules.

- Any number of 5 [Five] substitutes may be used at any time with the permission of the referee. A player who has been replaced may return to the playing area as a substitute for another player.
- All team members should receive equal playing time where possible, with best practice recommendation of at least 50% per player for each game.
- For all other substitution rules, normal rules apply, as per the Laws of Association Football.
- Players at Under 11 and Under 12 shall be registered with a team and can only play for the team they are registered to.

Law 4– Playing Equipment

- Players must wear shin guards and goalkeepers must wear a distinguishing playing strip.
- Shin guards must be covered entirely by the socks.
- Players must wear the appropriate clothing dependent on the weather (undergarments)
- Correct footwear must be worn for the surface of the pitch e.g. no metal studs on artificial grass pitches

NO JEWELLERY OR ANYTHING DANGEROUS OF ANY KIND SHOULD BE WORN BY ANY PLAYER

Law 5 – Referees

The Authority of the Referee

- Each match is controlled by a referee who has the full authority to enforce the Laws for 9v9 Football in connection with the match to which they have been appointed.
- The powers and duties of the referee are as normal rules apply, as per Laws of the game.

Law 6 – Assistant Referees

Assistant Referees

Two assistant referees may be appointed whose duties, subject to the decision of the referee, are to indicate:

- When the whole of the ball leaves the field of play
- Which team is entitled to a corner kick, goal kick or throw-in
- When a player may be penalised for being in an offside position
- When a substitution is requested
- When misconduct or any other incident occurs out of the view of the referee
- When offences have been committed whenever the assistant referee have a better view than the referee (this includes, in certain circumstances, offences committed in the penalty area)
- Whether, at penalty kicks, the goalkeeper moves off the goal line before the ball is kicked and if the ball crosses the line.

*Note: Referees will give their instructions to Club Assistant Referees before the game and instruct them which aspects of the above they wish them to assist with, as the above are for neutral assistant referees and not necessarily what they require from a Club assistant referee.

Law 7 – Duration of Play

- In any one day, no player shall play more than 100 minutes. It is the responsibility of the parent/carer organisation to ensure the child does not exceed this.
- Under 11s & Under 12s shall play **30** minutes each half – total match length **60** minutes.
- The half time interval must not exceed 15 minutes.

ALL PLAYERS TAKEN TO A MATCH MUST PLAY A MINIMUM OF 50% OF THE TOTAL MATCH TIME.

Law 8 – Start and Restart of Play

Procedure

- A Kick Off shall be taken at the centre of the playing area to start the game and after a goal has been scored.
- Opponents must be 7 yards away from the ball and in their own half of the field.
- Normal rules apply, as per Laws of the game.
- The referee tosses a coin, and the winning captain has choice of ends, the losers have kick off
- The second half is started with a kick off by the team who won the toss before the start of the game.

Law 9 – Ball in and Out of Play

Normal rules apply, as per Laws of the game.

Law 10 – Method of Scoring

Normal rules apply, as per Laws of the game.

Law 11 – Offside

Normal rules apply, as per Laws of the game.

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

Normal rules apply, as per Laws of the game.

Law 13 – Free Kicks

- For all free kicks opponents must be 10 yards from the ball
- Normal rules apply, as per Laws of the game.

Law 14 – Penalty Kicks

Position of the Ball and the Players

- All players except the defending goalkeeper and the kicker must be outside the penalty area and at least 7 yards from the penalty mark.
- All other normal Rules apply, as per Laws of the game.

Law 15 – Throw Ins

Normal rules apply, as per Laws of the game.

Law 16 – Goal Kicks

Normal rules apply, as per Laws of the game.

- The ball must be stationary and is kicked from any point within the goal area by a player of the defending team.
- The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves.
- Opponents must be outside the penalty area until the ball is in play.

If, when a goal kick is taken, any opponents are inside the penalty area because they did not have time to leave, the referee allows play to continue. If an opponent who is in the penalty area when the goal kick is taken or enters the penalty area before the ball is in play, touches or challenges for the ball before it is in play, the goal kick is retaken.

Law 17 – Corner Kicks

Normal Rules apply, as per Laws of the game.

- Corner Kicks should be taken within the corner 'arc'.
- Players from the opposing team should be at least 10 yds away from the ball.

Other Information

- A Team 'First Aid Kit' must be available at all matches.
- All teams must complete Result Card on Mitoo by no later than 6.00 pm following the day of play.
Failure to do so will result in a fine.
- All players are required to wear shin guards – any player without shin guards is not permitted to play.

