

Developed by the Programs Department
American Youth Soccer Organization
Guidance for Referees and Coaches

Guidance for Referees and Coaches

AMERICAN YOUTH SOCCER ORGANIZATION

12501 South Isis Avenue
Hawthorne, California 90250

TELEPHONE (800) USA-AYSO

FAX (310) 643-5310

EMAIL (Programs Department):

WEBSITE www.soccer.org and www.aysohelp.org



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Guidance for Referees and Coaches

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the family of AYSO volunteers. Your participation is greatly appreciated. The AYSO National Referee and Coach Councils have prepared this manual to assist volunteers with understanding and applying the rules under which we operate. This manual will provide you with a reference source of supporting materials with which you should be familiar and is intended to supplement the instruction provided at our referee and coach education courses.

Rules We Play By

AYSO matches are played in accordance with the current AYSO edition of the FIFA Laws of the Game and the AYSO National Rules and Regulations. The International Football Association Board (IFAB) meets yearly to consider modifications to the Laws, and FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association), the governing body of worldwide soccer, publishes the Laws of the Game including Questions and Answers annually which are binding on confederations and member associations as from 1 July following each Annual General Meeting of the IFAB.

Since 1984 AYSO has been authorized to reprint the Laws. The AYSO edition of the Laws of the Game also includes certain "Rules of Competition," as permitted by the IFAB. Subsequent to the AYSO National Annual General Meeting, the AYSO National Rules and Regulations are published, incorporating any changes approved at the NAGM. It is important that you have the most complete and recent information, and therefore, it is strongly recommended that you obtain current copies of these two booklets each year available from the AYSO Supply Center (888 243 2976) in August.

AYSO/USSF/FIFA Relationship

The United States Soccer Federation (USSF) is recognized by FIFA as the national governing body of soccer in the United States. AYSO is a National Affiliate member of the USSF and a member of the Youth Council of USSF. AYSO is the second largest member of USSF. AYSO referees and coaches are encouraged to use USSF reference material, especially the Guide to Procedures - Referees, Assistant Referees, and Fourth Officials and the Advice to Referees on the Laws of the Game. However, where USSF materials differ from AYSO publications (AYSO National Rules and Regulations, AYSO National Policy Statements, AYSO National Referee and Coach Program materials and this Guidance for Referees and Coaches) the AYSO publications take precedence.

The interpretations, instructions and advice contained in this booklet are intended to answer many of the common questions asked over the years. They are regarded as authoritative and should be quoted as such. This booklet is revised annually to conform to any changes in the documents noted above and to add any new material believed to be useful to AYSO referees and coaches.

Please remember that this publication is intended as a supplement to the AYSO referee and coach training courses and as additional interpretative and instructional advice. The AYSO edition of the Laws of the Game and the referee and coach materials you obtain by attending AYSO training courses contain the complete and in-depth information with which you should become familiar.

SAFE HAVEN PROGRAM

Introduction

There are more than 650,000 children playing AYSO soccer, and each one of those children has the right to a SAFE, FAIR, FUN, POSITIVE environment for experiencing the benefits of youth sport. This manual contains information vital to the volunteers who endeavor to bring this positive life experience to the children in their community.

The Safe Haven Certification Program was developed by AYSO to provide protection for the children and volunteers in AYSO. This program provides both child-specific and discipline-specific certification. This manual is concerned primarily with child-specific certification. The discipline-specific training (coach, referee and program administration) is offered separately. Contact your local regional commissioner for more information about additional training courses.

Welcome to the AYSO family.

AYSO Philosophies

AYSO is proud of our five core philosophies.

EVERYONE PLAYS

Our program's goal is for kids to play soccer, so we mandate that every player on every team must play at least half of every game.

BALANCED TEAMS

Each year we form new teams as evenly balanced as possible because it is fair and more fun when teams of equal ability play.

OPEN REGISTRATION

Our program is open to all children between 4 and 19 years of age who want to register and play soccer. Interest and enthusiasm are the only criteria for playing.

POSITIVE COACHING

Kids win when they are built up, not when they are torn down! We train and encourage our coaches to make the extra effort to understand and offer positive help to our players rather than negative criticism.

GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP

We strive to create a positive environment based on mutual respect rather than a win-at-all-costs attitude, and our program is designed to instill good sportsmanship in every facet of AYSO.

Volunteer Protection and Legal Responsibilities

AYSO requires all its volunteers to complete, sign and submit a Volunteer Application form each year and to act within their job descriptions and the scope of AYSO Policies, Procedures and Guidelines.

For the benefit of our children and volunteers, AYSO further requires that all coaches and referees and certain other volunteers

- Complete Safe Haven certification;
- Be properly trained in their jobs; and
- Be authorized to do their job (by region, area or other AYSO authority).

Most states have Good Samaritan statutes that provide protection from civil liability to any person who in good faith offers aid and assistance consistent with their training.

The Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 was passed by Congress to promote volunteerism. This law grants immunity from certain types of prosecution for volunteers who meet its requirements.

Use of Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs

LEGAL ISSUES

It is illegal for minors to possess, control or use alcohol or tobacco products or illegal prescription-only drugs without authority and subjects the minor to prosecution in juvenile court.

An adult who knowingly provides such substances to a minor is subject to criminal prosecution in any state in which such act is committed. Such prosecution can lead to mandatory fines and potential jail sentences of up to one year in most cases.

- The Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 does not protect any volunteer who commits a criminal offense involving alcohol, tobacco products and illegal or prescription-only drugs with minors.
- AYSO National Rule and Regulation I. E. 8., relating to the duties and responsibilities of coaches and officials, provides as follows:

It shall be the duty of each coach and official to: Present a healthy, athletic environment for players by neither consuming alcoholic beverages nor using tobacco products during practices or games or in the immediate vicinity of the soccer fields.

- It is unlawful for a person under 21 years of age to possess or use alcohol.
- In most states it is unlawful for a person under 18 years of age to remain within a drinking establishment that does not serve meals, even if in the company of an adult 21 years of age or older.
- In most states it is unlawful for a person under the age of 18 to possess or use a tobacco product.
- AYSO National Policy Statement 5.4 provides that every AYSO official must avoid improper acts and the violation of any governmental laws or regulations in the performance of the volunteer AYSO duties.
- Mere possession of an illegal drug or prescription-only drug without a prescription would violate criminal laws and the AYSO policy statement.

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AYSO Volunteers as Role Models

Unfortunately, alcohol, tobacco and illegal drugs seem easily obtainable by almost any child who wishes to possess them. The messages we send by our behavior to the impressionable young players is important. We are role models, albeit willing or unwilling ones, and we must do our best to set good examples.

Coaches who observe one of their players taking a pill without prior information from the parents may wish to inquire of the child and then get back to the parents to verify the information. Caution should be exercised when a player has legitimate possession of a prescription-only drug to ensure he or she does not share the medicine with another child. Prescription medicines are controlled so as to avoid their use by those persons who may suffer a dangerous reaction to the drug or an overdose of such drug.

If you take a prescription drug, you may wish to share that information with players so that they will recognize the danger signs if you suffer a medical problem at a practice or game. For example, if you carry nitro pills for heart irregularities, you might consider telling the players about the purpose of such medication as a precautionary measure to be taken if you suffer from chest pains. Advising players of your condition and where the nitro pills can be found might save your life. Sharing such information about yourself might also help a player taking a prescription drug for asthma or other chronic condition to be comfortable about sharing similar information with you.

Definitions of Training, Certification and Continuing Education

TRAINING-the education a volunteer receives to do a specific job or task.

- Training is Job Specific.

CERTIFICATION-the confirmation and recognition of three key competencies in a volunteer are as follows:

- In the job trained for;
 - In child and volunteer protection issues; and
 - In the policies, procedures and guidelines of AYSO.
- Certification is Safe Haven Specific.

CONTINUING EDUCATION-the education a volunteer receives on an annual basis to keep him or her abreast of changes in training or certification standards.

- Continuing Education is Standard Specific.

Supervision Policy

The recommended supervision ratio is 1:8 or fewer.

- One adult for every eight or fewer children and at least two adults (one of whom should be of the same gender as the group) present at all times.
- For the protection of both the children and the volunteer, no volunteer should permit himself or herself to be alone with any child or group of children (except his or her own) during AYSO-sponsored activities.
- Insure players are appropriately supervised (coaches and referees).

Definitions of Abuse

AYSO, psychologists, legislators and educators around the country now recognize five types of abuse.

- Emotional Abuse: the most common; attacking the emotional well-being and stability of an individual.
- Physical Abuse: the most obvious; harming the physical well-being of an individual.
- Sexual Abuse: frequently hidden; harming an individual through inappropriate sexual contact, lewd behavior, etc.
- Neglect Abuse: not always easy to identify; harming an individual by abandoning, ignoring, or rejecting basic needs.
- Ethical Abuse: the newest; harming an individual by convincing him or her to do an act that is against his or her physical, moral or ethical interests.

Abuses occur in all youth sports including AYSO.

It should be noted that AYSO volunteers can use their regional Child and Volunteer Protection Advocate (CVPA) as a resource to understanding the process of reporting suspected child abuse.

Preventing False Accusations of Child Abuse

- Avoid situations in which you are alone with a child. This includes not transporting youngsters alone in your car.
- When it is necessary to speak privately with a child, find a place out of earshot but within sight of others for your conference.
- Privacy of children in situations such as toileting, showering and changing clothes should be respected. When it is necessary to supervise children in these situations, at least two adults should be present and intrude only to the extent that the health and safety of the children require. Adult volunteers should preserve their own privacy in these situations also.
- When hugging is appropriate, hug from the side over the shoulders, not from the front.
- Sexual jokes, comments of a sexual nature, kissing, sensual massages or sexual gestures are not appropriate behaviors.
- Do not use corporal punishment in any form—spanking, slapping, hitting, etc.
- It is the adult's responsibility to set and respect boundaries. When a child attempts to involve an adult in inappropriate behavior, the adult must reject the overture.

Adults who work with children should take precautions to protect kids from abuse and also to protect themselves from misunderstandings or accusations.

Touching Guidelines

The National Support & Training Center (NSTC) is providing general basic guidelines on which kinds of personal contact with children are acceptable.

Some forms of touching are acceptable as long as they are respectful and appropriate.

- Touching should be in response to the need of the child, not the need of the adult.

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- Touching should be with the child's permission.
- Resistance to touching must be respected.
- Touching must never include the breast, buttocks or groin.
- Touching should be done in the open, not in private.
- Touching should have a brief, limited duration.
- A child's comfort level with touching is influenced by factors such as age, developmental stages, social and emotional well-being, life experiences, gender, etc., all of which change over time.

Precautions: Dealing with Blood-Borne Diseases

The possibility of contracting a blood-borne disease such as AIDS or Hepatitis-B through athletic activity is minimal at best, according to the Williamsport Hospital Sports Medicine Center, the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association, American Red Cross, Centers for Disease Control, and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. But minimal does not mean non-existent. And when dealing with young players, you also have to deal with parents who may not know the minimal risk. For safety and for peace of mind, know the risks and the precautions to minimize them further.

How minimal?

When people talk about blood-borne diseases, AIDS immediately comes to mind, especially when talking about athletic activities. But the disease experts listed above say the risk of contracting AIDS through casual contact or athletic activity is almost non-existent. These sources say the AIDS virus is very weak, and does not survive well outside the body. It is easily killed by many common disinfectants. They further say the virus cannot be spread through everyday activities such as eating in restaurants, swimming in public pools, shaking hands, hugging or other casual contact; it cannot be spread by sharing meals or bathrooms; and not one case of AIDS is known to have been transmitted in a school, day care or foster care setting. There also has not been a documented case of an athlete being infected with AIDS by another athlete as a result of athletic competition. However, in an editorial in the American Journal of Sports Medicine, Dr. Robert E. Leach, M.D. warns that as the number of infected athletes increases, so does the risk of infection through athletic activity.

PRECAUTIONS

While the risk of one athlete infecting another with HIV/AIDS during competition is close to non-existent, there is a remote risk that other blood-borne infectious diseases can be transmitted, according to the Sports Medicine Center. For example, Hepatitis B can be present in the blood as well as in other bodily fluids.

AYSO Guidelines for Dealing with Blood

- Any player or official who is bleeding must leave the field immediately to receive medical treatment, and may not return until the bleeding is stopped and the wound is covered.
- If there is blood on the uniform or clothing, the individual may not return until that portion of the uniform or clothing is replaced or the blood has been neutralized with a disinfectant solution. The best solution is 1 part bleach to 100 parts water (1 teaspoon bleach to 2 cups of water). The solution should be used within 24 hours.

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- If there is blood on the body, the individual may not return until all blood has been removed from skin surfaces and the contaminated skin has been disinfected. The best solution is 1 part bleach to 100 parts water (1 teaspoon bleach to 2 cups of water). The solution should be used within 24 hours.
- Players, coaches or volunteers with a bleeding or oozing skin condition should refrain from all direct contact with others until the condition heals.

Cleaning Up a Blood Spill

If a blood spill occurs-

- Clean up the spill immediately or as soon as possible after the spill occurs
- Use disposable gloves and other personal protective equipment while cleaning spills
- Wipe up the spill with paper towels or other absorbent material
- After the area has been wiped up, flood the area with a solution of 1/4 cup of liquid chlorine bleach to 1 gallon of fresh water, and allow it to stand for at least 20 minutes.
- Dispose of the contaminated material used to clean up the spill in a labeled biohazard container. (AYSO NOTE: If a biohazard container is not readily available, best efforts should be used to eliminate the possibility that others might come in contact with such materials.)

Risk Management

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS MAY PRESENT HAZARDS

- Wet field
- Dry field
- Hot day
- Cold day
- Electrical storms

PHYSICAL SURROUNDINGS MAY PRESENT HAZARDS

- Goalpost, crossbar and nets
- Structures near practice or game fields-walls, fences, etc.
- Sprinkler heads
- Seating-player/coach area and spectator area
- Foreign objects on field-broken glass, debris, etc.

INJURY PREVENTION

- Be safety conscious.
- Take immediate proactive corrective measures.
- Inform others-players, coaches, referees, safety director, league representatives.
- Move to a safer location if necessary and possible.
- Cancel activity if unsafe conditions cannot be corrected.

Note:

This concludes the first portion of the Safe Haven Certification for AYSO coaches and referees. A test covering this material is now required for AYSO coaches and referees. This concludes the requirements for AYSO referee Safe Haven certification. Additional education and testing is required to complete the AYSO coach Safe Haven certification.

AYSO Safe Haven Certification Test

NAME: _____ **REGION:** _____ **DATE:** ____ / ____ / ____

- T F** All AYSO volunteers must complete, sign and submit a Volunteer Application form only once.
- T F** All AYSO coaches and referees are required to do the following: complete Safe Haven Certification, be properly trained in their jobs and be authorized to do their job by the appropriate AYSO authority.
- T F** The Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 grants immunity for volunteers from certain types of prosecution, including offenses involving alcohol, tobacco products and illegal or prescription-only drugs.
- T F** Training is defined as the education a volunteer receives to do a specific job or task.
- T F** Certification is Safe Haven Specific and confirms key competencies in a volunteer.
- T F** The recommended supervision ratio in AYSO is 1:16.
- T F** AYSO recommends that at least two adults be present when children are being supervised at AYSO events and that at least one adult be of the same gender as the children being supervised.
- T F** Psychologists, legislators and educators around the country generally recognize only the following three types of abuse: emotional, physical and sexual.
- T F** AYSO volunteers should avoid situations, including transporting youngsters in a car, in which they are alone with a child other than their own.
- T F** Some forms of touching children are acceptable as long as they are respectful and appropriate.
- T F** Criticism of referee decisions is a part of sport and need not be discouraged in young players.
- T F** Players emulate the behavior of adults at sporting events and develop lasting attitudes and values based on the behavior modeled by adults in youth sports.
- T F** Physical features such as sprinkler heads, goal posts and walls may present significant hazards.
- T F** The possibility of contracting a blood-borne disease such as AIDS or hepatitis B through athletic activity is high.
- T F** The 5 basic philosophies of AYSO are Everyone Plays, Balanced Teams, Open Registration, Positive Coaching and Good Sportsmanship.

