THE FA GUIDE TO PITCH AND GOALPOST DIMENSIONS

INCLUDING INFORMATION ON LINE MARKING

Introduction

The FA receives many enquiries regarding pitch and goalpost sizes that are suitable for specific age groups. This document explains the various sizes of goalposts recommended and pitch markings for the following forms of the game:

- Mini Soccer 5v5 and 7v7
- 9v9 Football
- Youth Football
- Adult Football
- Football pyramid Steps 1 - 7 (Football Conference down the pyramid)

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These guidelines are intended to provide recommended size guidance to potential consumers to allow them to make informed choices when marking out of a football pitch.

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Pitch Dimensions

Pitches in the past have been marked out using the maximum and minimum pitches sizes as outlined in the laws of the game. These sizes vary tremendously, are often adapted to fit the space available and have been open to local interpretation. The FA has consulted widely and has been encouraged to produce national pitch sizes for mini soccer, 9v9, Youth football and Adult football.

The FA Recommended Pitch Sizes

Age grouping	Type	Recommended size **without** runoff (safety area around pitch)		Recommended size **including** runoff (safety area around pitch)		Recommended size of goal posts	
		Length x width (yards)		Length x width (yards)		Height x width (ft)	
Mini-Soccer U7/U8	5 v 5	40	30	46	36	6	12
Mini-Soccer U9/U10	7 v 7	60	40	66	46	6	12
Youth U11/U12	9 v 9	80	50	86	56	7	16
Youth U13/U14	11 v 11	90	55	96	61	7	21*
Youth U15/U16	11 v 11	100	60	106	66	8	24
Youth U17/U18	11 v 11	110	70	116	76	8	24
Over 18 (senior ages)	11 v 11	110	70	116	76	8	24

*If a pitch is to be provided for U13/14 it is recommended that 7 x 21 goalposts are provided. However, it should be noted that 8 x 24 would also be acceptable as not all sites will be able to provide specifically for this age group.

General Considerations

The following points should be noted:

- The run-off area beyond the pitch should be free of any obstacle (including dugouts and floodlight columns) to ensure players and officials do not injure themselves by running into any fixed object. The run-offs should be surfaced with exactly the same surface as the playing area. Tarmac and concrete are not allowed but 3G Football Turf is allowed for match officials run-offs.

- Clubs participating in the National League System should refer to The FA National Ground Grading Documents (Grade A-G) as there is a minimum of 1.83m (2 yards) required. However it should be noted that a run off of three yards or more is desirable. All new pitches should have a minimum of four yards run off to accommodate any future changes in the National Ground Grading Documents.

- Clubs participating in the National League System should refer to The FA National Ground Grading Documents (Grade A-G) to ascertain the size of dugouts and amount of hard standing required for the level they play at.

- Where pitches are located alongside each other, a minimum of six yards run off should exist. An additional four yards might be required to accommodate spectator areas.

- It is recognised that County Football Associations and Leagues may have defined their own rules for their own competitions which are within the maximum and minimum sizes as set out in the Laws of the Game. However, the above pitch sizes should be adopted where possible.

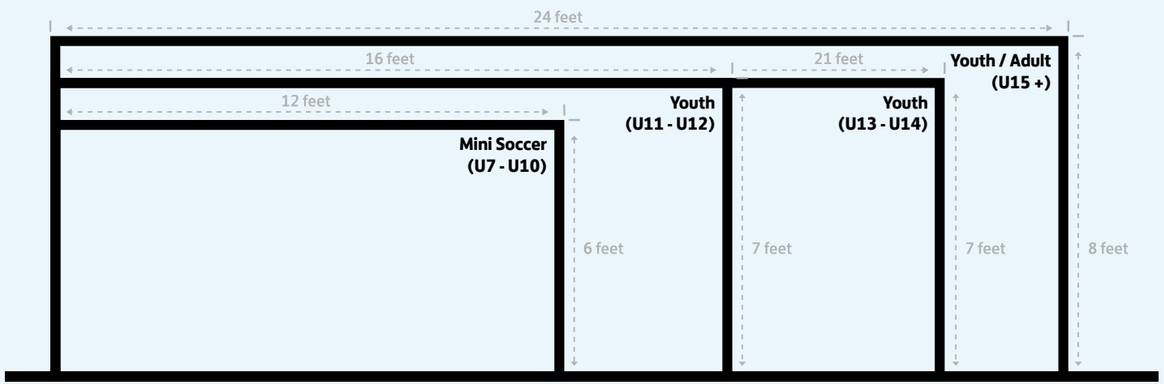
For information around alternative pitch sizes or metric conversion, please contact your County FA or Regional Facilities & Investment Manager.

9v9 football

It is advisable for Clubs and Leagues that use local authority, parish or town council pitches to consult with key personnel and County FAs when deciding on the implementation of 9v9 football. It will be important to establish how this format will be delivered on a site-by-site basis.

Goalpost Dimensions

The FA Goalpost Sizes



Goalpost Storage

Goals not in use should be properly stored. Stored goals should never be left accessible, upright or unstable. Socketed and folded free-standing goals should not be left leaning or unsecured, rather they should be locked securely and safely.; if this is not possible, they should be left lying flat on the ground so they cannot fall over.

Mobile /Free-standing Goalposts

Free-standing goals need to be appropriately stabilised in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Stabilisation of goalposts can be significantly affected by poor installation techniques, as well as by poor ground conditions. Consequently, the most reliable methods of stabilising free-standing goals is by attaching the back bar to permanent fixing points via eyebolts and stainless-steel loops set in concrete blocks, suitable attachment points on a permanent fence or wall, or using weights attached to the goal's back bar either in the correct positions as specified by the manufacturer, or integral to the goal. In all circumstances any equipment used to stabilise goals should be kept away from the immediate playing area to protect players and officials.

