



The Football Association Futsal Factsheet



Helvecia FC,
the winners of
The FA Futsal Cup



What is Futsal and how does it differ from our domestic versions of Small Sided Football?

Futsal is the format of Small Sided Football that is recognised and supported by FIFA and UEFA with World and European Championships for club and National Teams.

Futsal began in the South American countries of Uruguay and Brazil. In Brazil, the large crowded cities and a shortage of playing pitches forced a football mad populace to play small sided football. A version began to develop on the streets of Sao Paulo, leading to the publishing of the first rules of the game in 1936 from the country that would soon become the masters of the game.

Skills and techniques honed in Futsal soon began to become apparent in the performance of Brazil's National Team - Pele, Rivelino, and Zico all played the game at some time in their development.

Futsal was the name chosen by FIFA, the World governing body of Football for the only version of 5-aside football

that it supports. The name simply combines the Spanish words for 'Hall' - Sala and 'Football' - Futbol into Futsal. It is a five a side game, normally played on a flat indoor pitch with hockey sized goals and a size 4 ball with a reduced bounce. It is played to touchlines and all players are free to enter the penalty area and play the ball over head height. As a small sided game players are constantly placed in situations where they must receive or play whilst under pressure or in confined spaces. As a game it places considerable demand on technique, movement, tactical awareness and fitness.

The differences to our traditional versions of Small Sided Football are the absence of rebound boards and some slight amendments in the laws that favour skilful, creative play above the physical contact that tends to be a feature of English five a side.

FIFA in formulating the laws have also incorporated exciting elements from other indoor sports. Thus an accumulated foul count is in place with each and every team foul after the fifth in any one half resulting in an unopposed ten metre penalty. This really conditions the defensive tactics of teams and rewards attacking play. Teams can also use

a bench of up to seven revolving substitutes which means that the tempo of games remains high throughout. Games are played in two twenty minute halves but as the countdown clock is stopped every time the ball is out of play an average game can at International Level last 80 to 90 minutes.

The main differences between 11 a side Football and Futsal are summarised below.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?	
FUTSAL	TRADITIONAL ENGLISH FIVE A SIDE FOOTBALL
Five players on court – rolling substitutions	Five players on court – limited substitutions
Played to lines. Ball is returned to play with a 'Kick In'	No By or End lines – use of rebound boards. Ball constantly in play
Use of wider and longer pitch	
All players allowed to enter penalty areas	Only Goalkeepers permitted to enter penalty areas
No height restriction on ball	Use of restrictions on height of ball
Use of Square Goals (3m x 2m) Use of Futsal ball (size 4, 30% reduced bounce)	Use of rectangular goals Use of Football – size 5 for adults
5 Foul Limit - No wall for Direct Free Kick from 10 metres after 5th Foul	Unlimited Fouls

Why have FIFA and UEFA Shown an interest in this game?

The interest of the Football Governing Bodies has emerged for the three main reasons;

1. The popularity of the game – from its origins in South America the game is now played throughout the world. The growth of Futsal is illustrated by the growing numbers of entries for the FIFA Futsal Cup. A total of 46 countries entered for Spain 1996 but this figure increased to 70 for Guatemala 2000, 86 for Chinese Taipei 2004 and 96 for Brazil 2008.

2. Commercial rationale – FIFA wishes to develop an exciting and lucrative version of indoor football that has appeal for spectators and is attractive to sponsors and broadcasters.

3. Technical Development – Futsal can make a contribution to the technical development of football players – Luiz Scholari has commented 'Futsal is a good starting point for a footballer, we need to take advantage of what Futsal has to offer – namely the lightning speed with which it is played'.

Why is the FA Interested in Futsal?

11 a side football will always be the overwhelming concern of the FA but the FA is also aware that football participation is changing. Recent years have seen a significant growth in the numbers of people playing Small Sided football. The popularity of Small Sided Football is a reaction to changing work/leisure patterns and a move towards 'Pay and Play' football. It is here to stay!

The FA views Futsal as a high quality format of a small sided game.