THE SPIRIT OF THE GAME AND PHILOSOPHY OF REFEREEING

Soccer is designed as a players' game and the involvement of non-players (coaches and referees) is intended to be limited. This can be a difficult concept for those accustomed to seeing active involvement by coaches and officials in other popular sports. Coaches participate in these other popular sports by directing the action of the players, debating rule decisions with officials or completely stopping the action by calling time-outs. Officials, in these other popular sports, participate by stopping the game for each rule violation and not continuing play until the infraction and violator have been identified, the punishment options explained to the opposing team and a final accounting of the entire incident announced or signaled to the spectators. Indeed, it is not uncommon in some sports for considerably more time to be devoted to dealing with these matters than is actually spent playing the game. The spirit of the game of soccer intends something quite different.

In soccer, particularly youth soccer, the application of the spirit of the Law is far more important than the rote application of the letter of the Law. Soccer is a fast-paced game that should flow with a minimum of interruptions. Referees have considerable authority and flexibility when determining whether or not to stop play. Violation of the letter of the Law may be overlooked if the referee considers it to be a trifling or doubtful offense. The referee may also elect not to stop play for a foul when it would be more of an advantage to the team that was fouled to continue playing. It is easy to fall into the trap of becoming overly concerned with the details of various rules and regulations surrounding the game. Players simply want to get on with the enjoyment of playing. Standards that may seem appropriate to enforce during international, college or high school competitions are not necessarily appropriate to apply at all levels of youth soccer.

Soccer is a game, and the reason people play games is to have fun. The role of AYSO coaches and referees is to facilitate a game that will provide the maximum enjoyment for the players. Understanding the spirit of the game and the philosophy of refereeing can significantly contribute toward the enjoyment of the match for all concerned-coaches, referees, spectators and players.

Referees strive for uniformity of interpretation, just as players strive for excellence in playing skills and coaches strive to develop successful teams. With varying degrees of success, each does the best he or she can, and it is the inevitable human variation that makes for greater interest and enjoyment.

Guidance for Referees and Coaches

LAW 1: THE FIELD OF PLAY

SPIRIT OF THE LAW

The field of play must be safe for players. The goals and markings must be adequate for the referee to perform his duties and should not be confusing to the players.

SAFETY

The first concern of the coach and referee regarding the field is, obviously, safety. This applies to both practices and games. The common hazards such as holes, exposed rocks or sprinkler heads, broken glass and miscellaneous debris are fairly easily detected by walking over the field. Some of the less obvious hazards are associated with the goals. The goals must be inspected to ensure they are secured well enough that they will not collapse or be blown over by a strong gust of wind. The nets should also be secured. Loose netting can also present a hazard to players and to goalkeepers in particular. Corner flagposts and halfway flagposts must be the minimum height (5') and in good repair.

LAW 2: THE BALL

SPIRIT OF THE LAW

The ball must be safe for the players and of appropriate size and weight.

SIZE

Proper size, weight and pressure as well as safety make up the checklist for the ball inspection. Size varies according to age group. The correct weight and pressure can be determined sufficiently by feel with some practice.

LAW 3: THE NUMBER OF PLAYERS

SPIRIT OF THE LAW

Each team is entitled to begin play with a maximum of eleven (11) players and shall not continue play with fewer than seven (7). Exceptions in AYSO are permitted for small-sided games (see Short-Sided Games Guide for Referees).

MAXIMUM AND MINIMUM

Eleven-a-side is the norm, with a minimum of seven required. Fewer than that is allowed and strongly recommended for younger age groups. The AYSO National Coaching Program recommends 3-a-side for U-5 & U-6, 5-a-side for U-8, 7-a-side for U-10 and 9-a-side for U-12. A goal should be disallowed if it is determined that the team scoring the goal had more than the allowable number of players on the field at the time the goal was scored. This is true only if discovered by the referee before restarting play after the goal.

SUBSTITUTION

In AYSO it is mandatory that all players who are present at the match play a minimum of one half of the game (the "Three Quarter Rule" is strongly encouraged which means no player on a team should play four quarters in a given game, until all players on the team have played three quarters). Exceptions include: players arriving during the second or third 'quarters' must play a minimum of one 'quarter'. Substitutions during regulation play in AYSO matches occur only at 'quarters' or following an injury. Substitution during 'quarters' is managed by the referee stopping play approximately midway into the first and second halves to allow substitutions to occur. In order to

avoid interrupting play at inappropriate times, substitutions should occur at a normal stoppage such as a throw-in, goal kick, corner kick, etc. These stoppages seldom occur at exactly the midpoint of the half, so the referee will begin looking for a suitable stoppage during the period one minute before to one minute after the midpoint of the half. If no such stoppage occurs during this two-minute period, then the referee may stop play for substitutions and then restart play with a dropped ball at the location of the ball when play was stopped.

Substitution stoppages are intended only to be a time for the quick substitution of a few players and are not intended as mini-half-time periods or opportunities for coaching or any other purpose that would unduly extend the time taken for the game. On exceptionally hot days, the referee may allow some additional time for players to hydrate. The only players entitled to leave the field are those being substituted for, and the only individuals entitled to enter the field are the new players. This entire process should take only about a minute or less.

The referee must keep and submit a record of playing time on the lineup card, and if it appears that a player (or players) will not be substituted into the match after sitting out the entire first half or they have only one 'quarter' of playing time at the end of the third 'quarter,' the referee should inform the coach of the situation before starting play. If the coach still elects not to substitute the player or players into the match, the referee is not empowered to require the player(s) in question to play, as this is solely the coach's decision. The referee should start play and include the information in the game report for review and consideration by the governing authority (the region, area, section or tournament committee).

Players sent off after the opening kick-off (including during half-time) may not be replaced by a substitute, and the players' team must play with one fewer player. The players at the end of the half remain players until their substitutes have reported to the referee.

MONITORED (FREE) SUBSTITUTION

For U-16 and U-19 age groups only, "Monitored Substitution" is allowed which means substitutions need not occur at quarters, provided a system is in place which will ensure that every participant plays at least one half of every game by requiring a separate time monitor, independent of either team or coach, who checks each player in or out of the game. It is the responsibility of the regional commissioner or the area director, as the case may be, to monitor the experimental program during the season.

It is generally not the responsibility of referees to monitor playing time during games using monitored substitution, unless the region has developed modified lineup cards to check off substitutions by eighths, sixteenths or some substitution increment period other than quarters. Except as provided by the rules of the competition (region, area, section or tournament guidelines), monitored substitution, for U-16 and U-19 games only, may occur only at a stoppage in the match with the referee's permission.

Sanctioning bodies should take care not to establish procedures that will encourage the use of substitutions for delaying a match or limiting quick restarts. Allowing unlimited substitutions during any stoppage of play can often lead to this situation and places undue pressure on the referee to limit these substitutions during a match.

INJURY SUBSTITUTION

In the case of an injury, there are two choices available to the team. The injured player may be substituted, in which case the injured player may not return during that 'quarter,' or the injured player may leave the field to recover and the team will play short until the injured player has recovered well enough to return to play with the referee's permission.

Guidance for Referees and Coaches

Only the injured player gets credit for playing the 'quarter' in which the injury occurred regardless of the total time played in that 'quarter.' The substitute replacing the injured player must still play a total of at least two additional 'quarters' to satisfy the AYSO requirement for all players to play at least one half of the game.

CHANGING THE GOALKEEPER

Goalkeepers may be substituted for as described above. Additionally, another player on the field may change places with the goalkeeper during a normal stoppage in play, provided that the referee is first informed. In youth soccer this sometimes occurs at the taking of a penalty kick, with the players again changing positions, following the same procedure, at a subsequent stoppage in play. The referee will normally not give permission for the change if it would be to the disadvantage of the attacking team wishing to take a quick free kick or corner kick. Subsequent goalkeeper changes must also follow the same procedure. If a player changes places with the goalkeeper without the referee's permission, the referee allows play to continue and then cautions both players during the next normal stoppage in play (due consideration being given according to the age group).

LAW 4: THE PLAYERS' EQUIPMENT

SPIRIT OF THE LAW

The players of each team must be safely equipped and easily distinguished from the opposing team.

PLAYER EQUIPMENT

According to the Laws of the Game, "A player must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous to himself or another player (including any kind of jewellery)". The basic compulsory equipment of a player includes: a jersey or shirt, shorts, stockings, shinguards which provide a reasonable degree of protection and are covered entirely by the stockings and footwear.

It is the responsibility of each individual referee to examine the specific piece of equipment in question and then make a decision regarding whether or not it presents any danger to the player or to other players. The referee has the obligation and right to allow or disallow players wearing the item depending upon the referee's best judgment. AYSO neither endorses or refutes the claims of companies that produce products intended to increase player safety.

UNIFORM

AYSO does not train referees to be fashion police, but we do expect the teams to be appropriately attired and equipped. The purpose of uniforms is to allow the teams to be easily distinguished from one another and for the goalkeepers to be further distinguished and recognizable. Players' jerseys must be tucked inside their shorts. Articles worn for adornment that are not part of the team's standard uniform are neither needed nor permitted. In colder times of the year, additional clothing may be desired by the players. With the younger divisions, some deviations are allowed as long as the extra articles of clothing present no safety hazard to either the wearer or to other players and the wearer's team affiliation remains recognizable. Sliding pants, compression shorts, boxer shorts or other types of garments worn under the soccer shorts that are exposed are not illegal but should be the same color as the shorts or as the predominant color of the shorts. Although opinions vary greatly as to the appropriateness, function and esthetic value of these items, they should not be disallowed in games unless the referee believes they present a safety hazard or that they are simply unnecessary adornment. Also see Frequently Asked Questions in this booklet.

LAW 5: THE REFEREE

SPIRIT OF THE LAW

The referee's duty is to ensure the match is fun, fair and safe for the players.

The foundation of the AYSO Referee Program is expressed by the following quote from section I.D.5 of the AYSO National Rules and Regulations:

The Laws of the Game are intended to provide that games should be played with as little interference as possible, and in this view it is the duty of referees to penalize only deliberate breaches of the Law. Constant whistling for trifling and doubtful breaches produces bad feelings and loss of temper on the part of the players and spoils the pleasure of spectators.

To paraphrase the words of the late, great Mr. Ken Aston, "Soccer is like a play in two acts with the referee as the director. The drama contains the full spectrum of emotions including suspense, excitement, periods of calm followed by intense action, there are heroes and occasionally villains, and good performances building to a dramatic conclusion. A good director (referee) with well-coached actors (players) has the capability of creating a wonderful two-act play (game) that will be enjoyed by all who observe."

The referee is empowered by the Laws of the Game with considerably more latitude to allow play to continue even when an apparent infraction has occurred if, in his judgment, no significant advantage is gained from a trifling or doubtful offense or if stopping play for an infraction of the rules would, in fact, actually be an advantage to the team that committed the offense. The Laws intend for the game to flow with a minimum of interruption, and the referee is charged with conducting the game accordingly.

REFEREE SIGNALS

Signals, approved by the IFAB and universally in use, are illustrated in the Laws of the Game. The following quote from the 1996 edition of the Laws of the Game still applies today:

While it is not the duty of the referee to explain or mime any offense that has caused him to give a particular decision, there are times when a simple gesture or word of guidance can aid communication and contribute to greater understanding and more respect, to the mutual benefit of referee and players. Improving communication should be encouraged, but the exaggerated miming of offenses can be undignified and confusing and should not be used.

An indication by the referee of the point where a throw-in should be taken may well help prevent a player from taking a throw-in improperly. A call of "Play on, Advantage!" confirms to a player that the referee has not simply missed a foul but has chosen to apply advantage (see Law 5). Even an indication that the ball was minutely deflected by its touching another player on its path across a touchline, might be helpful in generating a greater understanding between referee and players. A better understanding will lead to more harmonious relationships.

All signals given by the referee should be simple, clear and instinctive. They should be designed to control the game efficiently and to ensure continuous play as far as possible; they are intended essentially to indicate what the next action in the game should be, not principally to justify that action.

Guidance for Referees and Coaches

An arm pointing to indicate a corner kick, goal kick or foul, and the direction in which it is to be taken, will normally be sufficient. The raised arm to indicate that a free kick is indirect is clearly understood, but if a player queries politely whether the award is a direct free kick or an indirect free kick, a helpful word from the referee, in addition to the appropriate signal, will lead to a better understanding in the future.

For an indirect free kick, the referee is required by the Laws of the Game to signal by holding his arm in the air and keeping it in this position until the ball is touched or played by another player, or the ball goes out of play. This serves as a reminder to players, coaches, spectators and the referee that a goal may not be scored directly from an indirect free kick. For less experienced players it is helpful for the referee to help players learn that the raised referee hand means the kick is indirect.

ADVANTAGE

The Advantage Clause, in the Laws of the Game, instructs the referee, in the interest of the flow of the game, to not stop play for an infraction when the referee believes that it would be more of an advantage for the team that was fouled to allow play to continue. If, after allowing Advantage, the advantage does not materialize within 2 to 3 seconds, the referee should stop play and award the free kick. If the ball goes out of play during this 2 to 3 seconds, play is restarted with the appropriate restart (i.e. a throw-in, goal kick or corner kick).

If, during this time, a second offense is committed by a teammate of the player who committed the first offense, the referee must sanction the more serious of the two offenses.

THE DIAGONAL SYSTEM OF CONTROL

The diagonal system of control is the only system for officiating outdoor soccer games recognized by FIFA and AYSO. This system employs three officials, one referee and two assistant referees. In addition to being the universally approved method of officiating outdoor matches, the diagonal system is an effective method for increasing the number and retention of referees by recruiting, training and assigning them first as assistant referees.

The use of the dual refereeing system is not an approved technique for officiating AYSO games. The dual refereeing system uses two referees on the field, each with a whistle. This system encourages the development of poor officiating habits and is the source of frustrations as the officials attempt the impossible task of remaining close to play and, at the same time, being correctly positioned to watch for offside infractions. This system also fosters hesitancy on the part of the officials and unnecessary interruptions in play as the two officials attempt to consult with each other for a consensus in making calls.

If only two qualified officials are available for a match, one should assume the duties of the referee and the other should become an assistant referee. A volunteer club linesman, if available, after receiving instructions from the referee, should also be used. The only duty of a club linesman is to indicate when the ball has completely crossed the touchline or the goal line. If no club linesman can be found, the referee must assume the duties of the missing assistant referee, just as they would if they were working the game alone.

SIDELINE BEHAVIOR BY COACHES AND SPECTATORS

AYSO coaches and referees (and all other AYSO volunteers) have a responsibility to provide a fun, pleasant environment for the players. According to the AYSO National Rules and Regulations, a coach must "conduct him/herself in a manner becoming a member of AYSO ... at all times encourage clean competition and good sportsmanship ... uphold the Rules and Regulations" and "Limit their sideline participation during AYSO games to positive instruction and encouragement.

Guidance for Referees and Coaches

Sideline participation shall be limited to two coaches from each team and they shall remain within the coaches' area as defined in Section 1.E.2. Negative comments and complaints about refereeing shall not be allowed."