Registrations

All players must be registered in accordance with League Rule 18.

- The Team Sheet must be shown prior to the start of all matches organised by this League.
- A match should not take place until both teams have produced the team sheet.
NO VERIFIED, TEAM SHEET, NO PLAY, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.

Players that have not reached their 10th Birthday before 31st August are not permitted to play in this competition.

- FA RESPECT barriers must also be used alongside the pitch for each Match, ropes or cones are acceptable, **however a painted line is not.**

Match Delegates

ALL MATCHES shall have a nominated 'match delegate' by each team, each delegate:-

- Shall wear a MHL 'Match Delegate' Bib (or other suitable easily distinguishable jacket, i.e. a high viz vest)
Failure to do so will result in a fine.
- **MUST** be introduced to the referee before 'Kick-off' and shall assist the referee where necessary i.e. keeping parents back from the touchline.
Failure to do so will result in a fine.

Please see MHL Appendix 1

APPENDIX 3

Mini- Soccer Rules – 2025-2026 Season

All matters not provided for in the foregoing Rules shall be governed by the Rules of the MHL. The League Management Committee shall deal with any matters not covered by these rules. All decisions of the League Management Committee shall be final and binding on all parties.

U7, U8, U9 & U10 shall have matches arranged by the League but shall be competitive but non-published results.

Under 7

- Format 5 v 5 and shall have fixtures arranged by the League.
- Four 10-minute quarters per match
- A 2-minute break in between each quarter
- Fixtures results are collected but are not published.
- The Management Committee reserve the right to realign the Divisions in the best interest of the Competition and the development of the Players.
- Players at U7 shall be registered with a team. A team may take up to two players from another of their club's team in the same age group, and no more than one division higher or lower than the team plays in, to a match if that team is short on players.

Under 8

- Format 5 v 5 and shall have fixtures arranged by the League.
- Four 10-minute quarters per match
- A 2-minute break in between each quarter
- Fixtures results are collected but are not published.
- The Management Committee reserve the right to realign the Divisions in the best interest of the Competition and the development of the Players.
- Players at U8 shall be registered with a team. A team may take up to two players from another of their club's team in the same age group, and no more than one division higher or lower than the team plays in, to a match if that team is short on players.

Under 9

- Format 7 v 7 shall have fixtures arranged by the League.
- Two halves of 25 minutes each way per match
- Halftime interval of 5 minutes maximum duration
- Fixtures results are collected but are not published
- The Management Committee reserve the right to realign the Divisions in the best interest of the Competition and the development of the Players.
- No movements will be made once Divisional Cup Draws have been completed.
- Players at U9 shall be registered to a team.

Under 10

- Format 7 v 7 shall have fixtures arranged by the League.
- Two halves of 25 minutes each way per match
- Halftime interval of 5 minutes maximum duration
- Fixtures results are collected but are not published
- The Management Committee reserve the right to realign the Divisions in the best interest of the Competition and the development of the Players.
- No movements will be made once Divisional Cup Draws have been completed.
- Players at U10 shall be registered to a team

FA Mini-Soccer Laws

Except where other provisions in these 'Laws' are made, the Laws of the game apply.

Each Law is numbered to correspond with the appropriate Law of the Game.

These Laws are **mandatory** unless the Football Association grants special permission.

Unless specified by age group (U7, U8, U9 or U10) the following rules for Mini Soccer cover all age group formats.

Law 1 – Playing Area

- The size of the playing area shall be within the following guidelines for Under 7s - Under 10s

| Age | Format | Pitch Size Yards |
|------------|--------|------------------|
| Under 7-8 | 5 v 5 | 40x30 |
| Under 9-10 | 7 v 7 | 60x40 |

- Halfway Line** - The field of play is divided into two halves by a halfway line. The centre mark is indicated at the mid-point of the halfway line. This is also used as the retreat line when restarting play with a goal kick.
- Penalty Mark** - The penalty mark distance from the centre of the goal line: -

| Age | Penalty Mark |
|------------|--------------|
| Under 7-8 | 7 yards |
| Under 9-10 | 8 yards |

- Goal Size** - The distance between the posts is 12ft and the distance between the lower edge of the cross bar and the ground is 6ft.

| Age | Goal Size |
|----------|------------------------|
| Under 7 | Mini Soccer |
| Under 8 | Mini Soccer |
| Under 9 | Mini Soccer 12ft x 6ft |
| Under 10 | Mini Soccer 12ft x 6ft |

WARNING

In view of a number of accidents that have occurred it is necessary to ensure that portable goals of any size are either pinned or weighted to prevent them from toppling forward.

