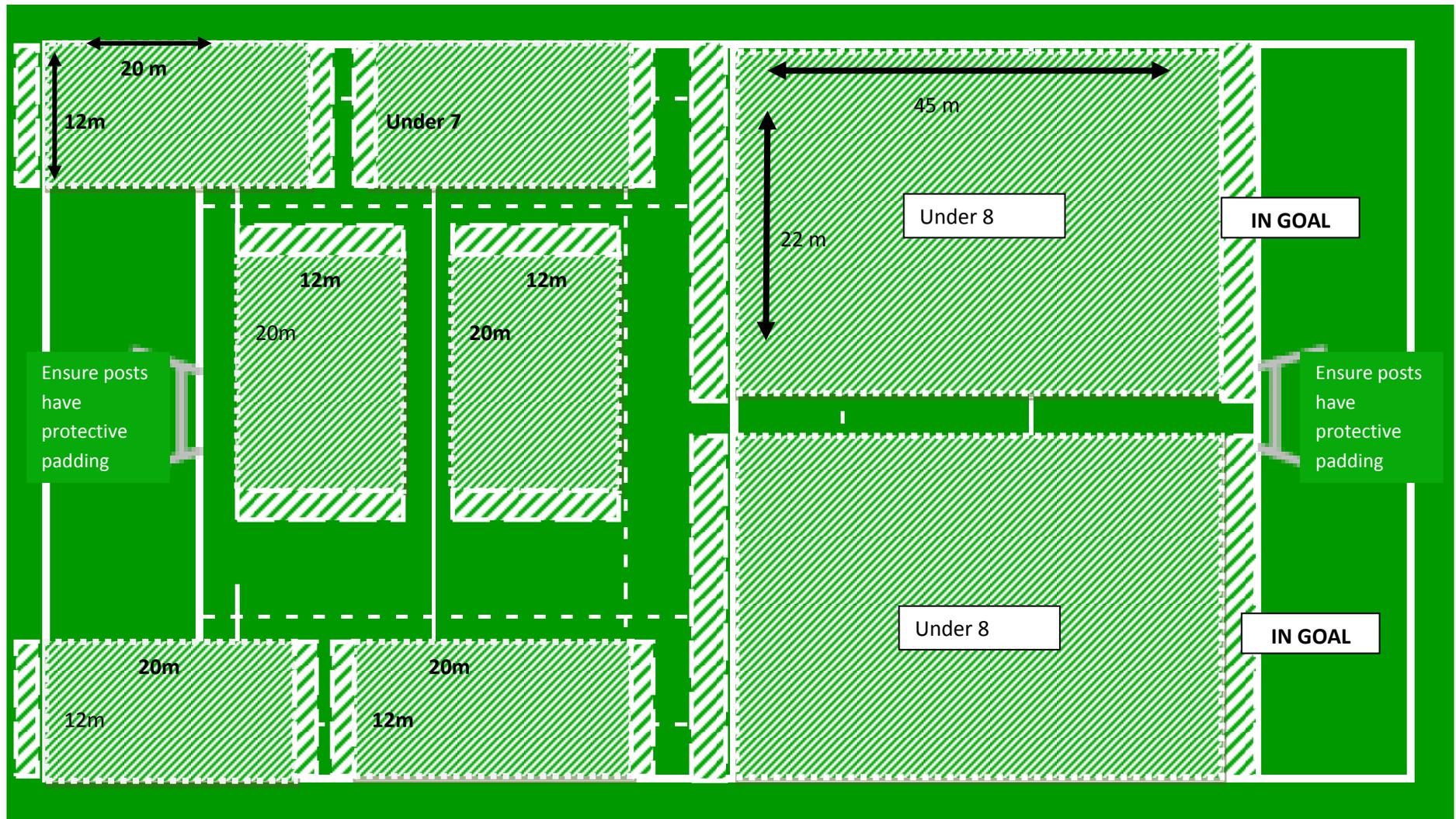