Additionally, coaches and referees must work together to ensure the comments and behavior of spectators are within the boundaries of the AYSO philosophical tenets. Comments and behavior that may be common at the high school, college or professional level are often not appropriate in youth sports. Referees are authorized to stop, suspend or terminate play for outside interference of any kind. AYSO is about 'kids first and soccer second.' Another AYSO rule prohibits coaches and referees from using tobacco or alcohol at practices or games, or in the immediate vicinity of the fields.

Cooperation between coaches and referees is essential in maintaining an appropriate environment for the players. The lessons young players learn from the behavior coaches and referees demonstrate will long endure after win/loss records are forgotten.

LAW 6: THE ASSISTANT REFEREES

SPIRIT OF THE LAW

The assistant referees assist the referee in officiating the match.

'Running the line' as an assistant referee is a demanding task, when done correctly, and is not easily mastered. The assistant referees must follow the lead and instructions of the referee. Their positions are determined by the position of the players, ball and instructions of the referee, and they must be ready to adjust based on the constantly changing conditions during play. They are also expected to judge misconduct or fouls out of sight of the referee and, when these activities occur, to bring them to the attention of the referee.

ASSISTANT REFEREE SIGNALS

Signals, approved by the IFAB and universally in use, are also illustrated in the Laws of the Game. Standardized flag signals are used to avoid confusion. Additional communication with the referee is also made through frequent eye contact and by other accepted signals agreed upon during the referee's pre-game instructions.

CLUB LINESMEN

Club Linesmen are sometimes used when neutral assistant referees are not available. Club Linesmen are usually selected from volunteers present at the game and often are supporters of one of the clubs or teams playing in the game, thus the derivation of the name 'Club Linesmen.' Because of their lack of official training, Club Linesmen have very limited responsibilities.

To acquire the most effective cooperation from Club Linesmen, the following procedure shall be adopted:

1. The Club Linesmen shall report to the referee before the start of the game for instructions. The referee shall inform them that, regardless of their personal opinion, the referee's decision is final and must not be questioned.
2. Their work as Club Linesmen is to signal when the ball is entirely over the touchline or goal line subject always to the final decision of the referee.

Keeping in mind their distinct duties as outlined above, the referee shall decide beforehand exactly what he requires of the Club Linesmen and, as head of the trio, tell them clearly how they can best assist him. The three officials must therefore confer before the game, and the referee's instructions must be specific in order to avoid confusion. The Club Linesmen must, for their part, fully appreciate the referee's authority and accept the referee's ruling without question should there be any difference of opinion among them. They must be supportive and never contradict his decisions. They are to assist, not insist.

LAW 7: THE DURATION OF THE MATCH

SPIRIT OF THE LAW

The players are entitled to the entire designated playing time.

ADDING TIME

Referees have sole responsibility for maintaining an accurate accounting of playing time. Additional time is added by the referee to make up for any time lost due to injury, substitution, unusual delay, time-wasting tactics or any other cause. It is the referee's responsibility to determine when these particular events have occurred and to add the precise amount of time lost.

Time should not be added (or the 'clock stopped') following a goal or to administer a caution or a send-off, or other such stoppages unless the delay is, in the opinion of the referee, unusually long. The time needed to attend to an injured player on the field as well as the time needed to make substitutions at the 'quarters' is easily determined and should be added. However, determining what constitutes an unusual delay or time-wasting tactic requires more careful consideration by the referee. An unusual delay would involve such things as retrieving a lost ball, removing an outside agent (dog, spectator, elephant, etc.) from the field or rain delay.

Referees are trained not to be influenced by the emotions of the moment when determining whether or not to add on time. Referees must consider what is fair for BOTH teams in determining the exact moment to end the half or the game. For example, a player on a breakaway attack on goal at the end of an exciting match with the score tied should not be given extra time to see if the player scores or not. Similarly, the referee should not stop the clock because the team that is winning is not rushing to put the ball into play near the end of the game. In general, the referee will not add time at the end of the match for an event for which he would not have added time had it occurred at the beginning of the game. The ball does not have to be in play for the game to end.

WASTING TIME VERSUS CONSUMING TIME

Referees are also taught to distinguish between time-wasting and time-consuming tactics, the former being illegal and the latter legal. Time-wasting would involve techniques used by one team to waste time that the opposing team has no opportunity to counter. A goalkeeper refusing to release the ball into play within six seconds or a team taking an unusually long time to put the ball into play on a given restart are examples of time-wasting. In such situations, the opposing team is powerless to prevent the situation and must rely on the referee to intervene. On the other hand, a team may legally consume time by simply skillfully controlling the ball. Kicking the ball out of play can be interpreted as legal time consumption or illegal time-wasting depending on the circumstances. Kicking the ball out of play is often a good defensive decision and should not be penalized. However, if in the opinion of the referee, the player kicking the ball out of play is intentionally using excessive force so that the kick causes an unusual delay in retrieving the ball, this could be considered an illegal time-wasting tactic.

LAW 8: THE START AND RESTART OF PLAY

SPIRIT OF THE LAW

Neither team shall have an unfair advantage at the start of play.

STARTING TIME AND FORFEITS

If one or both teams are not present with the minimum number of players at the scheduled starting time, the referee should wait the time specified in the rules of the competition and then abandon the match. If the rules of competition do not specify a time, the referee should wait 15 minutes and then abandon the match. The referee cannot declare a forfeit and must make a full report to the appropriate authorities, who will decide what action is to be taken.

COIN TOSS

To begin the game, the team who wins the coin toss chooses which goal his/her team will attack in the first half, and the other team must kick off (the same procedure applies to a first overtime period when required). When kicks from the penalty mark are needed to determine a winner, another coin toss is conducted at the end of regulation play and/or the last overtime period. The team winning this coin toss has the choice whether to take the first or second penalty kick.

KICK-OFF

Starting play with a kick-off is a relatively simple process and should not present significant difficulties. Remember, the ball is not in play until it has been kicked and moves forward. It is not uncommon for the opposing team, upon hearing the whistle for the kick-off, to immediately run into the center circle rather than waiting for the ball to be kicked into play. The correct restart in this case is to retake the kick-off.

DROPPED BALL

The dropped ball is used to restart play after the referee has stopped play for some neutral reason such as an injury, interference by an outside agent or when play is stopped for substitution with the ball still in play. The dropped ball should not be used to restart play when it is not obvious who last played the ball before it went out of play. Referees must make a decision.

When having a dropped ball, although not required, referees usually will wait until one player from each team has taken up position to attempt to kick at the ball and then will instruct the players to wait until the ball hits the ground before commencing the kicking. If the ball is kicked before it has touched the ground, the dropped ball must be retaken. The referee may remind the players to be good sports and try not to kick each other.

COMMON ELEMENTS OF RESTARTS

There are a total of eight different ways to restart play, and for each restart except the dropped ball the player restarting play may not touch or play the ball a second time until it has been touched or played by at least one additional player from either team. The dropped ball is the exception because it is the referee who is restarting play.

Guidance for Referees and Coaches

LAW 9: THE BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY

SPIRIT OF THE LAW

The ball remains in play, even if an assistant referee has signaled, unless the referee has signaled it out of play or has stopped play.

BALL IN PLAY

The Laws of the Game state that for the following restarts the ball is in play when it is kicked and moves: free kicks outside the penalty area, indirect free kicks by the attacking team within their opponents' penalty area and corner kicks. If, after the ball is placed for any of these restarts, it is touched with the foot, no matter how lightly, then it will move and is therefore in play. This also applies to kick-offs and penalty kicks, with the additional requirement that movement must be in a forward direction.

BALL OUT OF PLAY

It is the position of the ball, and not that of the player, that determines when the ball is out of play. This concept is somewhat foreign because the reverse is true in other popular sports such as football and basketball. It is also sometimes difficult to resist the temptation to think the ball is out of play when it touches a goal line or touchline, but the entire ball must cross the line before it is out. Position is critical when judging this fact, and in the vast majority of situations, it is the assistant referee who is in the best position to make this decision.

Curving balls from corner kicks or kicked from near the touchlines or goal lines may briefly (but completely) cross the plane of the line in the air and then return within the playing field. In these situations, the ball should be declared out of play and the appropriate restart taken.

LAW 10: THE METHOD OF SCORING

SPIRIT OF THE LAW

The referee will award a goal when the entire ball enters the goal except as otherwise provided by the Laws of the Game.

GOAL VERSUS NO GOAL

If a player kicks the ball into the goal making the net bulge to withstand the impact, most will realize a goal has been scored. However, goals are not always so obvious. For those less than obvious goals, referees must frequently rely on the correct positioning and judgment of the assistant referee, who will apply the same set of criteria used to determine when the ball is out of play together with the fact that it has left the field between the goalposts and under the crossbar. The best seat in the house to judge this is occupied by the assistant referee looking directly down the goal line.

One circumstance under which a goal can be scored that is not obvious occurs when the goalkeeper attempts to stop a particularly hard shot that causes the goalkeeper to retreat sufficiently back across the goal line that the ball completely crosses the goal line for a brief period while in the possession of the goalkeeper.

LAW 11: OFFSIDE

SPIRIT OF THE LAW

A player may not participate or interfere with play from an offside position.

ORIGIN

The late Ken Aston, internationally renowned referee instructor, gave the following account of the origin of the Offside Law.

Many years ago there was not an offside law in soccer. In the English schools where soccer was often played, it was noticed that players who were not willing to work with their teammates to help advance the ball would simply loiter around in front of the opponents' goal waiting for the ball to arrive so they could score a goal.

The schoolmasters determined this was not a sporting thing to do and therefore made a rule that any player guilty of this offense would be temporarily off the side (off the team) and not allowed to play. Thus, the Offside Law was born.

As a point of interest, Ken would point out, there is no "s" at the end of the term offside-since a player plays for only one side (team), he can be taken off only one side (team), not off both sides.

APPLICATION

The argument is sometimes made that a player who is standing in an offside position, even though inactive, is a cause for concern or worry on the part of the opposing goalkeeper or defender and therefore this can be interpreted as participation. This argument is not considered valid because referees cannot base their decisions on what is in the minds of players but rather must make their decisions based on what has, in fact, actually occurred. If players were penalized because they caused the opponents to worry about them because of what they might be able to do, this would have eliminated a lot of great players from the game. Do you think opposing teams had cause for concern or worry when they were about to play against great players such as Pelé or Mia Hamm?

As an example, consider the following: A player with the ball is near the opposing team's corner flag. The opposing goalkeeper is anticipating the ball being passed in front of the goal and has positioned himself close to the near goalpost and out from the goal line about two yards, which is close to where an opposing attacking player is legally positioned waiting for the ball. Another attacking player has taken an offside position inside the far goalpost on the goal line behind the goalkeeper. The ball is centered to the legally positioned teammate who, to the goalkeeper's dismay, heads the ball just inside the near goalpost. This goal should be allowed (and applauded) if the player in the offside position gained no advantage from this position and did not actively interfere with play or an opponent, despite proximity to the goalkeeper. "But what if...", begin the dissenting voices. The 'what ifs' would each be considered separately, but in the situation described, a goal should be awarded.

If the assistant referee does not raise the flag immediately when a player is in an offside position, players, coaches and spectators need not get upset. The assistant referee is properly waiting to assess whether or not the player in an offside position becomes involved in active play. By using a brief delay and observing the caution "If in doubt, don't signal," assistant referees do not stop the game needlessly.

The Offside Law always seems a source of debate and controversy as it contains elements of fact and of judgment which the referee must consider and interpret. There are additional criteria the referee must consider in some situations that are best learned through demonstration under the direction of a competent referee instructor.

Guidance for Referees and Coaches

LAW 12: FOULS AND MISCONDUCT

SPIRIT OF THE LAW

Teams that fail to play in a sporting, fair and safe manner will be penalized.

Referees and coaches want the game to be enjoyable at all levels of play. Player enjoyment and intentional fouling are not compatible. Coaches, through their teachings and behavior, set the tone for fair play, sporting behavior and injury prevention by reinforcing the importance of fair play at all practices and games. Referees must walk the fine line between letting the game flow without unnecessary interruption and knowing when to interfere with the action to keep play within the boundaries of fairness and safety. Coaches and referees must work in concert to ensure players learn and abide by the Laws of the Game and respect the principles of fair play and sporting behavior.

DIRECT FREE KICK FOULS MOST FREQUENTLY DEBATED

Direct Free Kicks are rare with the younger players who are more clumsy than careless or reckless, and they are very obvious when excessive force is used. With older players, the game becomes more intense, and challenges for the ball often involve vigorous contact between players. The referee must judge the manner in which the contact is made. The fact that players may get knocked to the ground or bumped off the ball does not necessarily mean a foul has occurred. It is not a democracy; only the referee decides foul or no foul, even if in the minority. The following situations are most frequently debated.

HANDLING THE BALL-

Handling the ball is arguably the source of most confusion. Referees must judge whether the contact of ball and hand or arm was caused by a deliberate act of the player or if the ball struck the hand or arm in the normal course of play. If the referee believes the contact was not deliberate, then no foul has occurred and play should continue. It matters not that an advantage might have been gained as long as the contact of ball and hand or arm was not deliberate.

TRIPPING-

There is a difference between tripping and being tripped. When a player stumbles or falls the referee must judge whether or not an opponent illegally tripped the player or if the trip was the result of a fair challenge for the ball.

Often when a fair tackle is made, with contact first being made with the ball, the opponent may trip over the extended legs of the player making the tackle. However, even though contact is first made with the ball, if the player making the tackle subsequently lifts his or her leg causing the opponent to fall, it is a foul and a direct free kick or penalty kick must be awarded to the opposing team.

A player who tackles an opponent, in a manner that endangers the safety of the opponent, must be sent off for serious foul play.

CHARGING-

A charge is an attempt to physically separate an opponent from control of the ball. Charging while contending for the ball is fair providing the following conditions are met:

- The player being charged is within playing distance of the ball and able to play it;
- The charge is a sharp staccato impact, not a push;
- When charging from the side, contact is made as near shoulder to shoulder as possible, depending upon the relative heights of the players involved; and
- When charging an opponent from behind who is legally screening the ball, the charge may be made to the opponent's shoulder blade.

If the charge is made in a manner that the referee considers to be careless, reckless or using excessive force, a direct free kick or penalty kick, as appropriate, is awarded to the opposing team.

If the charge is otherwise fair, but not made within playing distance of the ball, the charging player is guilty of impeding the progress of an opponent, and an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team.

SCREENING OR SHIELDING-

Players may often place themselves between an opponent and the ball to screen or shield the ball. This is a legal tactic provided the ball is, in the opinion of the referee, within playing distance of the player. If a player while screening or shielding the ball illegally uses his or her hands, arms, legs or body (pushing, holding, etc.) to prevent an opponent from challenging for the ball, it is a direct free kick foul.

TACKLING-

Legal tackling is the act of blocking the ball or moving the ball away from the feet of an opponent in a manner that is not dangerous to that player. Players controlling the ball with their feet may be tackled by an opponent who is attempting to dispossess them of the ball. If contact is made with the player being tackled before contact is made with the ball, then a direct free kick foul has been committed. In some cases, contact with the player after the ball has been played may also be a foul, depending upon the circumstances.

INDIRECT FREE KICK FOULS MOST FREQUENTLY DEBATED

Indirect free kick fouls result in an indirect free kick rather than a direct free kick as the penalty. The following two indirect free kick fouls are the frequent source of debate:

IMPEDING-

Impeding involves using one's body to prevent an opponent's access to the ball. The terms 'shielding' or 'screening' are also used to describe a legal tactic employed by players to deny opponents access to the ball (see above). Legal shielding often evolves into illegal impeding.

DANGEROUS PLAY-

Although the Laws of the Game state that an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player, in the opinion of the referee, plays in a dangerous manner, the indirect free kick must be awarded only if an opponent is involved and the act is dangerous to either the player or to the opponent. If the dangerous act does not involve an opponent and play is stopped, play must be restarted with a dropped ball.