- Many Countries that we admire for the technical skills of their players use Futsal as an aspect of youth development. Ball retention, quick and skilful play, tactical awareness - all are promoted in Futsal.
- **Fairplay** - The Laws of the game and an accumulated fouls rule discourages teams from being overly physical or disputing the decisions of the two referees.
- **Exit routes** - Futsal can offer some very exciting opportunities to its participants that are not available in traditional five a side. There is now a FA Futsal Cup, FA Regional Leagues, UEFA Futsal Cup and International representation in European and World Competitions available to talented teams and players.





What demands does it place on Coaches?

Futsal is a very tactical game and at its highest level is compared to Basketball in that teams once in possession can perform choreographed movements in order to create scoring opportunities. Having only four outfield players means that there is little room for personal errors and each individual must maintain their tactical awareness in order for the team to be successful.

Unlike 11 a side football the Coach has far greater opportunity to directly influence play on the pitch in that substitutions are unlimited and can be repeated. A coach also has the ability to call a one minute time out in each half. Futsal coaches seldom sit down in the course of a game!

The natural assumption of many English Coaches coming to Futsal is that it is similar to traditional five-a-side football and as such may offer few benefits other than fun and fitness. However the popularity of the game throughout the rest of the world is for a good reason and there are many elements of it that are transferable to 11 a side football. For instance the ingenuity, interplay and rotation of positions required to open up a close marking defence in Futsal could enhance creative play in Football.



What are the Tactics of Futsal?

Futsal is still a young game compared to its eleven-a-side parent; the tactics are evolving all the time.

Speed

Speed is a theme in futsal, as with such a small pitch, no one has long to dwell on the ball. Equally players have to move fast if they are to find space to receive passes, not least as the ball tends to stay on the ground. Futsal is widely played in Brazil by children before they concentrate on football, and the likes of Ronaldinho and Deco attribute much of their world-class technique to their grounding in the small-sided game. "I play futsal and it has helped a lot," Deco has commented. "I played from the age of nine until I was 16 when I had to stop to go on with my football career. It improves my speed and dribbling skills."

Fast moves

Goals generally come from swift moves, often involving lightning exchanges of passes, as the goal is small and a defence given time to regroup at the top level will usually be able to keep opponents at bay. The majority of goals at the very highest level are scored inside the area. Fouls can also be costly because of the danger of giving away a free-kick without the protection of a wall for offending more than five times in a half.

Tactics

Coaches are able to make as many substitutions as they like, with higher-

tempo teams, like Russian sides, tending to swap players more, even all four outfielders at once. Teams may utilise a single tactical system, be it a pressing game or a more defensive counterattacking strategy, but the astute use of player rotation can allow a coach several formations depending on the match. There is also the traditional ending to a tight game when a coach whose team is losing narrowly can take off his goalkeeper and use a fifth outfield player.

Formations

Formations are more fluid than in football, especially with the success in recent years of the '4-0' system which has grown in popularity due to its use by the exceptional Spanish national side. Also widely used is the 3-1, which relies on a 'pivot' forward to hold the ball after being cleared by the defence, 2-2 - where the players stay close together at all times - or the winger-utilising 1-2-1. It is a boon for teams to be able to switch to several different formations in varying match situations.

Defending

Over the last few years a zonal marking system has been superseded by man-to-man tactics, which was applauded by FIFA's technical experts in 2004 as a more dynamic ploy. As in most sports, though, the most important factor is the individual technique and ability of players, hence the popularity of Brazilians in the European leagues.



How is the FA supporting the development of the game in England?

Over the last five years the FA has promoted Futsal in England and has introduced the following:

- The FA Futsal Leagues comprise of three regional men's competitions that provide six teams for the end of season play-offs to determine the national champions. The 2008 winners were Helvecia who will also represent England in the 2009 UEFA Futsal Cup club competition.
- The FA Futsal Cup for men and women begins with local leagues and progresses through regional qualifiers to the three day Finals at the EIS in Sheffield in July.
- An England senior men's futsal team has contested qualification matches for the FIFA Futsal World Cup and UEFA European Championships. The team draws its players predominately from senior Futsal Clubs and semi professional 11 a side football. The squad get together on a regular basis and each year open trials are held to recruit new talented players.
- A School-Club Links programme has introduced Futsal to Schools and School Sports Partnerships.
- The FA Youth Futsal Festival takes place in Sheffield in June.
- The introduction of a British Universities Futsal Championships with a representative team to taking part in the FISU World Futsal Championships.
- A two level coaching award and a referee's course
- An English referee has been promoted to the FIFA futsal panel.
- Recognition of the technical merits to be gained by playing Futsal and other formats of small sided games in the FA's new development and coaching strategies.
- English national teams for the deaf, blind and partially-sighted also play Futsal or a near variation of the sport and are highly ranked in the world.