Due to uncertainty in types of ground and/or ground conditions, the use of pins, pegs, u-staples or screw in anchors on natural turf pitches is not generally recommended. However, if there is evidence that they are effective under the worst predictable ground conditions on the site in question, then they may be considered. Please refer to the goalpost manufacturer guidelines for the most appropriate form of stabilisation method.

9v9 Goalpost Funding

Funding for the purchase of new 9v9 Goalposts is now available through the Football Foundation. Eligibility criteria and further details can be obtained from the Football Foundation website at **www.footballfoundation.org.uk**.

Goalpost Safety

Several serious injuries and fatalities have occurred in recent years as a result of unsafe or incorrect use of goalposts. Please make sure that you follow this guidance to minimise the risk of injuries.

Goalpost Safety Guidelines

The Football Association, along with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the Health and Safety Executive and the British Standards Institution, would like to draw your attention to the following guidelines for the safe use of goalposts.

Several serious injuries and fatalities have occurred in recent years as a result of unsafe or incorrect use of goalposts. Safety is always of paramount importance and everyone in football must play their part to prevent similar incidents occurring in the future:

1 For safety reasons goalposts of any size (including those which are portable and not installed permanently at a pitch or practice field) must always be anchored securely to the ground or have a weighted back bar.
• Portable goalposts must be secured as per the manufacturer's instructions; this is also a requirement for the Laws of the Game.
• Under no circumstances should children or adults be allowed to climb on, swing or play with the structure of the goalposts;
• Particular attention is drawn to the fact that if not properly assembled and secured, portable goalposts may overturn; and
• Regular inspections of goalposts must be carried out to check that they are properly maintained.

2 Portable goalposts should not be left in place after use. They should be either dismantled and removed to a place of secure storage, or placed together and suitable fixings applied to prevent unauthorised use at any time.

3 The use of metal cup hooks on any part of a goal frame was banned from the commencement of season 2007-08 and match officials have been instructed not to commence matches where such net fixings are evident for safety reasons. Nets may be secured by plastic fixings, arrow head shaped plastic hooks or tape and not by metal cup hooks. Any metal cup hooks should be removed and replaced. New goalposts should not be purchased if they include metal cup hooks.

4 Goalposts which are "homemade" or which have been altered from their original size or construction should not be used under any circumstances as they potential pose a serious safety risk.

5 There is no BS/CEN standard for wooden goals and it is unlikely that wooden goals will pass a load or stability test. All wooden goals previously tested by independent consultants have failed strength and stability tests. The FA recommends that wooden goals should be replaced with compliant metal, aluminium or UPVC goalposts (this was updated in March 2012).

For reference, you should note that The FA and BSI, in conjunction with the industry, have developed standards for goalposts – BSEN 748 (2004) and BS 8461:2005+A1:2009. BS 8462:2005+A2:2012 (updated in March 2012). It is strongly recommended that you ensure that all goals purchased comply with the relevant standard. A Code of Practice BS 8461 has also been completed and copies of all of these standards are available from the BSI via their website at www.bsigroup.com.

Funding for the replacement of unsafe goals is available via the Football Foundation and eligibility criteria and further details can be obtained from their website at www.footballfoundation.org.uk.

The FA together with representatives from the industry, sports governing bodies and Government have prepared guidance notes for pitch users and pitch providers, which summarise the key priorities of the BSI's Code of Practice and provide further details on the information included above. These details are featured within the facilities section of The FA's website at TheFA.com/my-football.

REMEMBER TO USE GOALPOSTS SAFELY AT ALL TIMES

Line Marking

It is the duty of all facility providers to ensure that all the regulations are adhered to as The FA wants to promote the safe use of football facilities to improve everyone's experience of the game.

Various practices have been used in the past for the application of white lines to football pitches. The objectives of such practices has been to both reduce labour and materials costs whilst endeavouring to keep the lines visible for a greater length of time. Some of these practices have lead to injury and subsequent court action being taken against facility providers. You are therefore advised to study the following notes carefully.

Legislation

The main governing factors for marking out white lines are the same as that for other routine tasks in the workplace.

1 **Duty of Care**
Under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 every employer has a duty of care to ensure the workplace is safe for their employees, contractors, visitors, players, and spectators.

2. **The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1994 (COSHH)**
Regulations to prevent ill health from exposure to any hazardous substances present in the workplace.

3. **Risk Assessment**
You are required to carry out assessments on all tasks carried out in the workplace in relation to the nature of hazard, worst outcome, person(s) at risk, current precautions, estimated risk and further precautions.

If all three of the above are addressed satisfactorily this will automatically govern what to use for white line marking, ensure best practice and, above all, safety.

It is the duty of all facility providers to ensure that all the regulations are adhered to, as they are ultimately responsible. If line marking is carried out by contractors then a specification should be drawn up to include all the safeguards outlined in these guidance notes. This could also extend to including detailed specifications of all products to be used.

Suitable Line Marking Compounds

Permanent paints
Based on pigmented viscous liquid. These "paints" can be applied either in a diluted form or neat.

Powders
There are various non-toxic whiting powders available which are based on ground natural calcium carbonate and can he used wet or dry. They are safe to use provided COSHH principles are applied. Under COSHH the user would be required to wear gloves and eye protection and to wash off any contact with the skin as a precautionary measure. Most powders are supplied in a fine form.

Hydrated Lime (calcium hydroxide) should never be used for line marking. It is toxic and can give rise to chemical skin burns and irritations. It can cause serious damage to eyes and skin on contact in both its dry or wet form. Its use is not recommended under any circumstances.