GOALKEEPER POSSESSION

International F.A. Board Decision 2 of Law 12 states:

The goalkeeper is considered to be in control of the ball by touching it with any part of his hand or arms. Possession of the ball includes the goalkeeper deliberately parrying the ball, but does not include the circumstances where, in the opinion of the referee, the ball rebounds accidentally from the goalkeeper, for example after he has made a save.

The ball is also considered to be in the possession of the goalkeeper when

- bouncing the ball and catching it
- throwing the ball in the air and catching it

Guidance for Referees and Coaches

A goalkeeper who moves outside his or her own penalty area to intercept the ball and play it, with his or her feet, back into the penalty area may then handle the ball, unless the ball was deliberately kicked to the goalkeeper by a teammate or the goalkeeper received the ball directly from a throw-in taken by a teammate.

If a teammate, taking a throw-in, throws the ball in the general direction of the goalkeeper, but before the goalkeeper receives the ball, it is intercepted in the air and headed by another teammate, the goalkeeper is allowed to handle the ball within his or her own penalty area.

TEMPORARY EXPULSIONS

If a player cannot control his or her emotions and needs a 'time-out' to regain control, either the player must recognize this and request permission to leave the field of play or the coach should convince the player to do so. Players have the right to ask the referee for permission to leave the field of play for a variety of reasons, and the referee should grant this permission. Coaches also have the right to ask their players to request this option from the referee. In no case is a substitution allowed to replace these players for this temporary interruption in their play.

Coaches also have the right to call players to the touch line during play if they feel the need to tell them something or to 'calm them down.' This is also permissible, but in this case the player must remain on the field of play. Giving the coach this responsibility, which is where it belongs, is not in violation of the Laws.

FIFA has expressly forbidden mandatory temporary expulsions, sometimes called "sit outs," by a referee for cautioned players to regain their composure or to 'cool off.'

SERIOUS FOUL PLAY

It is serious foul play, a sending-off offense, when a player uses intentional violence when challenging for the ball against an opponent on the field of play.

VIOLENT CONDUCT

It is violent conduct, a sending-off offense, when a player is guilty of aggression toward an opponent when not challenging for the ball. If the ball is in play, a direct free kick or a penalty kick, as appropriate, is awarded in favor of the team of the player against whom the aggression was directed. If the ball is out of play, the match is resumed with the appropriate restart.

It is also violent conduct if a player, substitute or substituted player attacks a teammate, the referee, an assistant referee, a coach, a spectator or any other person. If the ball is in play, an indirect free kick is awarded against the team of the player committing the violent conduct. If the aggression took place outside the boundaries of the field of play, a dropped ball is the correct restart. If the ball is out of play, the match is resumed with the appropriate restart.

CAUTIONS (YELLOW CARDS) AND SEND-OFFS (RED CARDS)

A player, substitute or substituted player who is cautioned or sent off during the match is shown the yellow or red card, as appropriate. Cards are only shown to players and substitutes. The referee has the authority to take disciplinary sanctions and show the red or yellow cards from the moment he enters the field of play prior to the game until he leaves the field of play following the final whistle. The purpose of a caution is to give players fair notice that the manner in which they are playing or behaving is unacceptable and that they will be sent off the field for the remainder of the game if they continue to play or behave in this way. The referee may offer a verbal reprimand or warning, which is not an official caution, and, in this case, therefore will not hold up a yellow card.

The cards are not shown to coaches or spectators for their misconduct. The referee may, however, expel team officials from the field of play and its immediate surroundings without displaying a card.

The referee's report (in accordance with region, area or section procedures, as appropriate) must indicate in detail all misconduct occurring before, during and after the match. The referee should indicate whether the misconduct would have been a yellow or red card offense had it occurred during the match.

Children who are under 12 years of age should not be formally cautioned or sent off unless there are exceptional circumstances. Referees should consider whether children in this age group are fully aware of their actions and should consult and work with the coach to get the desired behavior. Young players can usually be controlled by a verbal admonishment, thus avoiding the need to display the cards.

In the case of players being sent off (red carded) for misconduct after the game has begun, substitution is not permitted for that player. The team must play with one fewer player for the duration of the match and the player receives a minimum one game suspension and additional sanctions may be imposed pending review by the governing authority. As with cautioning, sending off young players should be avoided.

ADMINISTERING CAUTIONS AND SEND-OFFS

Referees, when administering cautions or send-offs, should

- treat the individual in a calm, courteous and respectful manner
- try to take the player or team official aside so he or she is out of the direct earshot of other players, team officials and spectators
- explain briefly the reason he or she is being cautioned or sent off
- display the yellow or red card, in the case of players, substitutes or substituted players
- avoid a protracted discussion with the person being cautioned or sent off

Although the Laws of the Game require that "a player who has been sent off must leave the vicinity of the field of play and the technical area," youth players who are sent off must be allowed to remain on the sideline, under the control of their coach.

SPECTATOR MISCONDUCT

The model set by the adults present (referees, coaches and spectators) at games influences the development and behavior of the young players watching. The referee team establishes the parameters of acceptable behavior and must be attentive to and deal appropriately with any adult behavior that does not present positive role modeling for youth. Law 5 and AYSO National Rules and Regulations provide this authority.

The influence adults have on the impressionable young players in AYSO will far outlast the memories of won/loss records. The behavior modeled by the adults present at AYSO games should have a positive effect on the development of the players watching. All adults present at AYSO games share in the responsibility to ensure positive role modeling is demonstrated. However the ultimate responsibility rests with the AYSO referees as the guardians of the game to ensure there is truth in the motto that...

**"In AYSO, it's about more
than the game!"**

LAW 13: FREE KICKS

SPIRIT OF THE LAW

Free kicks are to be taken without interference from the opposing team.

APPLICATION

Free kicks generally are either ceremonial kicks or quick kicks. The ceremonial kick occurs when the team awarded the kick elects to take some time before taking the kick, possibly to attempt a set play learned in practice. It is the duty of the referee to enforce the Law and ensure that the opponents retreat the required distance as quickly as possible.

Conversely, it is the kicking team's right to put the ball into play quickly and thus take advantage of an opportunity to advance the ball or to score a goal before the opposing defenders can get organized. In this situation, the team taking the kick may elect to kick the ball before the opponents have retreated the required distance. The quick-kick option is the choice of the team taking the kick and is perfectly legal as long as the ball is placed correctly, it is stationary before it is kicked and the referee has not told the kicking team to wait for his signal.

LAW 14: THE PENALTY KICK

SPIRIT OF THE LAW

A penalty kick is awarded the offended team when a defending player commits a direct free kick foul within his own penalty area.

APPLICATION

A penalty kick provides an excellent goal-scoring opportunity, and this is precisely the intent of the Law. Direct free kick fouls, when committed by the defense close to their goal (inside the penalty area), seriously hinder the attacking team's chances of scoring a goal. Thus the Penalty Kick Law was devised to provide an additional measure of deterrence for committing direct free kick fouls near one's own goal. In the younger age divisions, direct free kick fouls are rare, and the use of penalty kicks should likewise be rare at this level of play.

The penalty kick is one of the few times players must wait for the referee's signal (whistle) before restarting play so that the referee can ensure that all the players are first legally positioned outside the penalty area and the penalty arc and no closer to the goal line than the ball. Once the referee has given the signal for the penalty kick to be taken, the kick will not be interrupted by the referee if an infraction is committed by either team until the outcome of the kick is determined. The resulting action of the referee will depend upon the circumstances of which team committed the infraction and whether or not a goal was scored.

PENALTY KICK-GOALKEEPER MOVEMENT

At the taking of a penalty kick, or kicks from the penalty mark, goalkeepers must remain on the goal line, facing the kicker, but may move laterally along the goal line, between the goalposts, until the ball is kicked. If the goalkeeper moves forward off the goal line before the ball is kicked and the shot does not score, the penalty kick must be retaken.

LAW 15: THE THROW-IN

SPIRIT OF THE LAW

When the ball completely crosses the touchline, it shall be thrown back into the field of play by a player of the team opposite to that of the player who last touched it.

APPLICATION

The throw-in is one of the simplest and most common restarts and should not be the source of any unusual problems. The ball is thrown in from where it left the field and the opposing team is required to retreat at least two meters (yards) from the point at which the throw-in is to be taken. The thrower may not play the ball twice in succession (cannot throw the ball to oneself).

There have developed over the years some misconceptions regarding the throw-in. One of the most common misconceptions is that spin on the ball is illegal. This is not the case, and in fact, it is almost impossible to throw the ball without some measure of spin. In reality, side spin on the ball is generally an indication that the ball has slipped through the hands of the thrower and the ball is not thrown as far or as accurately as the thrower intended. The ball can generally be thrown farther with one hand than it can with two, and this is what is considered illegal. It is the referee's duty to determine if this has occurred, but the simple fact that the ball is spinning should not, by itself, be reason to consider the throw-in illegal.

Another misconception is that the ball must be thrown with considerable force. The operative word is "thrown," and as long as there is a smooth continuous motion with the throw, it is perfectly legal even if the ball does not travel very far from the thrower.

Various techniques are employed by players when throwing in the ball. It is not uncommon for players to make a running throw-in. At the moment the ball is released, with the running throw-in, usually the toe of one foot will be dragging along the ground, which satisfies the requirements of the Law. As the players advance in age, they may develop an acrobatic flip throw-in that can significantly increase the distance of the throw. This flip throw-in is legal as long as all requirements of the Law are met at the moment the ball is released.

LAW 16: THE GOAL KICK

SPIRIT OF THE LAW

A goal kick is awarded to the defending team when the ball crosses the goal line last touched by a member of the attacking team, without a goal being scored.

APPLICATION

The goal kick is a relatively simple method of restarting play and generally causes few difficulties. As with free kicks, the team taking the goal kick may elect to take a quick kick before all of the opposing team has retreated outside the penalty area as required. The kick is retaken if it is touched by another player before leaving the penalty area, or if it is touched for a second time before leaving the penalty area by the player taking the kick. The offside exception for the first player to receive the ball from a goal kick is rarely of any consequence in the younger divisions. However, in the older divisions, this fact must be kept in mind during those long goal kicks that can reach a teammate in the opponents' half of the field.

LAW 17: THE CORNER KICK

SPIRIT OF THE LAW

A corner kick is awarded the attacking team after the ball crosses the goal line last touched by a member of the defending team, without a goal being scored.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is responsible for the players' Medical Release Forms?

It is the coach's responsibility to be in possession of the Medical Release Forms at all practices and games. Referees are not required, nor recommended, to ask coaches to prove that they have players' Medical Release Forms in their possession at games. Referees should not require coaches to produce the forms at matches as this would, in effect, put the referee in the position of assuming a responsibility that properly belongs with the coach.

Can Players wear Medical Alert Bracelets?

Children may participate in games and practices while wearing medical alert bracelets. The bracelet should be covered with a cloth wristband or something equivalent, which does not involve taping the bracelet directly to the child's skin, as this can be very painful to the child when it is removed.

We must all recognize that if the bracelet is removed and lost or hidden in any way, the child might be put in danger, particularly if the parents are not present to ensure that the medical condition is known. We must also recognize that it is unlikely that a medical alert bracelet, when properly covered, will pose a danger to the other children who are participating. Medical alert sports bands with a snug-fitting soft, polyester ribbon band are now available and should be permitted without modification.

May a player wear a cast or splint while participating in a game?

The AYSO National Rules and Regulations paragraph VI.H. states:

"Players shall not be allowed to practice or participate in any game with any type of cast or splint."

May a player remove a cast or splint in order to participate in a game?

The AYSO National Rules and Regulations paragraph VI.H. states:

"Removal of any type of cast or splint at the field or surrounding area in order to participate shall disqualify the player from practice or in any game."

Removable casts are designed to facilitate personal hygiene and dressing; they are not designed to be removed so that a player may engage in contact sports.

Are referees permitted to wear a cast or splint while refereeing?

The AYSO National Rules and Regulations prohibit players from participating in practices or games while wearing a cast or splint (even with a doctor's permission). However, there is no such prohibition for referees to officiate while wearing a cast or splint even if they are youth referees. The likelihood of an injury to players occurring from contact with the referee's cast or splint is very remote. Some padding on the cast may add a measure of protection.

Are players permitted to wear knee braces during a game?

AYSO policy statement 2.9 titled "Knee Braces" reads as follows:

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AYSO will not prohibit the use of knee braces by players in AYSO events and programs, provided that the knee brace is adequately covered and padded in the judgment of the referee so as to eliminate the possibility of its use causing injury to other players on the field of play.

The difference between casts or splints and knee braces is that a cast or splint is used for the treatment of a temporary injury to provide for healing. The use of a knee brace is different in that it is used to provide support and/or flexibility. Knee braces are designed to allow for flexibility of movement, while conversely, a cast or splint is designed to restrict mobility.

Are players permitted to wear any other kind of medical devices while playing?

If the device is needed to restrict mobility, protect an injury or support proper alignment to expedite the healing process of a temporary injury and is hard (cast, splint, etc.) then it is not allowed. If, on the other hand, the protective device is used to provide support, flexibility or enable an otherwise healthy player to function normally such as a knee brace, prosthesis, hearing aid, insulin pump, etc. then it would be allowed, provided the device was sufficiently padded to prevent injury to other players. The Laws of the Game specify that "A player must not use equipment or wear anything which is dangerous to himself or another player." The referee is the sole judge of whether or not the individual item in question is permissible to wear in the game.

May players wear spectacles while playing?

Players who require prescription glasses are to be allowed to wear them during practices and games. It is recommended that retaining straps be worn. Rubber bands may also be used for this purpose. Prescription goggles, such as the type used by racquetball players, are also permitted subject to the approval of the referee prior to the start of the match. Spectacle guards made of plastic or other hard material are not permitted.

May players wear hearing aids while playing?

Players who normally must wear hearing aids are also allowed to wear them during practices or games.

Are players permitted to wear mouthguards?

AYSO does not prohibit the use of mouthguards. Parents are encouraged to consult their child's dentist or orthodontist to determine what, if any, mouthguard is appropriate for their child. Players wearing mouthguards should not be prevented from participating in practice or games.

Are players permitted to wear jewelry, earrings or studs?

Jewelry, including earrings, of any kind worn in any visible body piercing or any stud used when the jewelry is not being worn must be removed before the player is allowed to participate in a practice or game. Covering the jewelry or stud with tape, padding or bandage is not sufficient, the jewelry must be removed before playing. In the case of visible taped-over or bandaged suspected piercings, referees must not ask players to lift or remove articles of clothing or bandages. It is acceptable however, to ask a player if the tape or bandages is covering an earring. The referee must accept the answer provided, regardless of suspicions.

Since it is rare that an earlobe or eyebrow is taped as the result of an injury, the referee should suspect that a player is using tape or other covering to hide a piercing. It is the responsibility of the referee to ask the coach whether or not the player has been injured or is hiding a piercing. This

should be done in a cordial manner and in the presence of the player. An assistant referee or other official must also be present. Coaches have the responsibility of not allowing players wearing jewelry to participate in practices or games.

If the coach confirms that it is an injury being covered, the referee may not prohibit the player from playing because of the tape or covering. In either case, the referee must indicate in his or her game report which players and coaches were questioned and their responses.

Players wearing beads braided into the hair must wear a hair net covering the beads in order to prevent them from flying into their face or the face or eyes of another player.

Coaches and referees are role models and should abide by the same rules as the players in regard to wearing jewelry, earrings and studs during practices or games.

Are players permitted to wear hats for medical or religious reasons?