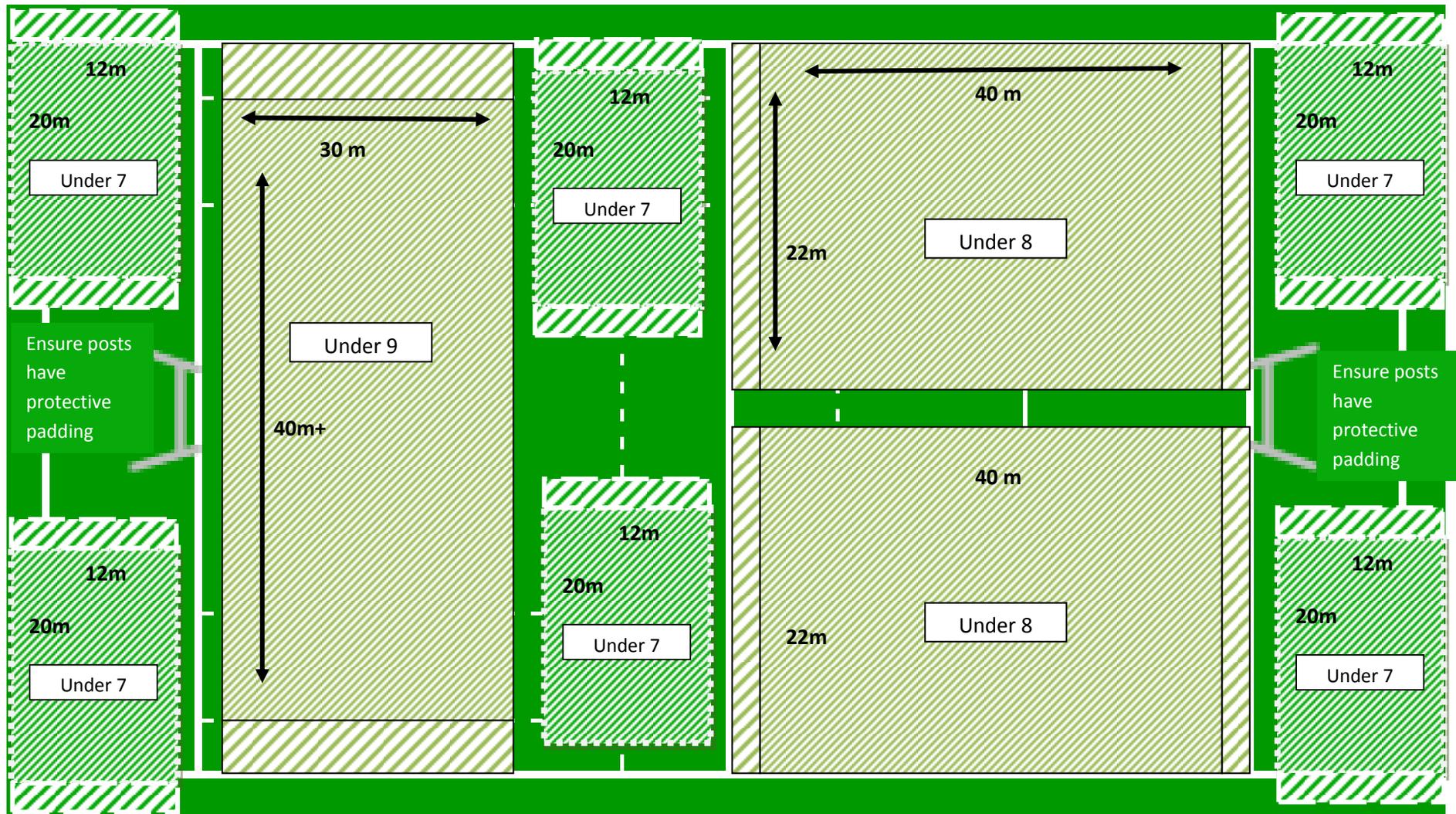