Use of Herbicides to Reinforce Line Markings

Until The Food and Environment Protection Act, 1985 (FEPA) was introduced many groundsmen and club members used various herbicides mixed in with whitening compounds to keep the lines in longer and more visible during the playing season.

It is, however, only permissible to use a herbicide which is approved for use on sports turf, and this is likely to be a total herbicide. COSHH and Risk Assessment must be carried out prior to any application. A further governing factor is that the user must have obtained his/her Certificate of Competence in Use of Pesticides (PAI, PA2A or PA6A).

Any herbicide product for line marking must be used within the conditions of approval granted under The Control of Pesticide Regulations, 1986 (COPR), and as outlined on the product label. There should be no risk to players by contact or transfer of the active herbicide to any part of the body.

The addition of herbicides to whitening materials is not a recommended practice unless carried out by a competent, certificated person. Creosote is another compound used in the past to mark and reinforce line markings but it is not approved for use on sports turf under HSE – Control of Pesticide Regulations. Its use is therefore not recommended under any circumstances.

The use of Hydrated Lime, herbicide additives and creosote can also result in serious injury to players as it leads to an uneven playing surface. This can ultimately lead to actions against both clubs or individuals.

Line Marking (continued)

Where pitches are cross-marked, the lines should be clearly distinguishable.

Machines Available to Mark White Lines

Marking machines fall into the following categories:

1 Dry Line Markers
As the name implies, these are for applying dry powder compounds.

2 Pressure Pump Markers
A wheel driven pump forces marking fluid through a jet or spout directly onto the turf surface.

Laser guided line markers are capable of marking across natural or artificial turf. They produce a perfectly straight line every time, providing consistent quality allowing sports pitches to be marked in half the time of conventional methods.

3 Electric Pump Markers
These are battery driven to constantly maintain the required pressure and direct the liquid onto the turf surface.

4 Belt Feed Markers
These have a moving belt system which conveys a continual supply of liquid onto the turf surface by contact.

5 Wheel Transfer Markers
These convey the liquid via rotating wheel onto a tray and then via a sponge wheel directly onto the turf surface.

Multi-line Marking on Single Pitches

Where pitches are cross marked the lines should be clearly distinguishable. The FA recommends using blue for the 9v9 pitch.

An example of how a 9v9 pitch can be cross marked is included in the diagrams on pages 24 and 25.

Use of coned areas to divide pitches
A large number of Football Turf (3G Artificial Turf) pitches are now used for competitive match play at mini soccer and youth level. Sometimes it is difficult permanently mark out these types of pitches because of the wide range of uses they have. Suitable cones can be used to mark out a pitch in this instance.

It is acceptable to mark natural grass pitches for Mini Soccer and 9v9 by using flat cones.

Hints and Tips

- Find an appropriate piece of grass the right size.
- Use flat markers to highlight the goal area to help the goalkeepers.
- Move the portable goals to the right place and secure using the manufacturer's instructions.
- Explore using a 3G Football Turf pitch or commercial provider as a venue.
- Place the RESPECT barrier for the parents to stand behind.
- Mark out a small technical area near the halfway line for the coaches and subs to stand within.

RESPECT

Research has show that Designated Spectators' Areas have a beneficial impact on the behaviour of spectators and their impact on players and match officials.

The FA RESPECT Designated Spectators' Areas were introduced in 2008 as a response to concern at some touchline spectator behaviour – particularly in youth football. The area can be marked using an additional painted line, the use of cones or a roped-off area. The best results have come when use has been made of a temporary spectators' barrier system.

The areas draw the line which spectators should not cross. It deters them from standing on the touchline or infringing onto the pitch and creates a clearer distinction between those who are there to spectate and those with a responsibility to coach and manage. As a consequence, the experience of match officials and players has improved.

The recommended arrangement is to mark out a Designated Spectators' Area on the opposite side of the pitch to club officials (manager/coaches etc) for spectators to stand behind.

This allows the manager/coaches of both teams to stand on the other side of the pitch, meaning players can better distinguish the advice from their team officials.

The Designated Spectators' Area should ideally start three yards from the touchline. The area should run the full length of the pitch. Ideally no spectators should be watching from behind the goal as this is not a designated spectator area. It is recognised however that the alignment of some public pitches does not allow for this set up in which case other appropriate arrangements should be made to best meet the guidance issued in this document.

An alternative form of marking a Designated Spectators' Area can be used, but you must ensure this is safe for both the spectators, the players and match officials. The FA strongly recommends you obtain formal agreement from the facility/pitch provider about which method of marking is most suitable for the pitch, before beginning any work or buying any new equipment. The safety of the players, officials and spectators is paramount. For further guidance, visit www.footballfoundation.org.uk.

To help implement the Designated Spectators' Area, The FA has endorsed a RESPECT Barrier Kit which is available from www.touchlinelogos.com.

A Football Foundation scheme to assist clubs and leagues to purchase touchline barriers will be available from Summer 2012.

Appendix 1: Pitch Layouts and Goalpost Dimensions

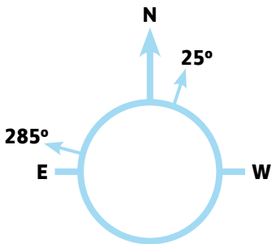
The following pages highlight the pitch layouts for all forms of the game, along with internal pitch markings and goal post sizes.