The Laws of the Game specify that "A player must not use equipment or wear anything which is dangerous to himself or another player." The referee is the sole judge of whether or not the individual item in question is permissible to wear in the game. The referee has the obligation and the right to allow or disallow players wearing additional equipment depending upon the referee's best judgment.

Players are generally not permitted to wear hats, but items used to secure hair such as sweatbands, bandanas, scarves, etc., are sometimes permitted. Players may be allowed to wear soft hats or caps without hard brims if the weather is inclement. Goalkeepers may wear a soft brimmed hat or cap. In addition to the above requirements the brim must also be made of a soft material and must be approved by the referee. Baseball-style caps with hard brims are not acceptable even if worn backwards. These items should be a neutral color free of inappropriate design, logo or meaning. They must not constitute a danger to the player or to other players and must be approved by the referee.

Referees may allow a player to wear a hat with a soft brim and otherwise not dangerous to the player or other players if, indeed, the player is known to be unusually susceptible to skin cancer from exposure to the sun or the head garment is required by the player's religion.

Are there any special requirements for soccer shoes and shinguards?

Soccer shoes and shinguards made by any established soccer equipment manufacturer are acceptable. Other shoes and shinguards are acceptable if, in the opinion of the referee, they are not dangerous to the player wearing them or to another player and the shinguards afford the player a reasonable degree of protection. A piece of cardboard, rolled up newspaper or similar makeshift items do not constitute proper shinguards. The referee must inspect all cleats to ensure there are no sharp edges; this is especially important for aluminum and nylon cleats.

Shinguards must be completely covered by the player's stockings. Players are not allowed to wear their shinguards over their stockings and then roll the stockings down over the shinguards. The shinguards must be worn completely under the stockings.

Are toe cleats illegal on soccer shoes?

The myth has been perpetuated that toe cleats are illegal in soccer. This particular folklore may have developed from the fact that some players new to the game felt they should wear cleats for soccer games and showed up in baseball shoes which often have cleats on the toe. Many styles of soccer shoes are now on the market and some of them have cleat configurations that wrap across the toe. A blanket statement that toe cleats are not allowed is too narrow. The myth that metal cleats are

not legal is also not uncommon. Metal cleats (usually aluminum) are acceptable, but the referee must inspect all types of cleats on shoes to ensure that there are no burrs or sharp edges and, if they exist, burrs or sharp edges must be removed before the player is allowed to participate. The referee must examine the particular footwear in question and determine if it presents any unreasonable danger to the participants.

Are players permitted to wear sleeveless jerseys?

Although Law 4 International Board Decision 1 states that jerseys must have sleeves, it is still the position of both USSF and AYSO that no individual or team should be kept from playing because their jerseys do not have sleeves. Since this is not a safety issue, the only action referees should take is to indicate on the game report that a team has, or players have, sleeveless jerseys.

Players are also not prohibited from rolling or tying up jersey sleeves provided it is done in a safe manner.

May players wear additional protective equipment while playing?

The Laws of the Game specify the following regarding Non-Basic Equipment:

- A player must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous to himself/herself or another player
- Modern protective equipment such as headgear, facemasks, knee and arm protectors made of soft, lightweight, padded material are not considered to be dangerous and are therefore permitted
- New technology has made sports spectacles much safer, both for the players themselves and of other players

AYSO neither endorses nor refutes the claims of companies which produce products intended to increase player safety. It is the responsibility of the referee to examine the specific piece of equipment in question and then make a decision regarding whether or not it presents any danger to the player themselves or to other players. The referee has the obligation and right to allow or disallow players wearing the item depending upon the referee's best judgment.

Face masks similar to the type hockey goalies or football players wear are not allowed for goalkeepers or field players because they are constructed of hard material and would pose a danger to other players.

Players may be allowed to wear soft hats or caps without brims. They must not constitute a danger to the player or to other players and must be approved by the referee. Goalkeepers may wear a brimmed hat or cap. In addition to the above requirements the brim must also be made of a soft material and must be approved by the referee. Baseball-style caps with hard brims are not acceptable even if worn backwards.

May players wear sweatbands, bandanas, scarves or other items to secure hair?

The referee is the sole judge of whether or not such items may be worn based on the referees assessment of the particular item and its function. Supplemental items worn for adornment are generally not permitted. Items the referee believes are not dangerous to the player or to other players and serve the purpose of hair control, perspiration absorption or to conform to religious requirements are permitted. These items should be a neutral color free of inappropriate design, logo or meaning.

May players wear gloves?

Goalkeepers are traditionally allowed to wear gloves. Other players may also wear gloves if, in the opinion of the referee, the weather is cold enough to warrant it.

May players drink water during the game?

Players are permitted to drink water during a stoppage in the play but only on the touch line. It is not permitted to throw water containers onto the field.

What procedure should be followed regarding electrical storms?

The National Severe Storms Laboratory (NSSL) currently recommends that all individuals should leave the game site and reach a safe structure or location when lightning is within 6 miles.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Lightning Safety Guidelines indicate that since lightning can strike out of a clear blue sky as far away as ten miles from a rain storm, when the "Flash-to-Bang" count is thirty seconds or less, everyone should leave the game site to a safe location.

The United States Soccer Federation (USSF) position is that if you can hear thunder you are within reach of lightning and that referees must protect the safety of all participants by stopping game activities quickly, so that participants and spectators may retire to a safer place before the lightning threat becomes significant.

In view of the above, the following is the position of the AYSO National Referee Commission regarding severe weather:

"It is said that lightning can strike from a clear blue sky that is within a ten mile radius of a storm. It is therefore strongly recommended that practices and games be terminated immediately upon hearing thunder or seeing lightning".

"If you can see it - flee it; if you can hear it - clear it."

What is the uniform dress code for referees?

Throughout the soccer community, referees and assistant referees (ARs) are identified by their uniforms. The AYSO National Referee Program (NRP) strongly encourages referees and assistant referees to follow the uniform standards for match officials established by USSF.

OFFICIAL USSF REFEREE UNIFORM

- Gold jersey with black pin stripes, black collar, black cuffs (long sleeve) or no cuff (short sleeve); black shorts; black socks with three stripe white top; black shoes

OFFICIAL ALTERNATE USSF REFEREE JERSEYS

- Black jersey with white pinstripes, black collar, black cuffs (long sleeve) or no cuffs (short sleeve)
- Red jersey with black pinstripes, black collar, black cuffs (long sleeve) or no cuffs (short sleeve)
- Blue jersey with black pinstripes, black collar, black cuffs (long sleeve) or no cuffs (short sleeve)
- The blue jersey may be worn when the gold, black or red jerseys will not provide a clear contrast to either team's shirt colors.

Uniformity on the part of officials establishes initial credibility for them as a team. The referee and ARs should wear shirts of similar color and style. If the referee wears an alternate jersey of a color that the ARs do not have, the ARs' jerseys, whenever possible, should match each other.

What is the appropriate referee badge for AYSO referees?

Only one badge, that of the current AYSO referee certification level, may be worn. Exception: An International Referee may wear his or her FIFA badge.

May referees wear hats or sunglasses?

Soccer referees have not historically needed to wear hats or sunglasses and AYSO referees are discouraged from doing so. Hats, in some cases, may be desired for sun-protection health reasons or during rain. Hats should not ordinarily be worn for night games.

- Hats, if worn, should be solid black or predominately black with white trim, or solid white or predominately white with black trim.
- Hats should bear no logos or slogans other than AYSO logos (traditional, promotional, regional or tournament) and National corporate apparel sponsor logos.

Sunglasses are likewise discouraged for referees as this restricts communication through eye contact with players and are generally considered unnecessary adornment.

What is the recommended way to deal with player violence?

Many possible scenarios of violence exist. The referee must assess each situation and determine appropriate action considering personal safety, player safety and game control.

The Law does not require anyone to place themselves in peril and AYSO referees should not subject themselves to undue personal risk. However, violence needs to be stopped if it erupts and referees need to assist in controlling it when it can be done without unduly risking personal safety.

RECOMMENDED PROCEDURES FOR REFEREES:

- Move quickly to the location of the problem.
- Blow the whistle loudly in the vicinity of the fracas to distract the “combatants”.
- Assess the risk to your personal safety by further intervention and do not attempt to intervene if you determine it is unsafe. Referees are not required to put their personal safety at risk.
- Consider intervention only if possible without undue personal risk. A referee who intervenes during player violence must:
 - Remain in a “passive role.”
 - Refrain from physically “manhandling” any players or other persons involved.
 - Endeavor to form a barrier between “combatants”.
 - Urge the coaching staffs to assist.
 - Endeavor to contain the fracas.
 - Be aware of the reactions of other players and discourage them from joining the fracas.
- Provide a detailed report of the facts of the incident in the game report for reference.

Addressing violent conduct is everyone’s job. Regional staff should be proactive in taking steps to address the issue with programs such as Safe Haven and Kids Zone.

Prompt disciplinary responses are encouraged if violence occurs during games.

Are there any additional penalties for players who are sent off or coaches who are expelled?

As stated in the AYSO National Rules and Regulations, "All AYSO games shall be conducted in accordance with the current FIFA Laws of the Game...". FIFA requires a minimum one game suspension for players being sent off (red card) but do not, however, address any mandatory additional sanctions for coaches who are expelled from a match. Additional sanctions may be imposed by the governing body (region or league) but they cannot reduce the one-game suspension.

Disciplinary actions taken against players and coaches subsequent to the match are determined by the governing body which in the case of AYSO is the Regional Commissioner and Regional Board of Directors according to the process they establish and document in the Regional Guidelines.

The referee is required to:

"provide the appropriate authorities with a match report, which includes information on any disciplinary action taken against players, and/or team officials and any other incidents that occurred before, during or after the match".

It is the governing body's responsibility to review the referee's match report and to take whatever additional action they feel appropriate.

May regions adopt local playing rules outside of FIFA and AYSO rules?

The very first line of the AYSO National Rules and Regulations states, "All AYSO games shall be conducted in accordance with the current FIFA Laws of the Game and decisions of the International Board..." The bulk of the remaining content of the National Rules and Regulations clarifies the kind of specific exceptions that are permitted. The FIFA Laws of the Game (under "Modifications") state, "Subject to the agreement of the national association concerned and provided the principles of these Laws are maintained, the Laws may be modified in their application..." and then specify the kinds of modifications that are permissible. These statements make clear how AYSO games should be played and to what extent the Laws may be modified.

Making a local rule in the presumed interest of player safety may appear well-intentioned on the surface but careful consideration must be given to the overall effect of the rule and whether or not it is permissible or, in fact, beneficial. Accidents happen in soccer and if we tried to make a rule to prevent all of them we would be overrun with rules that don't make sense. Running, jumping, kicking, heading, dribbling, tackling, shooting, and goalkeeper efforts to prevent goals all have potential to cause injury. Soccer is a contact sport and injuries are possible. Players and parents must recognize there is risk involved in playing sports. The waiver on the player registration form, which all parents are required to read and sign, makes this point very clearly.

It is the job of coaches to teach players correct technique to help them avoid injury to themselves and to others. It is the job of referees to learn to recognize when skills are executed correctly or not. Players should develop, coaches should teach and referees should learn to recognize the skills that are a part of the game of soccer. A local rule that takes away one or more of the skills used in playing the game lessens the opportunities for players to learn to execute the skill correctly, coaches to teach the skill and referees to recognize the skill performed legally.

May regions elect to pay their referees?

In a few isolated instances with special permission from AYSO, an existing soccer league or organization is permitted to transfer into AYSO and may continue to pay its referees for a fixed period of time (usually 1-2 years) during which the league or organization pledges to effect a

Guidance for Referees and Coaches

transition to an all-volunteer referee corps. Otherwise, AYSO's position on payment of referees is made clear in AYSO Policy Statement 2 (2.5) which states:

*"No payment may be made to any AYSO volunteer for the purpose of compensating such volunteer for services **unless otherwise approved** in exceptional circumstances by the National Board of Directors. AYSO has maintained throughout its existence a total volunteer concept of operation (except for its National staff) including without limitation, all aspects of coaching, officiating and local administration.*

*AYSO is a volunteer organization and does not condone or approve of the use of paid volunteers. **Various federal and state laws apply to payments for services and any person who condones or approves payment for volunteer services risks significant organizational and personal liability and penalty. Such liability is not covered in the Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 for the individual volunteers who may approve or condone such conduct.***

Paid professional trainers, medical personnel and security officers employed by a region, area or section, in their capacity as full-time service providers in their professional fields do not necessarily fall within the scope of these employer-employee laws. Any region which wishes to utilize such services for clinics, tournaments or other regional events should contact the National Support & Training Center for guidance and approved standards when hiring such professionals."

There are alternate ways referees can be recognized. Regions often provide their referees with uniforms, referee bags, warm-ups, free food and drinks from the concession stand and other incentives to show their appreciation. Additionally AYSO has a publication called "Recruiting and Retaining Referees" which contains useful information regarding developing volunteer referees.

AYSO has what has been referred to as the best amateur referee training program in the world. Recruiting volunteer referees may not be easy but it is successfully done in AYSO regions all across the country.

Research has shown that there is no correlation between paying referees and quality or quantity. It has been our experience that individuals motivated to referee because they want to help the kids or the program, rather than to make money, produces a quality referee. With a strong recruiting, training, and retaining program, Regions across the country are able to maintain a sufficient volunteer base to operate their programs.

Are coaches and referees required to be certified in AYSO?

In AYSO, all referees and coaches are required to be trained and certified. AYSO requires all its volunteers to complete, sign and submit a Volunteer Application form each year and to act within their job descriptions and the scope of AYSO Policies, Procedures and Guidelines.

For the benefit of our children and volunteers, AYSO further requires that all coaches and referees and certain other volunteers

- Complete Safe Haven certification;
- Be properly trained in their jobs; and
- Be authorized to do their job (by region, area or other AYSO authority).

Most states have Good Samaritan statutes that provide protection from civil liability to any person who in good faith offers aid and assistance consistent with their training.

The Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 was passed by Congress to protect volunteerism. This law grants immunity from certain types of prosecution for volunteers who meet its requirements.

Regions should ensure that all volunteer coaches and referees annually submit a volunteer application form to the Child and Volunteer Protection Advocate (CVPA). The CVPA should then determine whether or not the volunteer should be recommended to the regional board of directors for approval and appointment as a regional volunteer for that year. Before these volunteer coaches and referees are allowed to perform their jobs, regions should first ensure that they have attended the Safe Haven Certification Course, they are properly trained in their jobs and are authorized to do their jobs by the regional board. These requirements are clearly stated in various AYSO documents.

When individuals are asked to perform the duties of coach or referee without first undergoing these requirements, this is contrary to AYSO policy and, more importantly, does not provide the minimum level of protection for either the volunteer or the children for whom we are responsible.

May a game or practice proceed in the absence of an AYSO certified and trained coach or referee?

AYSO practices and games are not permitted without an AYSO certified and trained team coach in possession of the current AYSO player medical release form for each player participating. AYSO scheduled games are not permitted without an AYSO certified and trained referee. Practice scrimmages do not require a certified and trained referee.

Is there a minimum age requirement to be an AYSO certified instructor?

The minimum age for AYSO certified instructors is 18. The instructor responsible for the course may choose anyone to assist him or her in this course.

Are referees required to see a "Participant Release Form" before allowing a player to participate in games following a known serious injury or sickness which required professional medical attention?

No, this is not the referee's responsibility!

Are coaches required to see a "Participant Release Form" before allowing a player to participate in games following a known serious injury or sickness which required professional medical attention?

Yes, it is the responsibility of the coach to see and provide the regional safety director and/or regional commissioner with a copy of the "Participant Release Form" before allowing a player to participate in practices or games, following a known serious injury or sickness which required professional medical attention.

