



BETWEEN THE STICKS

OFFICIAL RULES

HANDBOOK

Built to put goalkeepers first

1v1 • Fast • Fair • Competitive

www.betweenthesticks.co.uk

Welcome to Between the Sticks

Between the Sticks is a goalkeeper-first competition designed to give young keepers the spotlight they deserve.

League Information and Rules

1. The Pitch

The pitch is 24 yards in length and is divided into three zones. Each end of the pitch contains a 10-yard playing zone, with a 4-yard Dead Zone positioned in the centre. No goalkeeper may enter the Dead Zone at any time. If the ball stops in the Dead Zone, the round ends immediately.



2. Starting a Round

Each round begins with one goalkeeper designated as the KIP. The KIP starts the round with the ball and takes the opening shot.

The opening shot may be taken as a volley, half-volley or from the floor. Once the opening shot is taken, the ball is live and the round becomes open play.

3. KIP – Keeper In Possession

KIP stands for Keeper In Possession. The KIP is the goalkeeper who starts the round with the ball and is identified by the green flag. The KIP takes the opening shot of the round.

KIP only determines who starts a round. Once the opening shot has been taken, the game moves into open play.

KIP only changes at the end of a round, as outlined later in these rules.

4. Open Play

After the opening shot, both goalkeepers are active. The ball remains live and rallies may include multiple shots, saves and rebounds. Play continues freely until a round-ending event occurs.

5. When the Ball Goes Out of Play

A round does not end when the ball goes out of play. Instead, play restarts immediately depending on how the ball went out.

If a shot is saved or tipped out of play by the defending goalkeeper, the goalkeeper who took the shot restarts play. If a shot goes wide without any save or touch, the other goalkeeper restarts play.

6. Rebounds

If a shot is saved and the ball stays in play, possession belongs to the goalkeeper whose 10-yard zone the ball finishes in. That goalkeeper may continue play immediately and take the next shot.

7. Goals

A goal ends the round. After a goal is scored, the goalkeeper who conceded becomes the KIP for the next round and starts with the ball. If the conceding goalkeeper was already the KIP, they remain the KIP.

8. Clean Catches

A clean catch ends the round and awards one point to the goalkeeper who made the catch. After a clean catch, the KIP switches and the other goalkeeper starts the next round with the ball.

9. Dead Zone

No goalkeeper may enter the Dead Zone. If the ball stops in the Dead Zone at any point, the round ends. When a round ends due to the Dead Zone, the KIP switches and the other goalkeeper starts the next round.

10. When KIP Changes

KIP only changes at the end of a round. A goal results in the conceding goalkeeper becoming the KIP. A clean catch results in the KIP switching. A Dead Zone ending also results in the KIP switching.

KIP does not change during open play, rebounds or restarts.

11. Match Duration

Matches are time-based. Match duration may vary depending on age group and league size and will be confirmed before the season begins or on the day of competition. This allows sessions to remain fair, well-paced and appropriate for all age groups.

12. The Game in a Nutshell

One goalkeeper starts each round as the KIP. The opening shot starts open play. Rallies continue freely with possession changing naturally during play. Only goals, clean catches or the ball stopping in the Dead Zone end a round. Who starts the next round is decided solely by how the previous round ended.

13. Scoring

Each goal scored is worth one point. A clean catch is also worth one point.

Scores are recorded on official score cards during matches and will be added to the league website at the end of each match.

14. Time and Match Flow

Matches are time-based. Match duration may vary depending on age group and league size and will be confirmed before the season begins.

Plenty of balls are positioned pitch-side to ensure play restarts quickly and continuously. The aim is to maximise shots, saves and rallies, keeping stoppages to a minimum and the game flowing at all times.

The focus is on high action and constant involvement.

15. Safety and Welfare

Player safety is a priority at all times. Shin pads are recommended for all participants and goalkeeper gloves are required.

Dangerous challenges or reckless play are not permitted. All players must stop immediately if instructed to do so by staff or officials.

Player welfare will always take priority over competition or results.

16. Parents and Spectators

Parents and spectators play an important role in supporting the league environment. All spectators are encouraged to support positively, respect officials and allow players to compete independently.

Between the Sticks is a learning and development environment and positive behaviour from the sidelines helps create the best experience for all participants.

17. Conduct and Fair Play

Between the Sticks promotes respect, sportsmanship and fair competition.

Players are expected to respect their opponents, respect officials, accept decisions and compete fairly at all times.

Poor behaviour may result in warnings, removal from a match or removal from the league.

18. Officials and Decisions

Match officials are responsible for the smooth running of games. The referee's decision is final and no appeals may be made during play.

Clarifications may be given between rounds if required. Officials are responsible for managing time, overseeing play and ensuring fair enforcement of the rules throughout each match.



Between the Sticks exists to: Build confident
goalkeepers, Reward bravery and skill and
Celebrate the position

Compete hard.
Respect the game.
Own the goal.

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