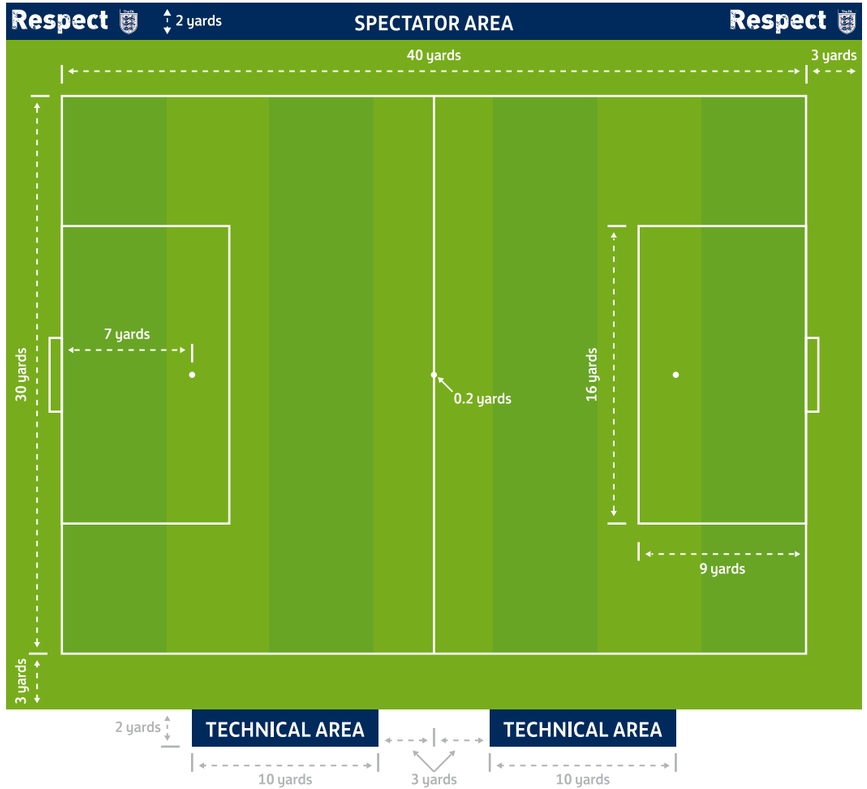
The spectator area can be marked out by using either a single white line or FA RESPECT logo barriers.

The technical are is for use by managers and coaches and should ideally be marked out using either white line marking or cones.

Pitch Orientation

The recommended main playing direction is approximately north (between 285° and 20°) / south, to minimise the effect of a setting sun on the players.





Mini Soccer U7 and U8 (5v5)