What are referees authorized to do when subjected to abusive or negative comment from spectators or coaches?

The Laws of the Game, AYSO National Rules and Regulations and our Kids Zone Program make it clear that the referee has the authority and should take action to deal with inappropriate spectator or coach behavior. Exactly what to do in these situations or how it should be done is left to the judgment of the referee. Referees should request the assistance of coaches when dealing with inappropriate spectator behavior but ultimately it is the referee who is responsible and must take action. Referees may require spectators or coaches to improve their behavior and may request they leave the area or even suspend or terminate the game if the individual is unwilling to comply. Interpersonal skills and common sense are the referee's tools to accomplish the task.

What happens when a match is abandoned?

According to the Laws of the Game “An abandoned match is replayed (completely) unless the competition rules provide otherwise”. Referees should not declare who the winner is when a match is abandoned. The referee simply records the circumstances surrounding the reason the match was abandoned and it is then up to the governing body (Regional Board) to determine the appropriate action according to the competition rules (Regional Guidelines).

Are female players allowed to use their hands to protect their chest?

All players (male and female) may **PROTECT** themselves from being hit by the ball by using their hand or hands. This may happen unexpectedly during play or from a free kick when they are positioned as defensive players in a wall (commonly seen at upper levels of play). Self defense is not a foul but **DELIBERATE** use of the hands to **CONTROL** the ball is a foul. Referees are charged with determining whether or not the contact of ball and hand was deliberate to control the ball or self protection. Coaches should not be teaching players to use their hands to control the ball unless they are goalkeepers or to take a throw-in. Female players who use their hands or arms to **CONTROL** a ball which is about to hit them in the chest are guilty of deliberately handling the ball. The same would be true for male players who used their hands or arms to **CONTROL** a ball which was about to hit them in the groin area.

Why doesn't AYSO teach or approve of referees using the Dual Referee System?

The AYSO National Referee Program does not support the dual referee system. We have no approved instruction or supporting materials regarding the dual system and strongly recommend against its use.

The FIFA Laws of the Game, under which we operate, specify in Law 5 that, “*Each match is controlled by a referee who has full authority to enforce the Laws of the Game in connection with the match to which he has been appointed*”. FIFA Law (Law 5) clearly designate one referee “*controls the match in co-operation with the assistant referees...*” and Law 6 further specifies that, “*Two assistant referees are appointed...*”. One referee with a whistle and two assistant referees with flags is the way it should be done.

The reality of life in AYSO is that we often do not have enough trained and qualified officials to have a referee with two assistant referees “on the line” for all the games. Nevertheless, it is still far better, when only two qualified officials are available for a game, to assign one as the referee and the other as a qualified assistant referee for one side of the field and, if possible, recruit an additional “club linesman” for the other side. If no “club linesman” is available the referee assumes the duties of the missing Assistant Referee. This will make the best of the situation and provide opportunities for practice doing it right and to possibly recruit a new referee candidate.

Using the dual system (two referees on the field each with a whistle) promotes poor officiating habits. Use of the dual referee system actually develops poor officiating habits as the two officials attempt the impossible task of remaining close to play and at the same time being in position to accurately call offside infractions. There is also a tendency in the dual referee system for the two officials to hesitate in making decisions while they attempt to see if the other official is going to make the call or worse they both make the call and signal in opposite directions. The end result is that calls are not made that should be. The dual referee system usually ends up looking like two assistant referees remaining near the touch line just calling the ball in and out of play with no one covering play in the middle of the field.

As the late Ken Aston often said, “The responsibility for the flow and control of the game cannot be shared”. One whistle, one interpretation, one opinion, one decision.

Short-Sided Games Guide for Referees

Introduction

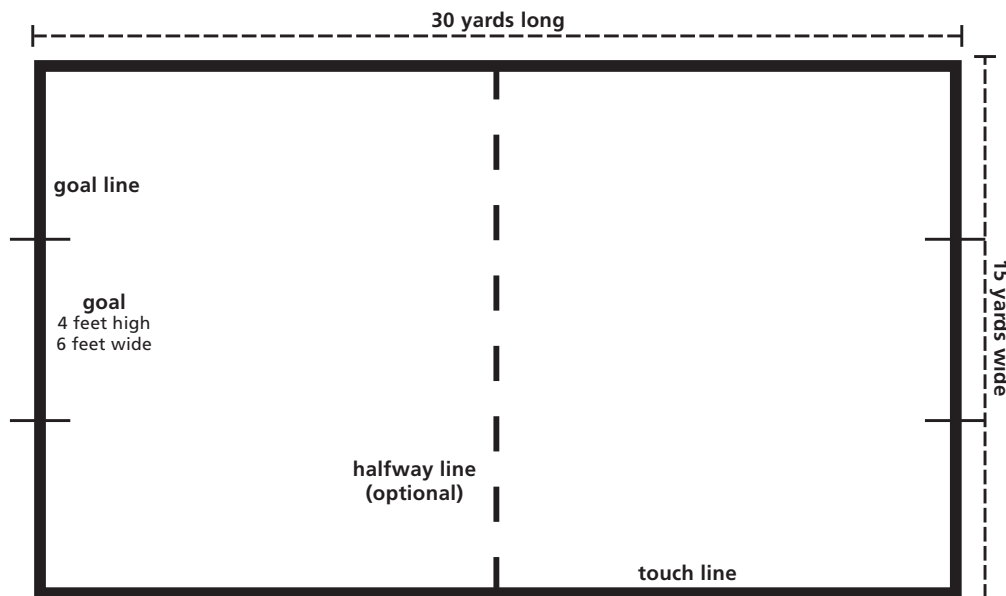
The AYSO National Referee Commission in cooperation with the National Coaching Commission has prepared this information as a guide for referees to conduct short-sided games. The information contained in this guide is intended to support the specific recommendations of the AYSO National Coaching Commission for short-sided play. Thank you for volunteering your time and talents as a referee and for helping young AYSO players learn to love and play the beautiful game of soccer.

UNDER-5 GUIDELINES

The following guidelines include the only elements of the Laws of the Game that apply to the AYSO U-5 Division:

The Field:

The recommended field size for U-5 games is 30 x 15 yards marked with lines or cones. See diagram.



The Goals:

The goals in U-5 games should be a maximum of 4 feet high and 6 feet wide or 2 tall cones set 6 feet apart.

Guidance for Referees and Coaches

The Ball:

A size 3 ball is used for U-5 games.

The Teams:

Each U-5 team should have a maximum of 4 or 5 on the team. Games are played with 3 players per team on the field (3v3) and no goalkeepers. Substitutions are made at quarters, halftime and for injuries. A minimum of 2 quarters is required for each player and it is recommended that no one play 4 quarters until everyone has played 3 quarters. Separate boys and girls teams are recommended at all levels.

Player Equipment:

Shoes and shinguards, covered by socks are mandatory at all practice and game activities. Soccer shoes, tennis shoes, or similar type athletic shoes are recommended. The type and condition of cleated shoes must be inspected for safety before use.

The Start of Play:

To start the first and second halves, and following each goal, play is started or restarted with a kick-off in the center of the field. A coin toss is used to determine which team kicks off to start the game and the other team kicks off to start the second half. Following a goal, the team scored upon kicks off.

The Kick-off:

The kick-off is taken from the center of the field with each team in their own half and the team not kicking off at least 5 yards from the ball. Do not insist the opponent be a minimum of precisely 5 yards from the ball as this is just a guide to give the kicker room to kick the ball without it immediately hitting an opponent. Remember, let them play and do not interfere for technicalities.

Ball In and Out of Play:

The ball is out of play when it completely crosses the touch line (side line) or goal line (end line) either on the ground or in the air. In U-5 games, the game supervisors for the week will determine when the ball is out of play. When the ball goes out of play in U-5 games across the touch line (side line) or the goal line (end line) without a goal being scored, a throw-in is awarded at the point it crossed the line.

Throw-in:

When the ball goes out of play in U-5 games across the touch line (side line) or the goal line (end line) without a goal being scored, a throw-in is awarded at the point it crossed the line. The throw-in is awarded to the team that didn't touch the ball last.

Whether the throw-in is properly taken or not, let it go...teach proper technique later. Again, let them play with minimum interruption. Keep the game moving and fun.

Method of Scoring:

A goal is awarded when the ball completely crosses the goal line into the goal. Goals should be enthusiastically celebrated by **everyone**. In U-5 games, goals are not recorded to determine who wins as everyone is a winner.

Fouls and Other Stoppages:

Deliberate fouling should be rare in U-5 games. Kicking, tripping, handling the ball and dangerous play may occur. There should be few, if any additional reasons to stop play in U-5 games. If a player is "not playing well with others", or if play must be stopped for any other reason (injury,

Guidance for Referees and Coaches

substitution, confusion, or to watch a passing train, butterfly or frog), refocus the players and begin with a free kick or as may be appropriate. Award the restart to whichever team deserves it. Stoppages must not become a lengthy ceremony.

Free Kick:

Play may have to be stopped occasionally to “sort things out” in U-5 games. When this is necessary, correct the situation and then restart with a free kick for the deserving team. The opposing team should be at least 5 yards from the ball in U-5 games. All free kicks in U-5 games are direct free kicks which means, if you’re lucky, a goal can be scored directly from the kick without the ball having to be touched or played by another player on the field.

UNDER-5 JAMBOREE ONE WITH ONE GUIDELINES

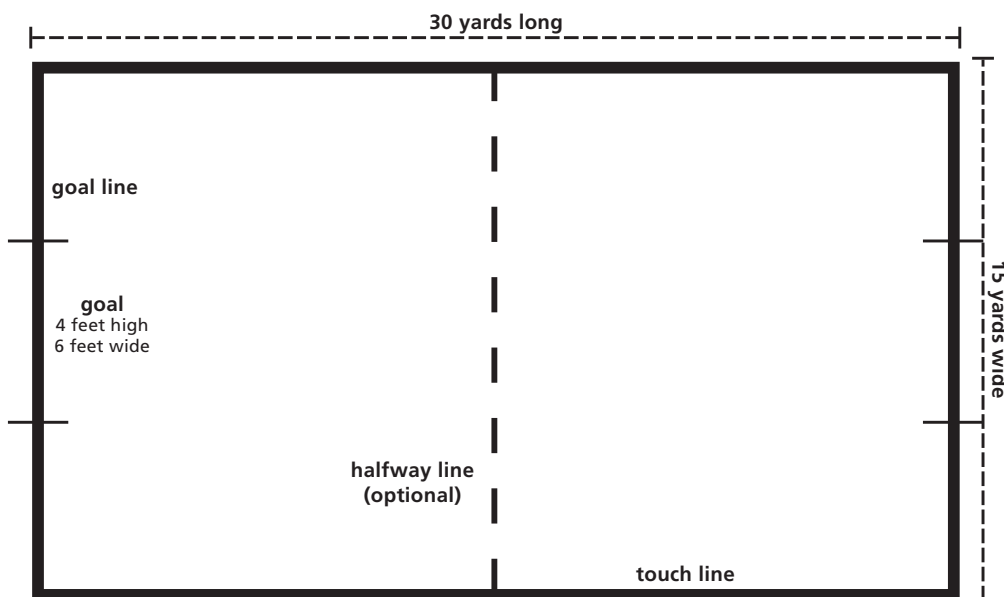
Each Jamboree session will end with a 20 minute short-sided game (3v3) where the same rules apply as described above. Most importantly, allow the players to play without coaching or teaching as this experience is designed to expose them to soccer, not to begin developing them. The two objectives of the program are to allow the players to enjoy the activities, and let the game be the teacher.

UNDER-6 GUIDELINES

The following guidelines include the only elements of the Laws of the Game that apply to the AYSO Short-Sided Games Program for U-6 games:

The Field:

The recommended field size for U-6 games is 30 x 15 yards marked with lines or cones. See diagram.



The goals in U-6 games should be a maximum of 4 feet high and 6 feet wide or just use tall cones set 6 feet apart.

Guidance for Referees and Coaches

The Ball:

A size 3 ball is used for U-6 games.

The Teams:

Each U-6 team should have a maximum of 5 on the roster. Games are played with 3 players per team on the field (3v3) and no goalkeepers. Substitutions are made at quarters, halftime and for injuries. A minimum of 2 quarters is required for each player and it is recommended that no one play 4 quarters until everyone has played 3 quarters. Separate boys and girls teams are recommended at all levels.

Player Equipment:

Shoes and shinguards covered by the socks are mandatory at all practices and games for all age groups. Soccer shoes, tennis shoes or similar type athletic shoes are recommended. The type and condition of cleated shoes must be inspected for safety before use.

Officials:

There is no need for fully qualified referees to manage U-6 games. One or both of the coaches should "officiate" using a whistle to stop play. The games are intended to be an opportunity for the very youngest of our players to experience the fun of playing. The barest of minimum rules are needed and should be applied with a generous amount of flexibility. For as much as possible, the coaches should not be on the field while "officiating". Let the players have the freedom to play with a minimum of whistling that interrupts play.

Duration of Game:

U-6 games are twenty minutes and are played in 2 ten minute halves with substitutions allowed 5 minutes into each half. The half-time break is 5-10 minutes.

The Start of Play:

To start the first and second halves and following each goal in all age group games, play is started or restarted with a kick-off in the center of the field. A coin toss is used to determine which team kicks off to start the game and the other team kicks off to start the second half. Following a goal, the team scored upon kicks off.

The Kick-off:

The kick-off is taken from the center of the field with each team in their own half and the team not kicking off at least 5 yards from the ball in U-6 games. Do not insist the opponent be a minimum of precisely 5 yards from the ball as this is just a guide to give the kicker room to kick the ball without it immediately hitting an opponent. Remember, let them play and do not interfere for technicalities.

Ball In and Out of Play:

The ball is out of play in all age group games when it completely crosses the touch line (side line) or goal line (end line) either on the ground or in the air. The coach, in U-6 games, will determine when the ball is out of play and should interfere as little as possible in the restart. It's the player's game, let them play and work on technique later.

Method of Scoring:

A goal, in all age group games, is awarded when the ball completely crosses the goal line into the goal. Goals should be enthusiastically celebrated by everyone but, in U-6 games, they are not recorded to determine who wins. Everyone wins in U-6 games.

Fouls and Other Stoppages:

Deliberate fouling should be rare in U-6 games. Kicking, tripping, handling the ball and dangerous play may occur. There should be few, if any, additional reasons to stop play in U-6 games. If a player is “not playing well with others” or if play must be stopped for any other reason (injury, substitution, confusion, or to watch a passing train, butterfly or frog), refocus the players and begin again with a free kick or throw-in as appropriate. Award the restart to whichever team deserves it or flip a coin to decide but do not make it a lengthy ceremony. Exercise common sense, briefly explain infractions and stand back and let ‘em play.

Free Kick:

Play may have to be stopped occasionally to “sort things out” in U-6 games. A player may pick the ball up and start running with it or want to keep it away from the other players or perhaps there is a pile of kids on the ground kicking at both the ball and each other. Stop play and correct the situation, then restart with a free kick for a deserving player. All free kicks in U-6 games are direct free kicks which means, if you’re lucky, a goal can be scored directly from the kick.

Throw-in:

When the ball goes out of play, in U-6 games, across the touch lines (side lines), a throw-in is awarded from where it crossed the line to the team that didn’t touch it last. In U-6 games, whether the throw-in is properly taken or not, let it go! Proper technique can be taught later. Again, let them play, give quick explanations when necessary and minimize interruptions. Keep the game moving and fun.

Kick-in:

When the ball goes out of play across one of the goal lines (end lines) and a goal is not scored, a kick-in, in U-6 games, is awarded from where it crossed the line to the team that didn’t touch it last. As with the throw-in, the coach should let the player take the kick-in with as little ceremony or interference as possible. Keep the game moving and fun.