Law 2 – The Ball

- The ball should be size 3 for U7, U8, U9 and U10
- It should be safe and made of leather or another suitable material.

– Law 3 – Number of Players

- The maximum number of players per team including a goalkeeper shall be as follows:

| – Age | – Players |
|------------|----------------------|
| – Under 7 | – 5 players per team |
| – Under 8 | – 5 players per team |
| – Under 9 | – 7 players per team |
| – Under 10 | – 7 players per team |

- A maximum of 5 (five) substitutes for 5 a-side and a maximum 7 (seven) substitutes for 7 a-side can be named for each team (i.e. 14 players may be taken to a match for U9s & U10s) all of whom must play a minimum of 50 % of the match.
- A match **may not** START if either team consists of fewer than 4 players in U7 and U8 and no fewer than 5 players in U9 and U10.
- The minimum number of players in a team for a match to **CONTINUE** is the same (as detailed above) Matches can begin with 5v4 (5v5 format) or 7v6 (7v7 format) but the importance and ethos of Mini-Soccer should be upheld wherever possible, and the development of the children should come before the score line. Players must play with and against players only from their own age range, as per Football Association and Competition rules.
- Each team must not have a squad greater than double the size of the team per age.
- Any number from 5 (5-a-side) or 7 (7-a-side) substitutes, without being named, may be used at any time with the permission of the referee. A player who has been replaced may return to the playing area as a substitute for another player.
- All team members should receive equal playing time where possible, with a best practice recommendation of at least 50% per player for each game.

Power Play is available through all Mini soccer football formats 5v5 and 7v7.

Power Play Rule - Development football is designed to create the best learning and fun experience for young players. To ensure an imbalance in ability does not spoil this, the FA has approved 'Power Play' as an option that mini-soccer and youth leagues can adopt. So, for example:

- If a team is losing by a four-goal difference, they can put an additional player on so 5v5 becomes 6v5.
- If the score returns to less than a four-goal difference the team takes off a player. It does not have to be the last player to come on.
- If a team goes on to be losing by a six-goal difference a further additional player can be added – so 6v5 becomes 7v5.
- The main aim of the Power Play option is that all players are being challenged and enjoying the game.

Law 4 – Playing Equipment

- All players are required to wear shin guards – any player without shin guards is not permitted to play and goalkeepers must wear a distinguishing playing strip. Shin guards must be covered entirely by the socks.

- Players must wear the appropriate clothing dependent on the weather. (Undergarments during the Winter for example)
- Correct footwear must be worn for the surface of the pitch e.g. no metal studs on artificial grass pitches.

NO JEWELLERY OR ANYTHING DANGEROUS OF ANY KIND SHOULD BE WORN BY ANY PLAYER

Law 5 – Referees

- Each match is controlled by a referee who has full authority to enforce the Laws for Mini Soccer in connection with the match to which they have been appointed.
- Furthermore, referee should also recognise their role is to facilitate learning of the players, for example, allow young children to take a second attempt at a throw-in if the first is not within the Laws.
- Referees shall be appointed to all competitive matches where possible by the League. The 'HOME' team shall pay the referees fee.

Law 6 – Assistant Referees

Assistant referees are not required.

Law 7 – Duration of the Game

- Under 7 - No Player shall play more than 40 minutes in one day.
- Under 8 - No Player shall play more than 40 minutes in one day.
- Under 9 - No Player shall play more than 60 minutes in one day.
- Under 10 - No Player shall play more than 60 minutes in one day.
- **It is the responsibility of the parent/carer or organisation to ensure the child does not exceed this.**
- Under 7 - 8s shall play **four 10** minute quarters, with a break of 2 minutes maximum between quarters – total match length **40** minutes.
- Under 9s and 10s shall play **25** minutes each half – total match length of **50** minutes. The half time interval must not exceed 5 minutes

Law 8 – Start and Restart of Play

Procedure

- A Kick Off is taken at the centre of the playing area, to start the game and after a goal has been scored.
- Opponents must be 5 yards away from the ball and in their own half of the field. The ball can travel in any direction.
- In Mini-Soccer a goal cannot be scored directly from a start or restart of play.

Special Circumstances

- A dropped ball to restart the match, after play has been temporarily stopped inside the penalty area, takes place on the penalty area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the ball was located when the play stopped.
- No goal can be scored direct from a dropped ball.