Recommended pitch size:
40 x 30 yards

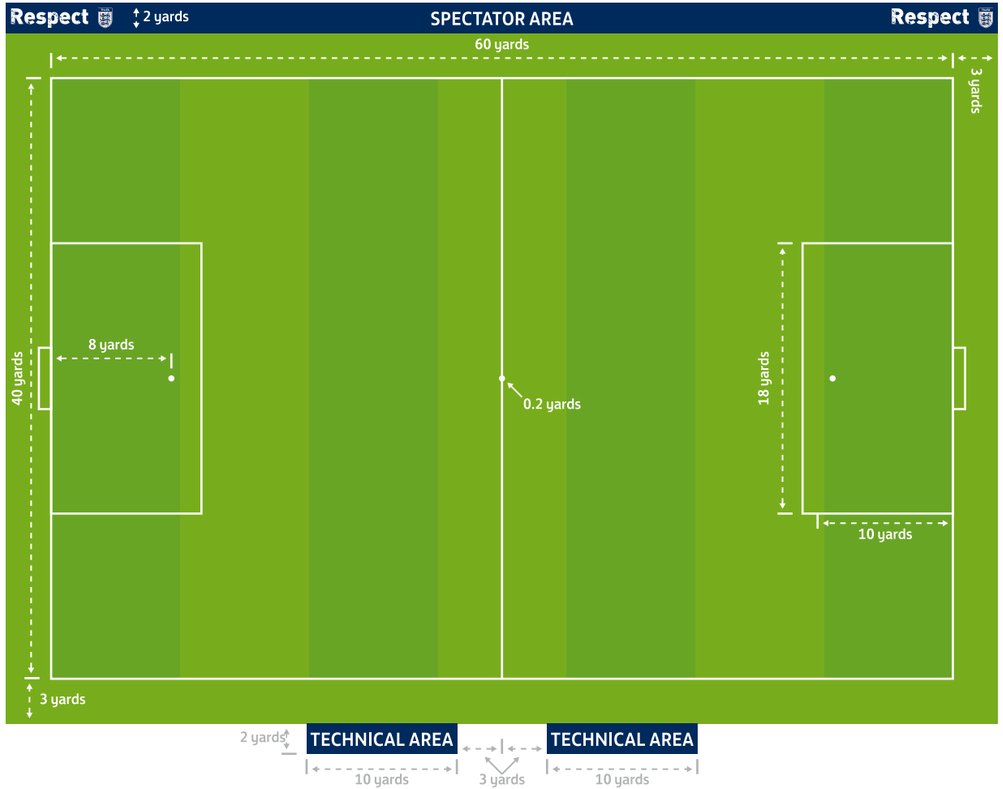
Recommended goalpost size:
6 x 12 feet

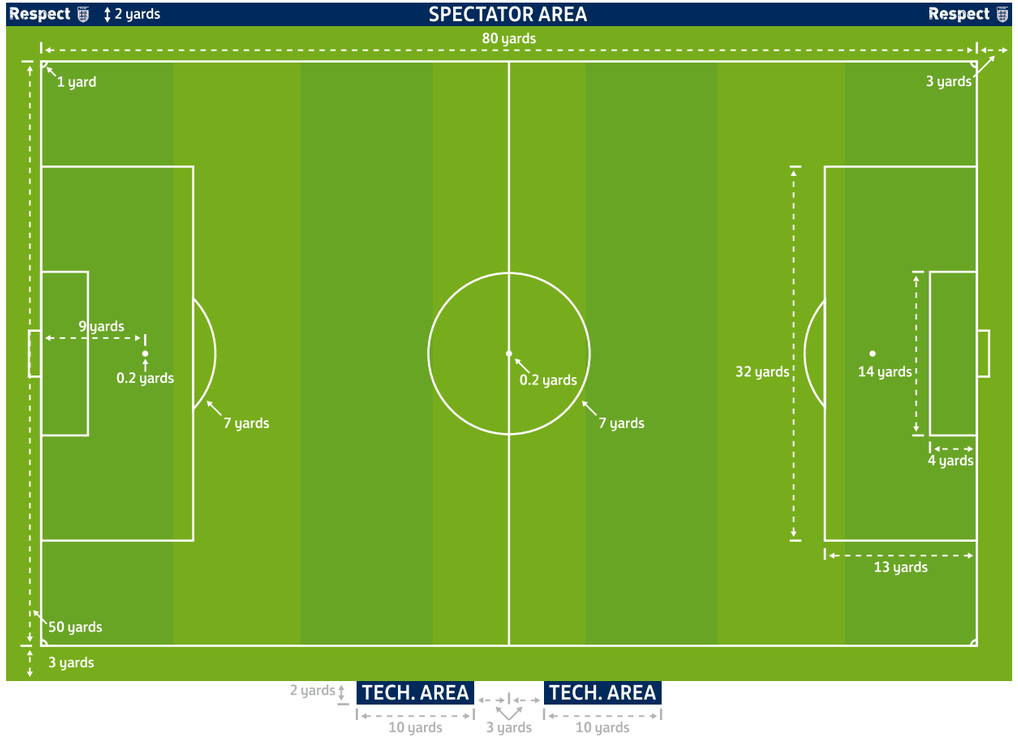
Note: The halfway line is also used as the retreat line when restarting play with a goal kick

Mini Soccer U9 and U10 (7v7)

Recommended pitch size:
60 x 40 yards

Recommended goalpost size:
6 x 12 feet





U11 and U12 (9v9)

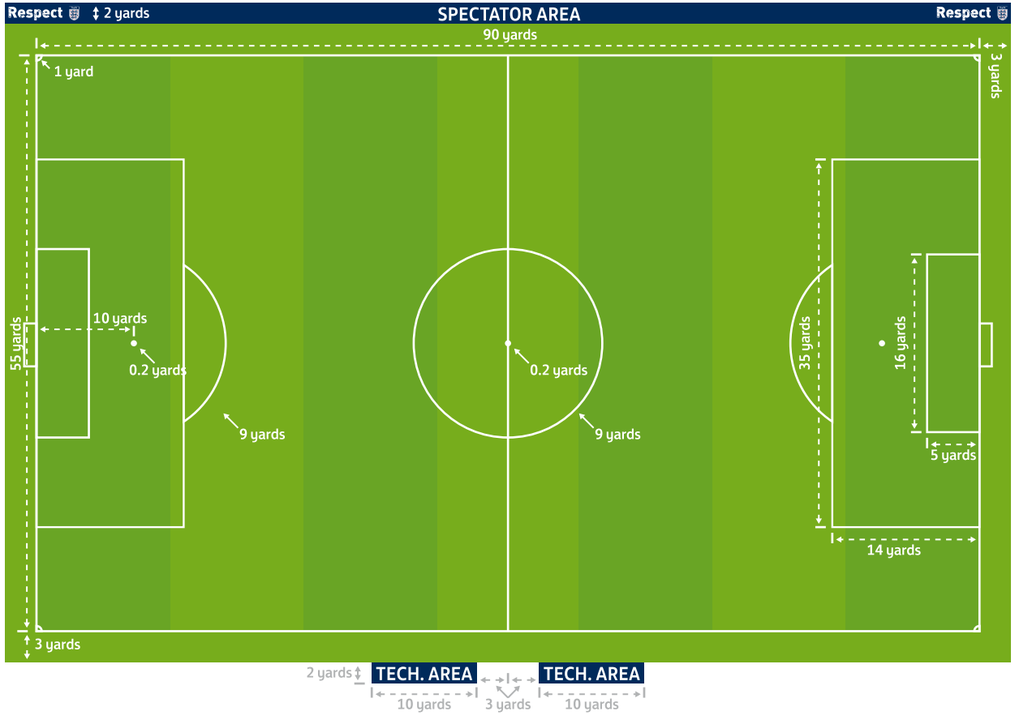
Recommended pitch size:
80 x 50 yards

Recommended goalpost size:
7 x 16 feet

U13 and U14 (11v11)

