



Grassroots Standards Retreat Line – One-Pager

Who This Is For: Coaches, Club Technical Staff, Districts, Match Officials & Parents

Why It Matters: The retreat line supports player development by creating space and time for young players to build play from the back. It encourages composure, decision-making, and technical skill under low pressure.

Purpose: To explain the retreat line rule, when and how it is used, and why it is important for development.

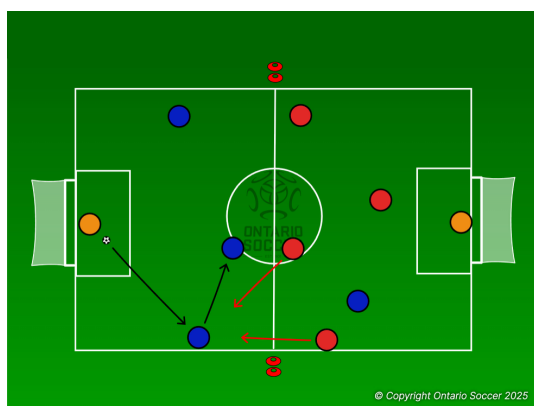
Key Standards:

- The retreat line is used in U9–U12 matches on goal kicks and goalkeeper possession:

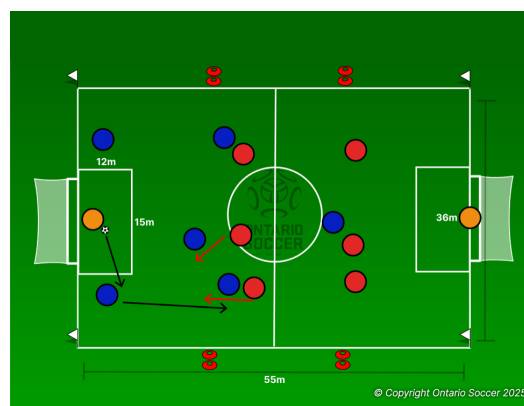
Active Start	Fundamentals		Learn to Train	
U4	U6-U7	U8-U9	U10-U11	U12-U13
Not Applicable	Halfway Line		One-Third	Not Applicable

- Opponents must retreat behind the designated line until the ball is in play.
- The ball is in play once it leaves the retreat line area or is touched by a teammate, whichever happens first.

Halfway Retreat Line



One-Third Retreat Line



Implementation Tips:

- Use cones or field markings to indicate the retreat line.
- Educate players and parents on the purpose of the rule.
- Ensure referees enforce the rule consistently and clearly.
- Use the retreat line as a teaching moment to build confidence in possession.



Using the Retreat Line as a Teaching Moment

1. Building from the Back

- **What to teach:** Encourage defenders and goalkeepers to stay calm and make smart decisions under low pressure.
- **How:** Use the retreat line to create a safe zone where players can receive the ball, look up, and choose a pass rather than clearing it instinctively.

2. Decision-Making Under Pressure

- **What to teach:** Help players recognize when to pass short, dribble, or switch play.
- **How:** Once the ball is in play and opponents can press, players must quickly assess their options—this mimics real-game pressure in a controlled way.

3. Positional Awareness

- **What to teach:** Teach spacing, angles of support, and movement off the ball.
- **How:** Use the retreat line to show players where to position themselves to support the ball carrier and maintain team shape.

4. Confidence and Composure

- **What to teach:** Help young players feel confident receiving the ball near their own goal.
- **How:** Reinforce that mistakes are part of learning and that the retreat line gives them time to try new things without immediate pressure.

5. Goalkeeper Involvement

- **What to teach:** Encourage goalkeepers to be part of the play, not just shot-stoppers.
- **How:** Use the retreat line to give goalkeepers time to distribute the ball thoughtfully and communicate with teammates.