The FA Four Nations
Football Tournament
December 2008



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Coaching qualifications

The FA introduced in May 2006 the 'FA Introduction to Futsal' Course. This is a seven hour programme designed to provide a starter for coaches. The Course is available to candidates that hold one of the FA's current coaching qualifications. The Level Two Course will be available from Easter 2009.

Futsal in Education

Futsal is now available as an option of the FA's and CFA's Education programmes. Free equipment and training is available to School Sports Partnerships interested in developing the game. Applicants should contact their County FA.

What are the laws of the game?

The official laws of Futsal –are available to download from the FIFA website as a standalone publication - www.fifa.com

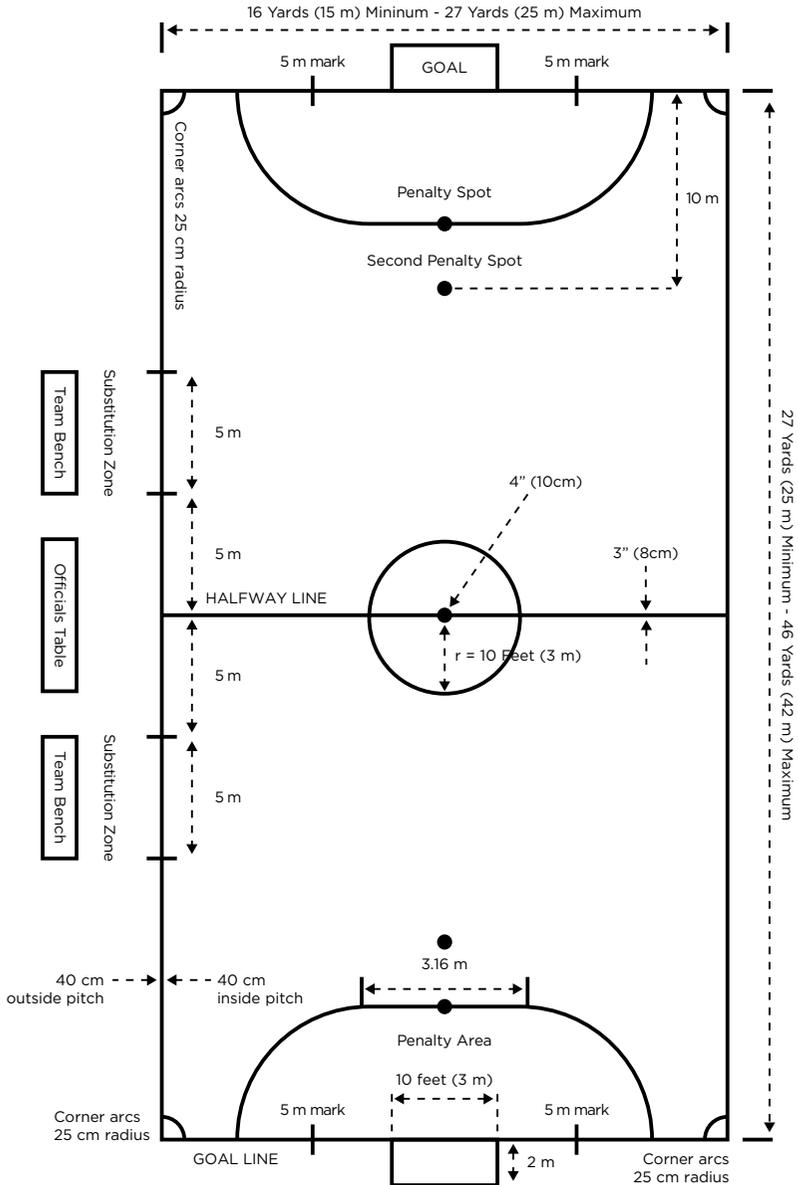
As an initial introduction to these laws, the basic principals of the game that make it different from any other versions of 5-a-side are highlighted below:

- The pitch – Futsal is played on a marked pitch and the ball can go out of play (see illustration for dimensions and layout of pitch).
- The ball - Is a fundamental factor in making the game and is by virtue of the laws of the game required to be a smaller, heavier, 'low bounce' version of 11 a-side ball.
- Head height – There are no restrictions (apart from the ceiling of the sports hall!) as to how high the ball can be kicked in Futsal.
- Rotating substitutions – Up to 12 players can be used in one match and there is no limit on how long a player must stay on or off the pitch. Players must enter and leave the field of play via the 'substitution zone' that is marked on the pitch in front of the team's benches.
- Kick-ins – In order to restart the game after a ball has gone out of play the ball is kicked back into play from the touchline and from corners. The ball must be placed stationary on the touchline and the feet of the player taking the kick-in must not cross the line.
- The 4 second rule – For kick-ins, free kicks, goal clearances and corner kicks the player in possession of the ball has 4 seconds to restart play which the referee will count with their fingers in the air. If play isn't restarted within four seconds an indirect free kick will be awarded to the opposing team. The goalkeeper is not allowed to control the ball for more than 4 seconds in his own half.
- The 5m rule – Players are required to keep 5m from the player in possession of the ball on free kicks, corners, goal clearances, kick-ins and penalties.
- Goalkeepers – Goalkeepers are allowed to come out of and players are allowed to go into the penalty area. A goal clearance must be thrown out and the goalkeeper cannot touch the ball again until it has crossed into the opponents half or a member of the opposition has touched the ball.
- Accumulated fouls – Each team will be allowed to give away 5 direct free kicks in each half, then on the sixth foul a direct kick is awarded to the opposing team and the defending team is not allowed to position any

players (other than the goal keeper) between the ball and the goal. The kick may be taken from the 10m mark or, if the foul was committed closer to the goal than the 10m mark, then the kick may be taken from the position where the foul took place.

- Real time - A Futsal match consists of two twenty minute halves that are played real-time which means the clock stops whenever the ball goes out of play.
- Time outs - Each team is allowed a time out in each half lasting 60 seconds.
- Sliding Tackles - Sliding tackles are not allowed in Futsal but players ARE allowed to slide on the pitch, for example to stop the ball from going out of play. For a player sliding to be considered an offence, the tackler's opponent must have possession of the ball. Referees will not give a foul for a slide if the opponent does not have possession of the ball.
- Red Cards - If a player is sent off then the team to which the player belongs must remain with 4 players until either two minutes have passed, or the opposition have scored a goal.
- In an International Futsal match there are three referees and one timekeeper.

What are the dimensions and markings of a Futsal Pitch?



If official dimensions are required. You are advised to use metric measurements.

How can I start playing Futsal?

Since the sport is only just beginning to develop in England, initially it may be difficult to find the facilities already established that will allow you to play Futsal - but don't be put off!

Any reasonable sized school or sports hall can accommodate Futsal and the floor markings can be laid down with tape - even if it is only temporary at first. Futsal Goals resemble Handball or Hockey Goals so try to use these if you can't access the real thing. Alternatively Goals used for Mini Soccer would also be fine to start off with.

Can I play on Any Surface?

At an International level Futsal must be played on either a wooden floor or a suitable synthetic floor that is smooth and flat. At any other level Futsal can be played - Indoor or out - on a variety of firm surfaces. Futsal can also be played on Artificial Grass. Although the surface slightly slows up the pace of the game it is fine to introduce the game on.

Do I need to use a special type of ball?

Yes, Futsal balls are smaller than eleven aside balls and are made with a reduced bounce.

Are three referees and a timekeeper really necessary?

Only at an international level - though it may be difficult for one person to referee on their own.

Where can I get more Information on Futsal?

Useful web sites for leagues and general Futsal information:

www.thefa.com/futsal

www.fifa.com

www.uefa.com

www.futsalplanet.com

www.futsal.org.uk

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