Recommended pitch size:
90 x 55 yards

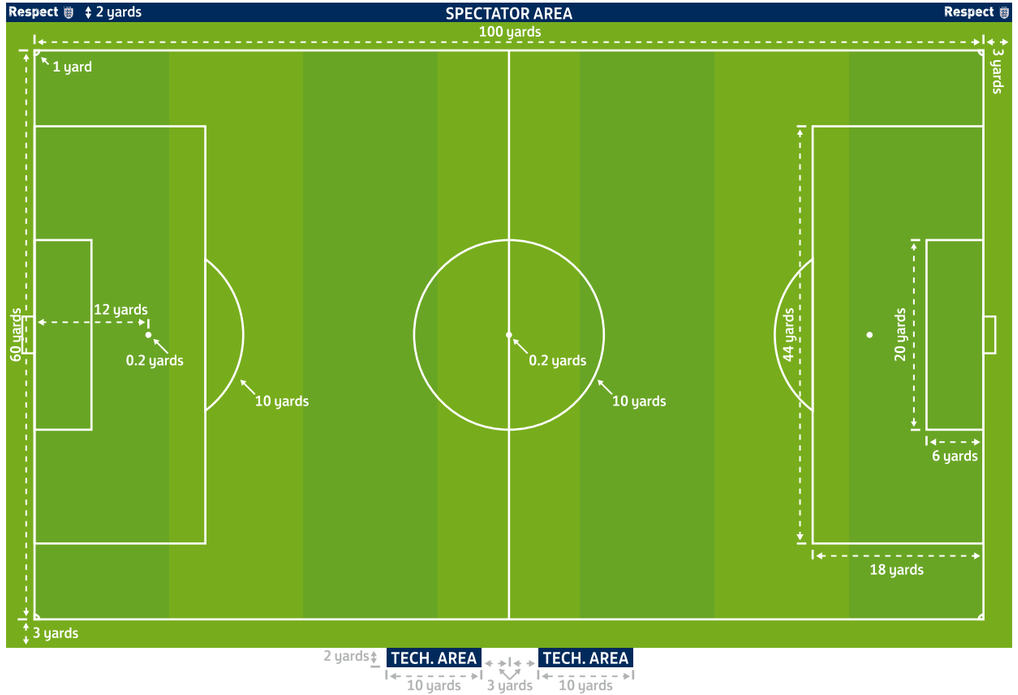
Recommended goalpost size:
7 x 21 feet or
8 x 24 feet
(please refer to table on page 4)



U15 and U16 (11v11)