UNDER-6 JAMBOREE GUIDELINES

During the U-6 Jamboree 3 v 3 scrimmages, the same rules apply as described above. The “Master Coach” will instruct the volunteer coaches or parents how to keep the games going with as little interference as possible.

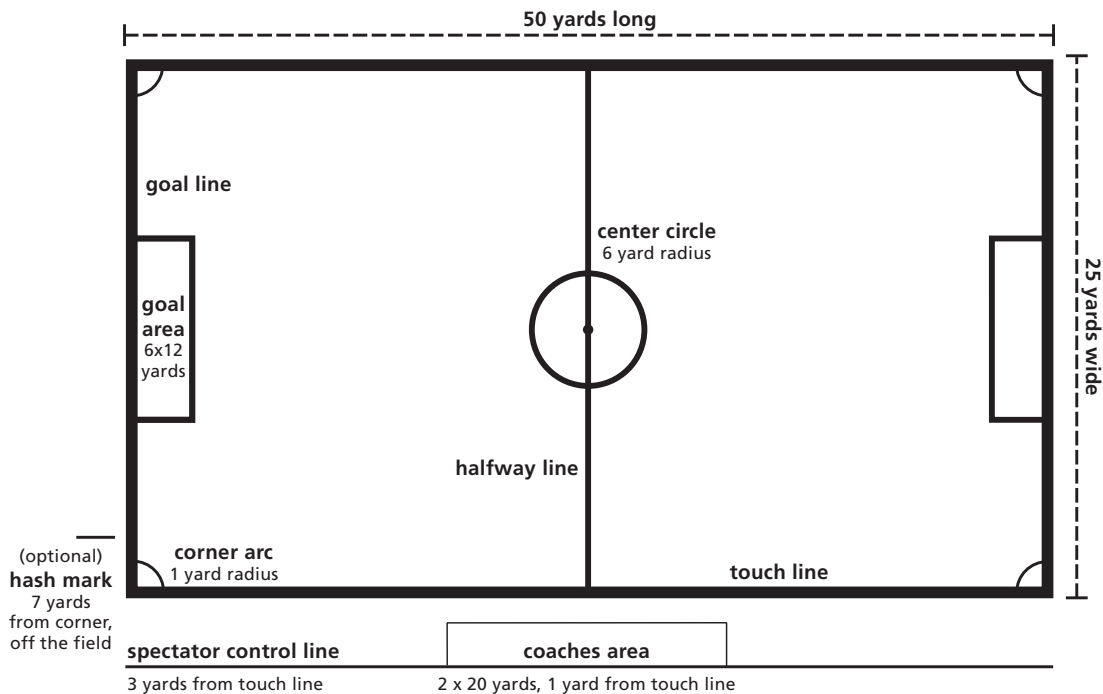
UNDER-8 GUIDELINES

The guidelines for U-8 games in the AYSO Short-Sided Games Program are the same as for U-6 games and no other elements of the Laws of the Game apply, with the following modifications or additions:

The Field:

The recommended field size for U-8 games is 50 x 25 yards with the following field markings: Halfway line, 6 yard radius center circle, 1 yard radius corner arcs and 6 x 12 yard goal areas. See diagram on the following page.

Guidance for Referees and Coaches



The Goals:

The goals in U-8 games should be a maximum of 6 feet high and 6 yards wide.

The Ball:

A size 3 ball is used for U-8 games.

The Teams:

Each U-8 team should have a maximum of 7 on the roster. Games are played with 5 players per team on the field (5v5) and no goalkeepers.

Officials:

AYSO certified U-8 Officials or higher are required for U-8 games. The U-8 Official should briefly explain any infringements to the player(s) and encourage proper play and sporting behavior. As with all games, every effort should be made to keep the game moving and free from stoppages for doubtful infractions. Let them play and enjoy.

Duration of Game:

U-8 games are forty minutes and are played in 2 twenty minute halves with substitutions allowed 10 minutes into each half. The half-time break is 5-10 minutes.

Kick-off:

Opponents must be at least 6 yards from the ball during the kick-off in U-8 games.

Fouls:

The following, if deliberately done, are the fouls most likely to occur in U-8 games: kicking, tripping, pushing, holding, handling the ball and dangerous play. Do not stop play for trifling violations. It's a player's game so keep the fun going and let them play.

Misconduct:

Misconduct should be rare in U-8 games. There is no need for the public cautioning and sending off of young players (leave your red and yellow cards home). Officials should work cooperatively with the coach when a U-8 player may need a "time out".

Free Kicks:

All free kicks in U-8 games are direct free kicks. Opponents must be at least 6 yards from the ball or on the goal line between the goal posts during free kicks. Free kicks awarded the attacking team inside the defending team's goal area are to be taken from the nearest point on the goal area line parallel to the goal line.

Throw-in:

A second throw-in should be allowed in U-8 games if the first attempt was improperly done. Following brief corrective instructions, a second attempt should be permitted. If the second attempt is still done improperly, let it go. Proper technique can be reinforced later by the coach. Keep the game moving and minimize interruptions.

Goal Kick:

A goal kick is awarded the opposing team, in U-8 age groups and older, when the attacking team is last to touch the ball before it crosses the goal line but not scoring a goal. The goal kick may be taken from any point inside the goal area. The opposing team must be at least 6 yards from the ball when the goal kick is taken in U-8 games.

Corner Kick:

A corner kick is awarded the opposing team, in U-8 age groups and older, when the defending team is last to touch the ball before it crosses the goal line but not scoring a goal. The opposing team must be at least 6 yards from the ball when the corner kick is taken in U-8 games.

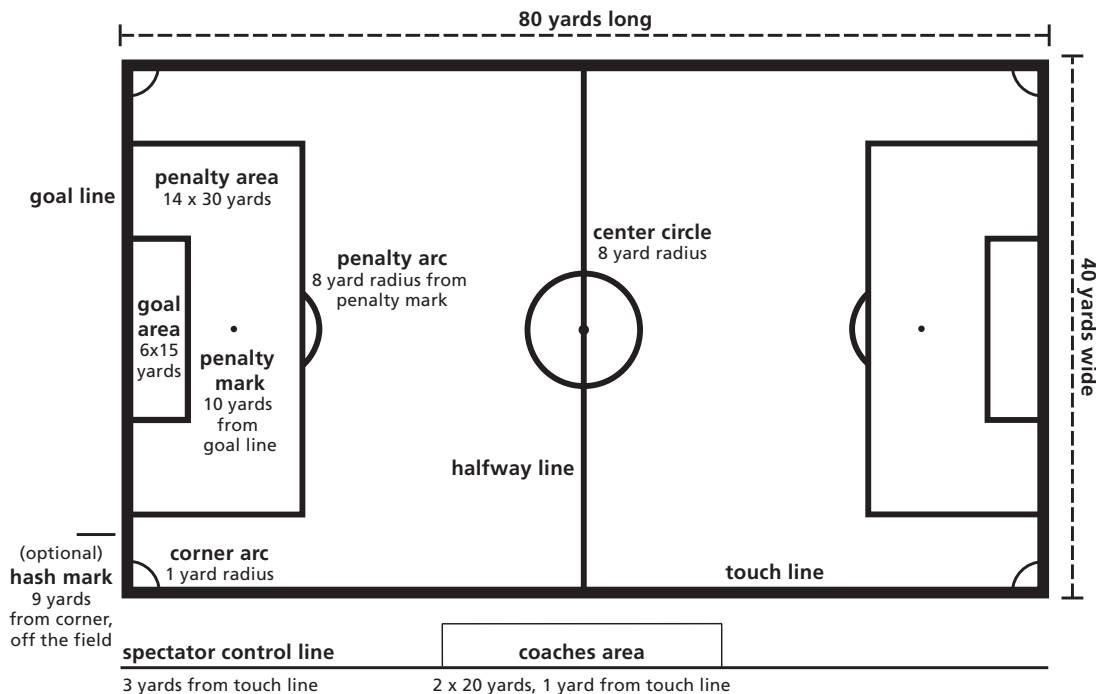
UNDER-10 GUIDELINES

The guidelines for U-10 games in the AYSO Short-Sided Games Program are the same as for U-8 games and no other elements of the Laws of the Game apply, with the following modifications or additions:

The Field:

The recommended field size for U-10 games is 80 x 40 yards with the following field markings: Halfway line, 8 yard radius center circle, 1 yard radius corner arcs, 6 x 15 yard goal areas, 14 x 30 yard penalty areas, a penalty mark 10 yards from each goal and penalty arcs extending 8 yards from the penalty mark. See diagram on the following page.

Guidance for Referees and Coaches



The Goals:

The goals in U-10 games should be a maximum of 7 feet high and 7 yards wide.

The Ball:

A size 4 ball is used for U-10 games.

The Teams:

Each U-10 team should have a maximum of 10 on the roster. Games are played with 7 players per team on the field (7v7) one of which may be a goalkeeper.

Referee:

AYSO certified Regional Referees or higher are required for U-10 and older games. Be a thinking referee who only interferes with play when necessary for the safety of the players and the good of the game. The game belongs to the players.

Assistant Referees/Club Linesmen:

If available, qualified assistant referees who have completed Assistant Referee Certification may be used to assist the referee. This is an opportunity for new assistant referees to begin getting experience. If qualified assistant referees are not available, Club Linesmen (untrained volunteers who may be affiliated with one of the teams/clubs) may be recruited from the spectators to assist the referee with calling the ball in and out of play only. This is an opportunity for parents to get involved.

Duration of Game:

U-10 games are fifty minutes and are played in 2 twenty-five minute halves with substitutions allowed 12 1/2 minutes into each half. The half-time break is 5-10 minutes.

Kick-off:

Opponents must be at least 8 yards from the ball during the kick-off in U-10 games.

Offside:

The Offside Law applies in U-10 and older games. Offside is a simple Law easily misunderstood by those new to the game. Refer to the Laws of the Game for more information regarding the Offside Law.

Fouls:

For U-10 and older games, all fouls identified in Law 12 apply. Refer to the Laws of the Game for more information. Although there is now the potential for more fouls, referees must still remember that only deliberate breaches of the Law merit stopping the game and that constant whistling for trifling or doubtful breaches produces bad feeling and loss of temper on the part of the players and spoils the pleasure of the spectators. Maximize playing time - minimize stoppages.

Misconduct:

Misconduct should still be relatively rare in U-10 games. Coaches at all levels of play have the option of calling players to the touchline to receive a few words of "positive instruction" concerning the player's behavior. A coach also has the option of telling a player to ask the referee for permission to leave the field and then, after getting the player under control, having the player request permission to reenter the game. The referee should permit these requests. However, substitution is not allowed for the player leaving the field in this situation.

Free Kicks:

Opponents must be at least 8 yards from the ball or on the goal line between the goal posts during free kicks in U-10 games. Free kicks, in U-10 and older games, may be either direct (may score directly) or indirect (must be touched or played by another player before a goal can be scored). Refer to the Laws of the Game for further details.

Penalty Kicks:

Penalty kicks may be awarded in U-10 and older games. A penalty kick results from a player committing one of the ten direct free kick fouls inside his or her own (defending) penalty area. The penalty kick is taken from the penalty mark with all other players outside the penalty area except for the opposing goalkeeper. Refer to the Laws of the Game for further details.

Throw-in:

Second chances are not given for improper throw-ins for U10 and older players. An improper throw-in results in a throw-in for the opposing team. The referee must judge if indeed the throw-in violated the spirit of the Throw-in Law or if the violation was trifling and not worthy of stopping play. Keep the game moving and minimize unnecessary interruptions.

Goal Kick:

The ball is not in play and cannot be touched or played by either team until it has been kicked beyond the penalty area in U-10 and older games. The goal kick is retaken if the ball is touched or played by either team before leaving the penalty area.

Corner Kick:

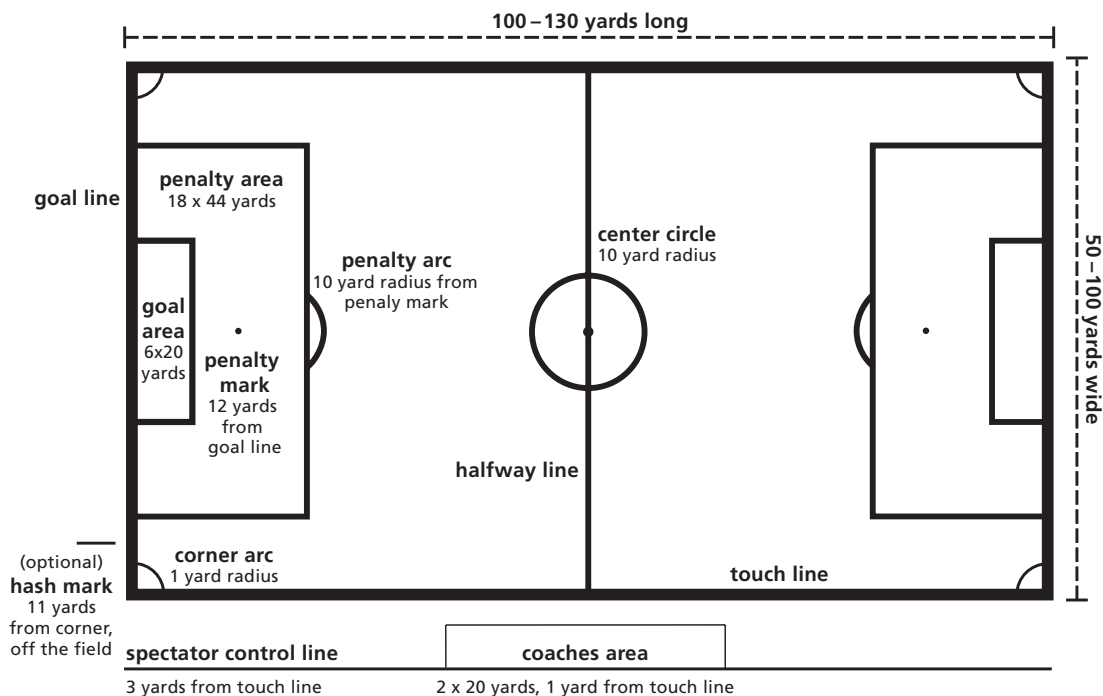
The opposing team must be at least 8 yards from the ball when the corner kick is taken in U-10 games.

UNDER-12 GUIDELINES

The guidelines for the AYSO Short-Sided Games Program for U-12 games are as specified in the FIFA Laws of the Game and the AYSO National Rules and Regulations with the following modifications or additions:

The Field:

The recommended field size is 100 x 50 yards for U-12 games with field markings as specified in the Laws of the Game. See diagram.



The Goals:

Official size goals (8 feet high and 8 yards wide) are used in U-12 games.

The Ball:

A size 4 ball is used for U-12 games.

The Teams:

Each U-12 team should have a maximum of 12 on the roster. Games are played with 9 players per team on the field (9v9) one of which is the goalkeeper.

Duration of Game:

U-12 games are sixty minutes and are played in 2 thirty minute halves with substitutions allowed 15 minutes into each half. The half-time break is 5-10 minutes. With the exceptions noted above, all other elements of the Laws of the Game apply to U-12 games.

The AYSO National Rules and Regulations

AMERICAN YOUTH SOCCER ORGANIZATION (AYSO) NATIONAL RULES & REGULATIONS 2005-2006

I. GAME CONDUCT

All AYSO games shall be conducted in accordance with the current FIFA Laws of the Game and decisions of the International Board in effect at a date specified by the area director for his area (approximately the time of team formation for a given season), with the exceptions noted below:

A. COMPETITION

1. Coaches or other officials shall not enter the field of play, unless requested by the referee.
2. Except as noted in paragraph I.H., a minimum of seven (7) players shall constitute a team; a scheduled game shall not commence nor be continued if one or both teams cannot field seven (7) eligible players.