Deliberate Header Restart (Applicable to u7-u10 age groups)

- Deliberately Heading the ball is an offence and punishable by an indirect free kick
- The indirect free kick is taken from the point where the ball was deliberately headed except when:
A player is deliberately heads the ball in their own penalty area. The referee will stop the game and restart with an indirect free kick to the opposition from the nearest sideline to where the offence took place.

Touchline restarts. (Applicable to u7-u10 age groups)

- When the whole of the ball passes over the whole of the touchline, either on the ground or in the air, instead of a throw in, a pass-in/dribble-in is awarded.
- The kicker that takes the pass-in/dribble-in may touch the ball again before it is touched by another player.
- At the moment of delivering the ball:
The ball must be stationary on the touchline at the point it left the pitch; Only the kicker may be off the pitch.
All opponents must stand five yards from the point where the pass-in/dribble-in is to be taken from.
- A goal cannot be scored directly from a pass-in.
- The ball is in play when kicked and it clearly moves.

Law 9 – Ball in and out of play

Normal Rules apply, as per Laws of the game.

Law 10 – Method of Scoring

Normal Rules apply, as per Laws of the game.

Law 11 – Offside

- There shall be NO offside in Mini - Soccer

Law 12 – Fouls and Misconduct

Normal Rules apply, as per Laws of Association Football. However, in Mini-Soccer all free kicks are direct. A free kick is awarded to the opposing team if the goalkeeper:

- Takes more than 6 seconds to release the ball from his/her hands.
- Touches the ball again with his/her hands after it has been released from his/her possession and has not touched any other player.
- Touches the ball with his/her hands after it has been deliberately kicked to him/her by a teammate.
- Touches the ball with his/her hands after he/she has received it directly from a throw in taken by a teammate – commonly referred to as a back pass but the pass does not have to be made backwards for it to be an offence.
(Goalkeeper's In all age groups **cannot** pick up a "back pass", in doing so a **Direct Free Kick on the edge of the penalty area, directly in line where the ball was picked up**, should be awarded.

Advice to referees: Consider the words 'Deliberate pass to the goalkeeper' and not accidentally when penalising the team.

For all these offences, the free kick should be taken from the penalty area line, parallel with the goal line, at the nearest point to the offence. **It is not a penalty kick against the offending team.**

Law 13 – Free Kicks

- For all free kicks opponents must be 5 (five) yards from the ball.

Law 14 – Penalty Kicks

Normal Rules apply, as per Laws of the game.

Position of the Ball and Players

- All players except the defending goalkeeper and kicker must be outside the penalty area and at least 5 yards from the penalty mark.
- The ball must be kicked forward.

The penalty mark distance from the goal line –

| Age | Penalty Mark |
|------------|--------------|
| Under 7-8 | 7 yards |
| Under 9-10 | 8 yards |

Law 15 – Throw In

- Please see Law 8 for touchline restarts

Law 16 – Goal Kick

Procedure

- A player of the defending team kicks the ball from any point within the penalty area.
- Opponents must retreat to their own half until the ball is in play. The defending team does not have to wait for the opposition to retreat and has the option to restart the game before should they choose to*.

The Ball

- The ball is in play when it is kicked directly out the penalty area.
- If the defending team, choose to take a goal kick before their opponents have retreated to the halfway line and then lose possession of the ball the match continues, and the goal kick is not re-taken
- Referees are encouraged to manage this and ask players to move back into their own half when their opponents are taking a goal kick.
- If the ball does not leave the penalty area or is touched by another player before it leaves the penalty area, the goal kick is re-taken as per Law of the game.

Law 17 – Corner Kicks

- The opposing Players must remain at least 5yds away from the ball until it is in play. The kicker may not touch the ball again until it has touched another player. If he/she does, a free kick is awarded against them.
- The ball is in play immediately when it enters the field of play.
- Corner Kicks should be taken within the corner 'arc'. – if marked on the field of play

Other Information

- A Team 'First Aid Kit' must be available at all matches.
- All teams must complete Result Card on Mitoo by no later than 6.00 pm following the day of play.
Failure to do so will result in a fine.
- All players are required to wear shin guards – any player without shin guards is not permitted to play.

Small Sided Matches

- In this League for 2025-2026 small-sided matches will be open to boys and girls.
- The age qualification is set out in Rule 18(C).
- **All Mini-Soccer matches within this League shall be played on a Saturday.**

Registrations

All players must be registered in accordance with League Rule 18.