Recommended pitch size:
100 x 60 yards

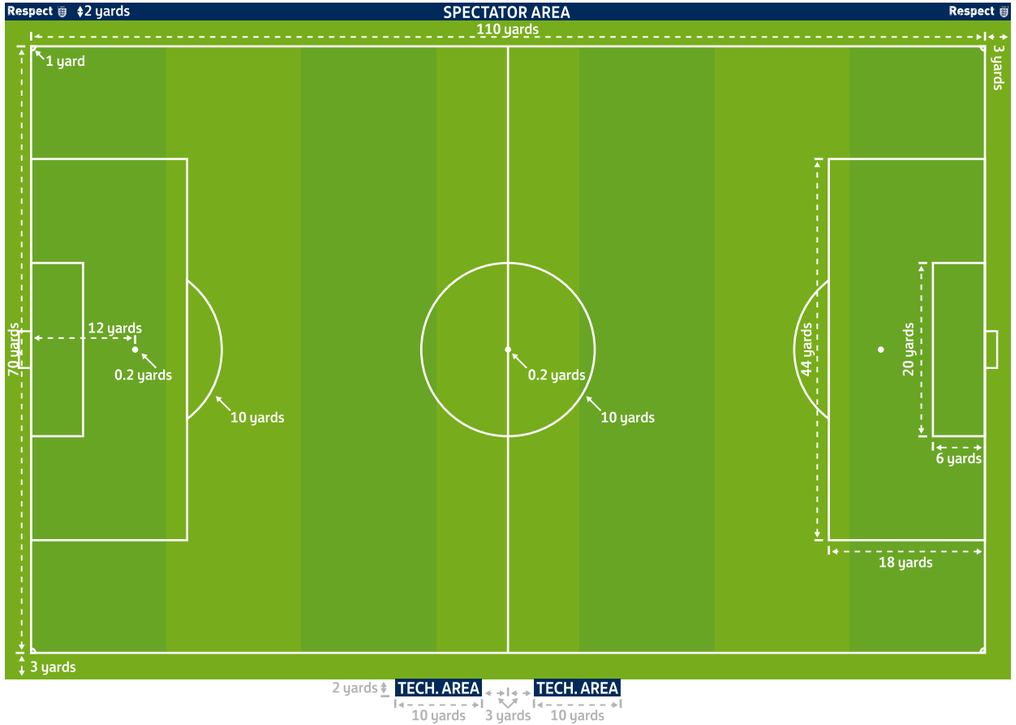
Recommended goalpost size:
8 x 24 feet

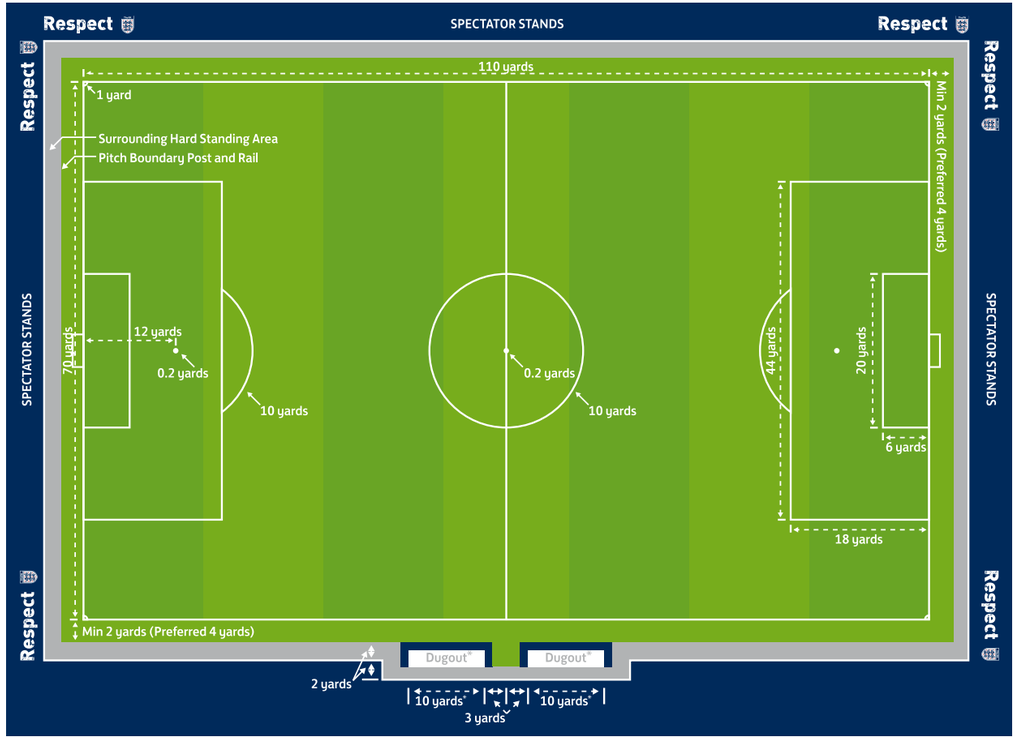


Over 18 and Adult Football

Recommended pitch size:
110 x 70 yards

Recommended goalpost size:
8 x 24 feet





Clubs Playing in the National League System

Steps 1-6

Recommended pitch size:
110 x 70 yards

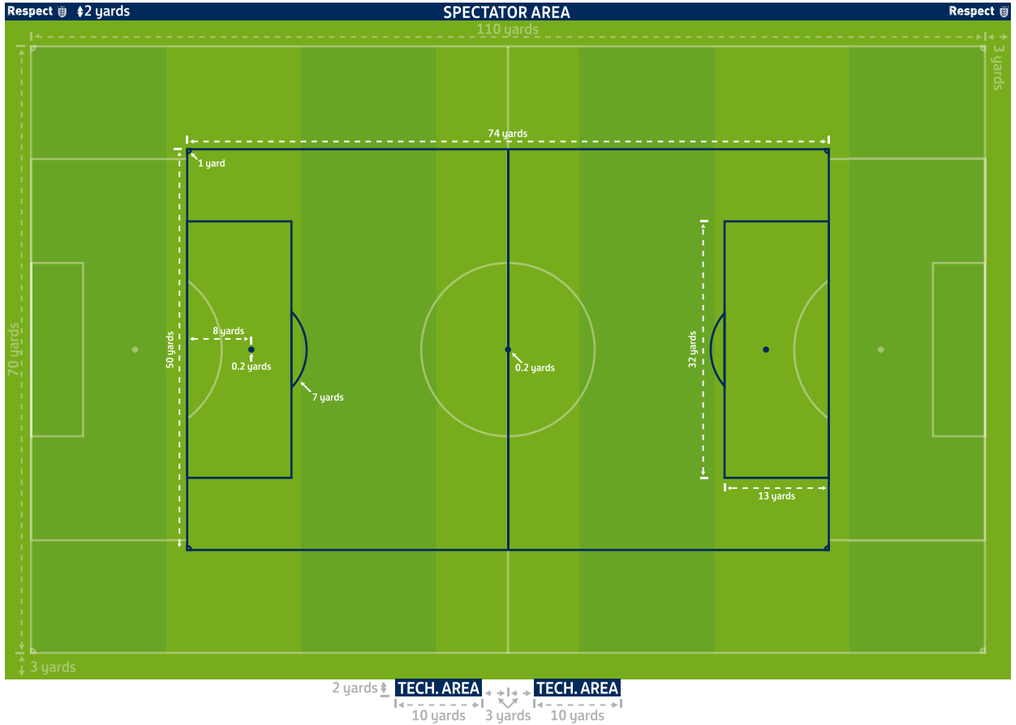
Recommended goalpost size:
8 x 24 feet

* Please note that dugout size varies depending on the level of the league the club plays in. Details of the size of dugouts is detailed in The FA National Ground Grading Document A-G

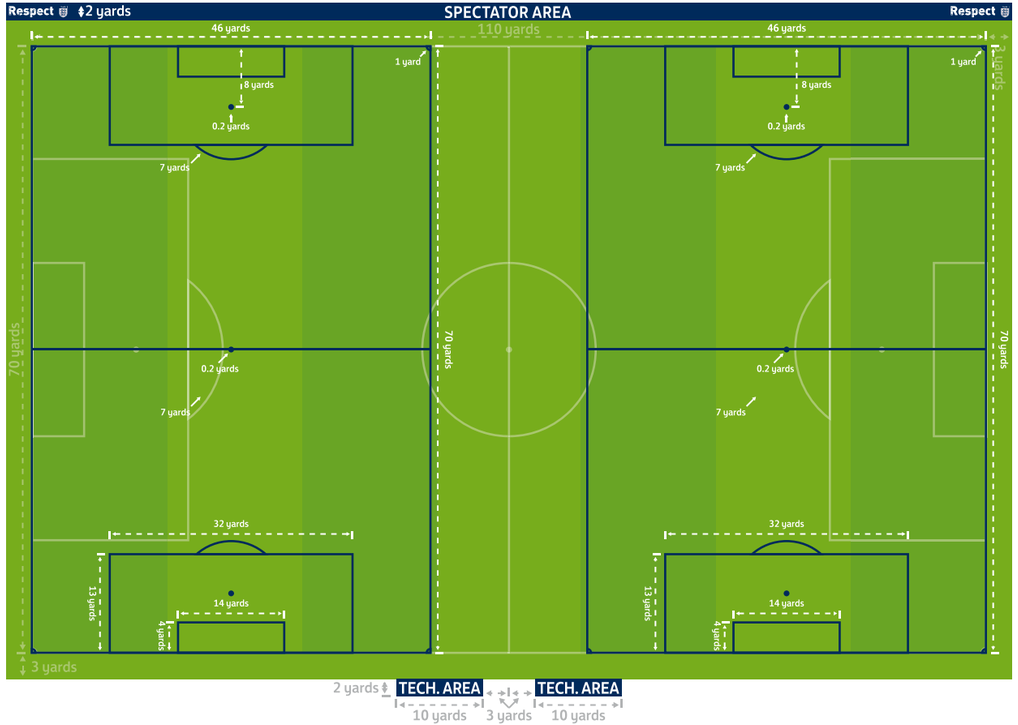
Marking 9 v 9 on a Full Size Pitch
Option 1

Where there is limited space, there is the ability to mark out 9v9 pitches across a full size pitch lengthways.