B. DURATION OF GAMES

1. U-6 games shall be two (2) halves not to exceed twenty (20) minutes each.
2. U-8 games shall be two (2) halves, not to exceed twenty (20) minutes each.
3. U-10 games shall be two (2) halves, not to exceed twenty-five (25) minutes each.
4. U-12 games shall be two (2) halves, not to exceed thirty (30) minutes each.
5. U-14 games shall be two (2) halves, not to exceed thirty-five (35) minutes each.
6. U-16 games shall be two (2) halves, not to exceed forty (40) minutes each.
7. U-19 games shall be two (2) halves, not to exceed forty-five (45) minutes each.
8. Half-time periods shall be a minimum of five (5) and a maximum of ten (10) minutes as designated by the referee.

C. PLAYING TIME AND SUBSTITUTION

1. Except as noted in paragraph C.4., all registered players in attendance at AYSO games must participate and play at least half of the game, excluding overtime. Players must be recognized by the referee prior to entry onto the playing field.

Such participation is controlled as follows:

Guidance for Referees and Coaches

- a. Approximately midway through the first half, and approximately midway through the second half, the referee halts the game, stops his/her watch and notes on the lineup cards those players substituting. Stoppage is made when the ball is out of play, and prior to the appropriate restart (i.e., throw-in, goal-kick, corner-kick, kick-off, free-kick, penalty-kick or drop ball). Additionally, substitutions may be made at half-time and at the start of any overtime periods.
 - b. Respective coaches of each team may substitute as many players or none during such interruptions, as long as all players meet the minimum playing requirements.
 - c. Players substituting must report to the referee.
2. Substitution for injury:
- a. If a player is injured, the coach may provide a substitute for the player, in which case the injured player may not return until the beginning of the next quarter. Only the player who is injured is credited with a quarter's play regardless of the actual time played.
 - b. The coach may choose to play short thereby allowing the injured player to return during the quarter in which he was injured.
 - c. The player must be recognized by the referee in order to legally return to the game.
3. Signed lineup cards must be completed by the referee and forwarded to the regional commissioner or designee.
4. Late arriving players shall be substituted as follows:
- a. If the player arrives during the first quarter, the player must play a minimum of two (2) of the remaining three (3) quarters.
 - b. If the player arrives during the second or third quarter, the player must play a minimum of one (1) quarter.

D. OFFICIATING

1. Referees shall at all times impose the Rules & Regulations of competition as defined by AYSO and the FIFA Laws of the Game in general.
2. Referees shall at all times put great emphasis on the welfare of the players and officiate the game in a manner inducing clean competition and good sportsmanship. If a player is injured, the referee, at his/her discretion, may stop play to ensure the welfare of the player even if the ball has not gone out of play.
3. The Goalkeeper shall not be harassed or interfered with while attempting to put the ball in play.
4. It is the duty of referees to protect the goalkeeper against dangerous play.

5. The Laws of the Game are intended to provide that games should be played with as little interference as possible, and in this view it is the duty of referees to penalize only deliberate breaches of the Law. Constant whistling for trifling and doubtful breaches produces bad feelings and loss of temper on the part of the players and spoils the pleasure of spectators.

E DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF COACHES AND OFFICIALS

It shall be the duty of each coach and official to:

1. Conduct him/herself in a manner becoming a member of AYSO.
2. A rectangle defining the coaches' area shall be marked where possible by two lines parallel to the touch-line extending ten (10) yards on either side of the half way line, and by two lines perpendicular to the touch-line. The edge of the coaches' area nearer the field of play shall be, where possible, at least one yard from the touch-line; the parallel edge shall be no more than three (3) yards from the touch-line.
3. At all times encourage clean competition and good sportsmanship.
4. Train and coach their respective team to the best of their ability.
5. Uphold the Rules & Regulations of AYSO.
6. Limit their sideline participation during AYSO games to positive instruction and encouragement. Sideline participation shall be limited to two coaches from each team and they shall remain within the coaches' area as defined in Section 1.E.2. Negative comments and complaints about refereeing shall not be allowed.
7. Upon team formation, each coach must have in his/her possession a player registration form for each player assigned to the team, during team gatherings, practices, scrimmages, and games (regional, inter-regional, area, sectional, national and tournaments).
8. Present a healthy, athletic environment for players by, in the case of coaches and referees, neither consuming alcoholic beverages nor using tobacco products during practices or games or in the immediate vicinity of the soccer fields.

F. SIZE OF BALL

1. Size of ball:
 - a. U-19, U-16 and U-14 Divisions: must be 26.5 to 28.0 inches in circumference and weigh between 14 and 16 ounces (Size 5).
 - b. U-12 and U-10 Divisions: must be 25.0 to 26.5 inches in circumference and weigh between 12 and 14 ounces (Size 4).
 - c. U-8 and U-6 Divisions: must be 23.0 to 25.0 inches in circumference and weigh between 10 and 12 ounces (Size 3).

G. FIELD OF PLAY

1. Dimensions, the field of play, marking, goal area, penalty area, corner area, and goals will be at the discretion of the particular region, except during post-season play-off games where the field must conform to all FIFA Laws of the Game requirements, including the size being no less than 100 yards in length and 50 yards in width.
2. On open fields where most youth games are played, the field shall be marked, where possible, with a spectator control line parallel to the touch line (side line) at a distance of at least three (3) yards from the touch line. All coaches, referees, linesmen, and other league officials are asked to ensure that spectators remain behind this line.
3. With the exception of photographers who have received authorization from the referee, and who must remain quiet and sufficiently back from the goal line, spectators should not be allowed behind the goal line.

H. SMALL-SIDED GAMES

1. It is strongly recommended that U-6 through U-12 divisions play small-sided games, conducted in accordance with the current FIFA Laws of the Game as modified by the age appropriate AYSO Coaching Manual.
2. Small-sided games are permitted for all divisions.

II. TEAMS

- A. Team names shall bear no resemblance to a religion or nationality.
- B. Teams shall participate only in games approved by their respective Regional Commissioner and/or AYSO Special Games Committee.
- C. Each U-19 and U-16 team shall have a maximum of eighteen (18) and a minimum of twelve (12) registered players at any one time. Each U-14 through U-8 team shall have a maximum of fifteen (15) and a minimum of twelve (12) registered players at any one time. U-8 teams may optionally play with a maximum of nine (9) players on a side in which case teams shall have a maximum of thirteen (13) and a minimum of ten (10) registered players. All divisions may play optionally with teams of smaller sizes for minisoccer, indoor soccer or small-sided games, subject to rules established by the section.
- D. Every effort will be made to balance team strengths within any one age division, within a reasonable geographical area.
- E. A region or area shall not form leagues on a major and minor basis within any, or all of its divisions.
- F. Retention of players on any team shall be limited to the head coach's child (ren).
- G. The guidelines under item 400.II.C shall be followed but in certain circumstances the area director shall have the authority to allow one or more regions in that area to carry more than the maximum amount of players listed under item 400.II.C but no more than would allow each player to play one-half of each game.

III. REGISTRATION

A. The standard age divisions for the Boys and Girls programs are as follows:

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 1. Under five (5) years of age and not younger than 4 years of age | U-5 Division |
| 2. Under six (6) years of age | U-6 Division |
| 3. Under eight (8) years of age | U-8 Division |
| 4. Under ten (10) years of age | U-10 Division |
| 5. Under twelve (12) years of age | U-12 Division |
| 6. Under fourteen (14) years of age | U-14 Division |
| 7. Under sixteen (16) years of age | U-16 Division |
| 8. Under nineteen (19) years of age | U-19 Division |

B. Regions may form coed U-6 Division for boys and girls under six (6) years of age and not younger than 5 years. Regions may form co-ed U-5 divisions for boys and girls under five years of age and not younger than four years. Teams formed in this division will be primarily for the introduction of soccer skills and techniques to the children, not for competitive purposes.

C. The effective date of age determination shall be the player's age as of July 31st immediately prior to the start of the membership year as defined in Article V. Players who have reached the age of four years as of this date are eligible to participate in the program. Players who are nineteen years of age or older as of this date are not eligible to participate.

D. In regions where not enough players are registered to make any or all standard age divisions, a lesser number may be formed. Such divisions shall be classified on the basis of the oldest player and shall not, subsequent to the start of the season of play, be reclassified (to a lower age division) should the oldest player(s) then be removed from the roster. Regions with a sufficient number of players within a standard age division may, with the approval of the Area Director and Section Director, form single-year sub-divisions within the standard age divisions defined in III.A.

E. The regional commissioner is responsible for assuring the eligibility of all players on teams within the region. Any player must present birth certificate or other legal proof of age to the regional commissioner or area director upon request.

F. No player may register without the written consent of a parent or guardian, (unless that player is of legal age), and the approval of the regional commissioner.

G. A player becomes an official team member only after payment of the required registration fee and acceptance of registration form by the regional commissioner, or the designated representative.

H. A player may be a member of only one AYSO league-team at any one time.

Guidance for Referees and Coaches

- I. Sections may exercise the prerogative to allow boys and girls to play on the same teams where there is an insufficient number of players to establish separate teams with reasonable application of paragraph III.D. It is strongly recommended, however, that separate boys and girls teams be instituted and maintained wherever possible.

IV. TRANSFER OF PLAYERS

A player may transfer from one team to another within one region or from one region to another, after the following conditions have been met:

1. Approval of both coaches of the teams involved.
2. Approval of regional commissioner(s).
3. Approval of player or parent.

V. DURATION OF SEASON

The official playing season of AYSO shall be from August 1st through the following July 31st each year.

VI. PROPER DRESS

- A. Each chartered and pilot (upon the third anniversary of their pilot inception/existing pilot programs three years commencing July 1, 2004) AYSO region shall provide for players to wear a matching team uniform consisting of jersey, shorts, and socks. Such uniform shall be properly marked with the AYSO logo on the left front of the jersey and otherwise conforms to the markings on the attached drawing.
- B. The AYSO uniform may bear a manufacturer's name and/or trademark provided that the brand name and/or trademark is contained in the same location(s) on uniforms available to the general public.
- C. The AYSO uniform may bear an optional emblem on the sleeve and/or the front of the shorts in accordance with the attached drawing. Such emblems shall be approved by the regional commissioner, shall be about three (3) inches in diameter (or equivalent diagonal), and shall generally provide for player, regional or sponsor identity.
- D. The AYSO Uniform may not bear the player name or team name by any application of lettering, silk screening, etc.
- E. Each section shall determine the application of dress code to competitive play within the section, each area within the area, and each region within that region, respectively.
- F. Regulation soccer shoes, gym shoes, or sneakers (with or without rubber cleats) are permissible in all AYSO competitions.
- G. Players shall not be allowed to participate in any game or practice unless they are wearing shin guards.

- H. Players shall not be allowed to practice or participate in any game with any type of cast or splint. Removal of any type of cast or splint at the field or surrounding area in order to participate shall disqualify the player from practice or in any game.
- I. Players shall not wear anything that is dangerous to either themselves or other players.

VII. OWNERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY OF UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

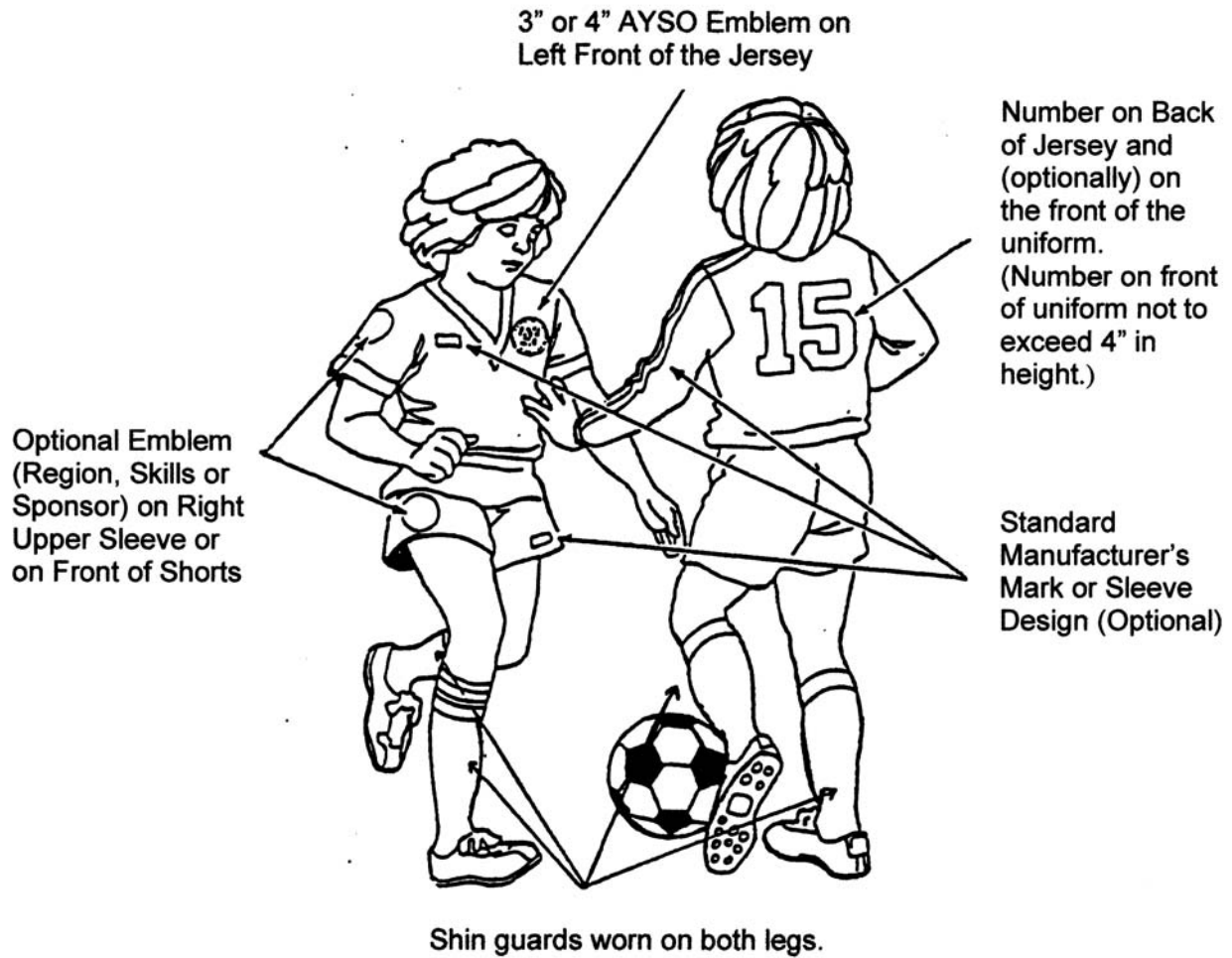
The custodianship and disposition of equipment and supplies purchased by an individual region shall be the responsibility of that region.

VIII. INJURIES

Any injury or damage involving an AYSO participant shall be reported to, and by, the regional commissioner in accordance with the directive of the American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) National Support & Training Center.

NOTE: Most recent changes are indicated by bold-type and are underlined.

Guidance for Referees and Coaches



NOTE:

1. The AYSO emblem (registered trademark) shall be worn on the left front of the jersey. The uniform number, not to exceed 4" in height, may also be put on the front of the uniform.
2. Except as indicated in Note 1. and in the drawing, additional markings on uniforms are not permitted.
3. For clarification of proper application of AYSO and manufacturers' logos refer to the AYSO National Rules & Regulations Section VI. A. and Section "800 - Legal" of the Regional Commissioner Manual.

