**Making the game as safe as possible**

The FA recently announced that heading in U7-U11 youth grassroots football matches is to be phased out over the next three seasons following an IFAB trial.

In 2022 the FA became the first national association to successfully adopt the International Football Association Board [IFAB] trial to remove deliberate heading in grassroots football matches at U11 level and below with the **York and District Youth Football League (YDYFL)** and **City of York Girls Football League (CYGFL)** participating in the trial.

After two seasons of the IFAB trial, the FA have decided to introduce a new rule to phase out deliberate heading in matches in all affiliated grassroots youth football between U7-U11 level over the next three seasons. This includes all leagues, clubs and any affiliated school football matches – starting with U7-U9 level from the 2024-25 season, then increasing to include U10 level from 2025-26, and U11 level from 2026-27.

Although the FA are phasing in the new rules over 3 years the leagues which were part of the original trial will continue with no heading at U7 through to and including U11's. **This means that heading in the YDYFL and CYGFL is not permitted at the U7 to U11 age groups**. **Heading is only permitted in the U12 age group and above.**

Teams participating in the YDYFL and CYGFL will see changes though as feedback collated from clubs and leagues participating in the IFAB trial concluded that players wanted to more opportunities to have the ball at their feet, they wanted more effective playing time and they wanted to reduce the amount of time the ball is in the air during a match.

**As a result, from the start of the 2024-25 season the YDYFL and CYGFL will be introducing the following restarts at the U7-U11 age groups.**

**Deliberate Header Restart:**

1. A red background with white text

   Description automatically generatedDeliberately heading the ball is an offence punishable by an indirect free kick.
2. The indirect free kick is taken at the point where the ball was deliberately headed, except:

Where a player deliberately heads the ball within their own penalty area, the referee will stop the game and restart with an indirect free kick to the opposition from the nearest side line of the penalty area where the offence took place.

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[**HEADING IN YOUTH FOOTBALL**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zoBwWcntmmU&t=54s)

**Sanctions in the event of a deliberate header in a match:**

From the start of the 2024/25 season, there will be no disciplinary sanctions applied for a deliberate header in a match, unless the action is considered a persistent deliberate offence, which could then result in a caution.

**Touchline Restart:**

A child holding a football ball

Description automatically generatedKick-ins and dribble-ins will be introduced instead of throw-ins to create more technical opportunities for players with the ball at their feet, allow for more effective playing time, and to help reduce the amount of time the ball is in the air during a match.

* When the whole of the ball passes over the whole of the touchline, 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 where it left the pitch; only the kicker may be off the pitch
* All opponents must stand at least 5 yards from the point on the touchline where the pass-in or /dribble-in is to be taken from
* A goal cannot be scored directly from a pass-in
* The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves

**As a result, from the start of the 2024-25 season the YDYFL and CYGFL will be introducing touchline restarts at the U7-U10 age groups only.**

**U11 age group will continue with throw-ins, no heading.**

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[**PASS-INS and DRIBBLE-INS**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jP_DzpoMSXg&t=3s)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Laws of the Game** | | **U7** | **U8** | **U9** | **U10** | **U11** |
| **Law 3** | Ball size | **3** | | | | **4** |
| **Law 4** | Max. permitted format | **5v5** | | **7v7** | | **9v9** |
| **Law 11** | Offside | **No** | | | | **Yes** |
| **Law 15** | Pass In Dribble In | **Yes** | | | | **No** |
| **Law 16** | Retreat Line | **Yes** | | | | **No** |
| **Law 17** | Corners | **Yes** | | | | **Yes** |
|  | Back Pass Rule | **Yes** | | | | **No** |
|  | Powerplay Laws | **Yes** | | | | **No** |
|  | **Throw Ins** | **No** | | | | **Yes** |
|  | **Deliberate Heading** | **No – If occurs, indirect free kick to opponents** | | | | |