- Registration Team Sheets must be shown prior to the start of all matches organised by this League.
- A match should not take place until both teams have produced team sheets.
- **NO TEAM SHEET, NO PLAY, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.**
- **Players that have not reached their 6th Birthday before 31st August are not permitted to play in this competition.**
- FA RESPECT barriers must also be used alongside the pitch for each Match, ropes or cones are acceptable, however a painted line is not.

Match Delegates

ALL MATCHES shall have a nominated 'match delegate' by each team, each delegate: -

- Shall wear a MHL 'Match Delegate' Bib (or other suitable easily distinguishable jacket, i.e. a high viz vest). **Failure to do so will result in a fine.**
- **MUST** be introduced to the referee before 'Kick-off' and shall assist the referee where necessary i.e. keeping parents back from the touchline. **Failure to do so will result in a fine.**

Please see MHL Appendix 1

Appendix 4

Referees – Guide to Marking

The mark awarded by a club must be based on the referee's overall performance, it is most important that the mark is awarded fairly and not based upon isolated incidents or previous games. The referee's performance should be determined by the table below which should act as a guide for the overall mark which should fall within the mark range for each standard of performance.

Mark Range Comment

| | |
|----------|---|
| 91-100 | The referee was extremely accurate in decision making and very successfully controlled the game using management and communication skills to create an environment of fair play, adding real value to the game. |
| 81-90 | The referee was very accurate in decision making and successfully controlled the game using management and communication skills to create an environment of fair play. |
| 71 - 80 | The referee was accurate in decision making and controlled the game well, communicating with the players, making a positive contribution towards fair play. |
| 61-70 | The referee was reasonably accurate in decision making, controlled the game quite well and communicated with players, establishing a reasonable degree of fair play. |
| Below 60 | The referee had significant shortcomings in the level of accuracy of decision making and control with poor communication with the players which resulted in low levels of fair play. |

Notes

- A scale of up to 100 allows greater flexibility for clubs to distinguish between different refereeing performances more accurately.
- A mark within each mark range can be given to reflect the referee's performance e.g. a mark of 79 indicates a somewhat better performance than a mark of 71.
- A mark between 71 and 80 represents the standard of refereeing expected.
- When a mark of 60 or less is awarded, an explanation must be provided to the League or Competition by completing the appropriate box on the marking form. It must include comments which could help improve the referee's future performances. Even where a referee has significant shortcomings there will have been some positive aspects which should be given credit; extremely low marks (below 20) should be very rare.

How to decide on the Referee's mark

The following questions focus on the key areas of a referee's performance. They are intended as an "aide memoire", are not necessarily comprehensive and need not be answered individually. It is, however, worth considering them before committing yourself to a mark for the referee.

Control and Decision Making

- How well did the referee control the game?
- Were the players' actions recognized correctly?
- Were the Laws applied correctly?
- Were all incidents dealt with efficiently/effectively?
- Were all the appropriate sanctions applied correctly?
- Was the referee always within reasonable distance of incidents?
- Was the referee well positioned to make critical decisions, especially in and around the Penalty area?
- Did the referee understand the players' positional intentions and keep out of the way accordingly?

- Did the referee demonstrate alertness and concentration throughout the game?
- Did the referee apply the use of the advantage to suit the mood and temperature of the game?
- Was the referee aware of the players' attitude to advantage?
- Did the referee use the assistants effectively?
- Did the officials work as a team, and did the referee lead and manage them to the benefit of the game?

Communication and Player Management

- How well did the referee communicate with the players during the game?
- Did the referee's level of involvement/profile suit this particular game?
- Did the referee understand the players' problems on the day – e.g. difficult ground/weather conditions?
- Did the referee respond to the changing pattern of play/mood of players?
- Did the referee demonstrate empathy for the game, allowing it to develop in accordance with the tempo of the game?
- Was the referee pro-active in controlling of the game?
- Was the referee's authority asserted firmly without being officious?
- Was the referee confident and quick thinking?
- Did the referee appear unflustered and unhurried when making critical decisions?
- Did the referee permit undue questioning of decisions?
- Did the referee deal effectively with players crowding around after decisions/incidents?
- Was effective player management in evidence?
- Was the referee's body language confident and open at all times?
- Did the pace of the game, the crowd or player pressure affect the referee negatively?

Final Thoughts

- Always try to be objective when marking. You may not obtain the most objective view by marking immediately after the game.
- Judge the performance over the whole game. Don't be too influenced by one particular incident.
- Don't mark the referee down unfairly because your team was unlucky and lost the game or some disciplinary action was taken against your players.