Recommended pitch size:
74 x 50 yards
(on 110 x 70 yards)



Where pitches are cross marked the lines should be clearly distinguishable. The FA recommends using blue for the 9v9 pitch



Where pitches are cross marked the lines should be clearly distinguishable. The FA recommends using blue for the 9v9 pitch

Marking 9 v 9 on a Full Size Pitch
Option 2

Where there is limited space, there is the ability to mark out 9v9 pitches across a full size pitch

Recommended pitch size:
70 x 46 yards
(on 110 x 70 yards)

Whilst not the preferred choice, if there is more space available it is recommended to increase the length of the pitch to save on wear and tear around the goal mouths

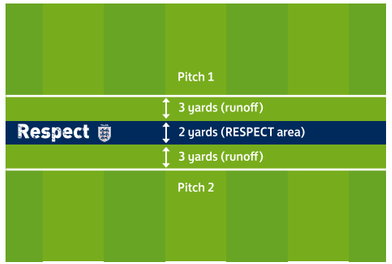
Appendix 2: Layouts for Multi-pitch Sites

Many pitches operate alongside each other. It is important that there is a minimum of six yards of clearance (three yards run-off from each pitch) between the two pitches to avoid player injuries. If a RESPECT spectator area is added, then this two-yard area is in addition to this six yards.

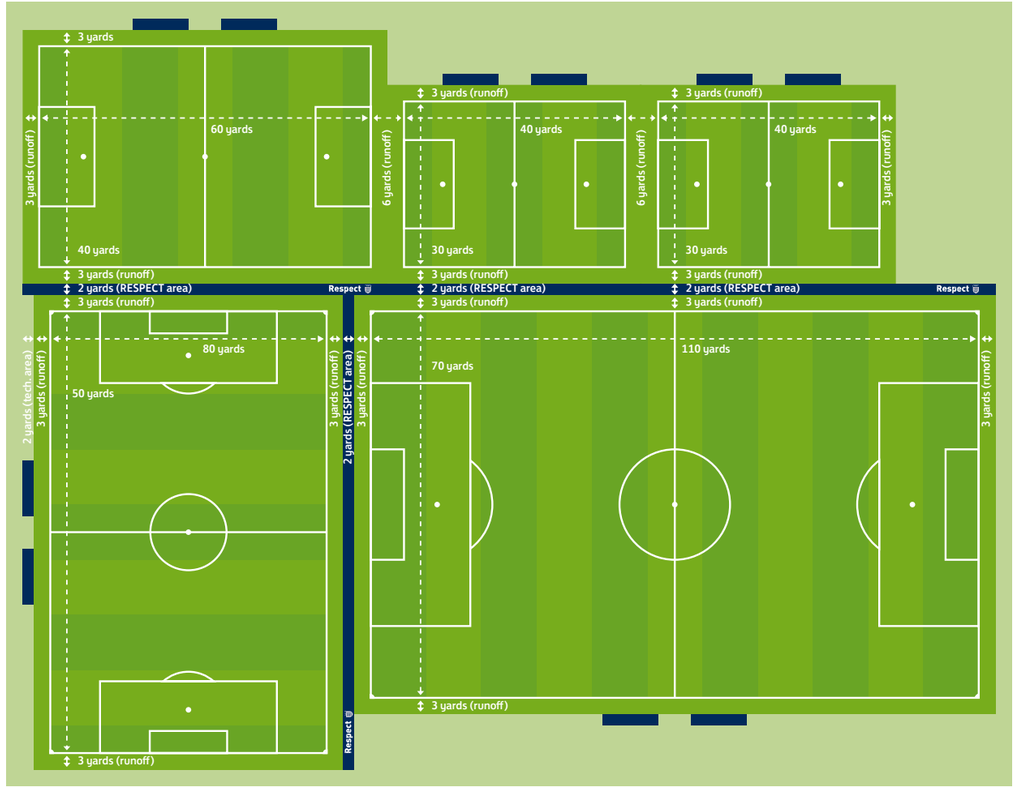
It is good practice, where it allows, to group spectator areas together to minimise damage to the pitch area and reduce maintenance costs. It is advisable to increase the depth of the spectator areas so that spectators can access neighbouring pitches via this walkway route.

If the pitches are marked out in the same place year on year, consideration should be given to some type of ground re-inforcement so that wear of this area in the winter months can be managed. This area, if wide enough, could also be used as an access road for grounds maintenance equipment which is required to maintain the pitches.

Spectator areas and walkways (minimum)



Spectator areas and walkways (preferred)



Example Layout for Multi-pitch Sites

Includes:
Full size (110 x 70);

9v9 (U11/U12, 80x50);

Mini Soccer U9/U10 (60x40);

2 x Mini Soccer U7/U8 (40x30)

Appendix 3: Further Advice and Information

For further information or guidance regarding any of the issues covered in this document, please contact you local FA Regional Facilities & Investment Manager (details overleaf).

Alternatively, visit **TheFA.com**, or email FacilitiesInfo@The FA.com.

More information about pitches and goalposts suitable for youth football is also contained in The FA specific age group documents and guidance 'Their Game' and can be found online at **TheFA.com/my-football/player/youth-football/youth-development-review**.

Notes

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