# New Rules of Play - Pitch & Game Guidance



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Guidance:

## Context:

U7 & U8 when asked at a festival what they enjoyed most about the day (in rank order):

1. The post-match hot dog
2. Scoring tries
3. Getting a medal (all players received a medal)
4. Running with the ball
5. Tagging

The response from U9s (rank order)

1. Scoring tries
2. Tackling
3. The post-match hot dog
4. Getting a medal (all players received a medal)
5. Running with the ball

- The above diagrams provide **possibilities and suggestions** for pitch lay out. It is understood that many clubs will have their own preferred format.
- As with the current regulations the suggested pitch sizes are **maximum sizes**, and the lay-out above reflects this flexibility
- At Under 7 and 8 because coaches are no longer permitted on the field of play (other than the Game Coach), this provides scope for those coaches to manage (referee) other games on other pitches
- The Game Coach (referee) should endeavour to encourage both teams.
  - If possible try and get to know the names of children on both teams (parents & children really like this, especially at U7)
  - Try and avoid blowing the whistle unless absolutely necessary. Use voice to encourage and prevent infringement
  - Be empathetic – these are children.
  - At Under 7 provide players with chances, especially early in the season (e.g. if they run out of play encourage them to come back in and carry on, or pass, if they drop the ball over the line, tell them that next time they need to place the ball, but award the try). A game, for a 6 or 7 year old can be a daunting, exciting, brand new experience – **you can help to make it a positive one**
- To encourage participation when running festivals, and if an entrance fee is charged, clubs should be charged per age group **NOT PER TEAM**

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- For player & spectator safety and enjoyment we recommend that all spectators are positioned off the playing area at least 3 meters from the touchline. Where this is not possible, due to the lay-out of the pitches it is recommended that spectators are positioned 3 metres behind the dead-ball line
- The duration of matches remain the same as in previous seasons:
- A match is made up of two halves, with half-time lasting not less than 2 minutes.

Matches are limited to the following durations:

- Under 7 and Under 8:
  - Fixture (2 Clubs are present): 10 minutes each way, 1 game = 20 minutes
  - Fixture (3 are present): 7 minutes each way, 2 games = 28 minutes
  - Festival: 5 minutes each way, maximum of 5 games = 50 minutes (total playing time per team)
- (b) Under 9 and Under 10:
  - Fixture (2 Clubs or Schools are present): 15 minutes each way, 1 game = 30 minutes
  - Fixture (3 Clubs or Schools are present): 10 minutes each way, 2 games = 40 minutes
  - Festival: 6 minutes each way, maximum of 5 games = 60 minutes (total playing time)

Fixtures, coaching and training sessions (including time devoted to match play) must last no longer than the following:

- (a) Under 7 and Under 8: 60 minutes;
- (b) Under 9 : 90 minutes

### Festival /Club Fixture Guidelines

#### Under 7

Clubs/CBs organising festivals may sometimes charge for team entries. At Under 7 it is recommended – to increase and encourage participation – that a club may enter as many teams as possible, but there should only be **one entry fee per club** regardless of number of teams. .

As the number of players in each team numbers four, there is potential for each “club” fixture to take a festival approach. The aim of the pilot and of 4-a-side is to encourage greater handling, support, evasion and tagging skills and to maximise involvement.

Clubs should be encouraged to involve all available players by increasing the number of pitches (outlined above) and teams involved. For example a club with 20 players could bring 4 or 5 teams. At Under 7 it makes little difference if teams from the same club play each other.

The game coach (referee) should also be a coach **for both sides** and negate the necessity to have a coach from either team on the pitch. Children should be encouraged to explore and discover for themselves with a little guidance from the game coach. Often other adults on the pitch (although well meaning), and advice from the touchline, can be a distraction and prevent children from making their own decisions – an

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important part of their learning and development. In line with this **all feedback** and comment should be positive and constructive.

As the game coach is also acting as a coach it is not entirely necessary to have a coach from each club in attendance for each game. Parents can be utilised to report back on the team and individual performance where necessary. By rotating pitches/matches it may be possible for each coach to see all the players from their club.

### **Under 8, 9 and 10**

Where clubs have 12+ players (U8) or 14+ players (U9), 16+ (U10) it is possible to play two plus fixtures, or if one club has two teams and another club has one, a three club format could be used. It is important, however, that each player is provided with the opportunity to develop and 'A' and 'B' teams should be discouraged. **The building of confidence and self-esteem in children is of paramount importance and "categorizing" children at such a young age is not conducive to achieving that objective.**