

Welcome!

The American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) welcomes you to the world of coaching youth soccer. The Programs Department of the National Support & Training Center and the AYSO National Coaching Commission are pleased to present this manual to help you get started.

AYSO is a place where every child plays in an atmosphere of good sportsmanship and positive coaching. The emphasis in AYSO is on youth. AYSO is unique because we recognize the social and psychological needs of children and do our best to work toward the fulfillment of those needs in all our programs. This emphasis makes AYSO a model for other youth sports groups and is a key to our astounding growth and popularity.

Developing soccer skills, physical attributes, tactical awareness and knowledge of the game are critical to promoting self-efficacy and increasing self-esteem in players. Thus, they perform at a higher level, avoid injury, see the results of their hard work and achievement and most importantly, have fun. As a volunteer coach, your participation in the program should be fun, as well.

The content of this manual is drawn from the knowledge and experience of AYSO's National Coach and National Coaching Commission—people with vast soccer knowledge, yet volunteers of AYSO—just like you. With these guidelines and recommendations, your coaching experience will be satisfying for both you and your players.

We encourage you to attend the Annual Coach Orientation Course, held in your local region, as well as other AYSO coaching courses available in your area. Your regional commissioner or coach administrator can provide you with information about what's available and how to register.

We are glad that you have joined AYSO. On behalf of the players, we thank you!

John Ouellette , AYSO National Coach

AYSO Introduction

Vision Statement

To provide world class youth soccer programs that enrich children's lives

Mission Statement

To develop and deliver quality youth soccer programs, which promote a fun, family environment based on our 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 1/2 and 19 years of age who want to register and play soccer. Interest and enthusiasm are the only criteria for playing.

Positive Coaching

Encouragement of player effort provides for greater enjoyment by the players and ultimately leads to better-skilled and better-motivated players.

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.

Why Short-Sided Soccer

AYSO recommends that all children under the age of 12 play short-sided (less than 11 players per team) soccer.

Young soccer players need special consideration.

- They are children playing a child's game.
- They must be regarded as young children, not mini adults.
- They are essentially self-oriented and relate naturally to one or two others, not to large groups.
- Fun and activity factors must be a central part of a child-centered program.
- Educators agree early learning experiences are the most important and produce the most retention.
- Most children cannot sustain prolonged activity.
- They function best in suitable starts and stops (rest periods).
- Concentration span is limited, so frequent changes of pace and activity are essential.

Children love to learn.

- They learn a great deal more when the ratio of teacher (coach) to student (player) is reduced.
- With small numbers and the simple nature of the game, the best teacher is the game itself.

- With fewer players on the field, each player gets more touches of the ball and has greater opportunity to change location in a fast-flowing, fluid game.
- Playing short-sided allows players to make simpler decisions and develop an earlier, better understanding of organization of play.
- Smaller fields mean more players are directly involved in play, creating increased levels of both concentration and interest.
- The reduced field size encourages more shots on goal by all players, therefore more goals scored.

Residual benefits.

- Parents are introduced to the game in smaller, more understandable doses.
- Short-sided soccer is a great place to train new referees.
- The rest of the world is playing short-sided, and we are part of the soccer world.

The Psychology of Coaching

Working with young athletes

It is important as a coach that you subscribe to a philosophy that acknowledges the role of athletics in developing children as complete individuals. Remember that AYSO's vision is to provide soccer programs that enrich children's lives.

As coaches we need to recognize that each athlete is an individual with unique needs and that we treat them accordingly:

- Understand that players want to enjoy attending practices and games. If they are not having fun and learning, they will lose interest and not want to return.
- Organize your activities and games so that every athlete on your team has an opportunity to develop and maintain positive feelings of self-worth.
- Provide positive encouragement to all players for both accomplishments and mistakes.

Play in this very young age group is meant to give a "taste" of the game, some experience in working together as a team, and, most of all, a positive introduction to the sports experience.

One of the appealing things about soccer as a youth sport is that practically no skills at all are required to play the game at its simplest level. If a youngster can run and can kick a ball, he or she can play soccer and enjoy it.

If we understand and support player development as both athletes and individuals, the players will enjoy themselves more and want to continue playing. We must help them understand that the objective of any game is to win, but that the overall goal is to enjoy the game and strive to do their best!

U-5 Program Guidelines

- The U-5 program should be separate from U-6, as there are significant social, emotional and physiological differences between U-5 and U-6 players.
- The effective date of age determination shall be the player's age as of July 31 of the year that the season commences. Players who have reached the age of four as of this date are eligible to participate-NO EXCEPTIONS!
- Every effort should be made to have separate girls and boys training groups.
- The Jamboree One with One format is the AYSO U-5 program and should be followed when offering a U-5 program.
- The U-5 program consists of one day per week of the Jamboree One with One program for 6 weeks.

Organization

Jamboree One with One is the combination of two different formats that, put together, provides the best possible introduction to soccer for our youngest players. In AYSO soccer, a jamboree means that groups are formed on a weekly basis depending on how many players attend a given session.

One with One refers to the concept that each player will have a parent (or other adult) working with them on the field.

A "Master Coach" will lead each session. The Master Coach will introduce a game/activity that will apply to a certain skill or part of the

game. They will explain and demonstrate to help parents and players understand the activity. Each pair (player/parent) will then attempt the activity while the Master Coach circulates between pairs providing specific help or suggestions so that the activities are performed as intended. After a suitable amount of time, the Master Coach will bring the players and parents back together as a group and recap what they have done, introducing the next game/activity.

If the activity is a group activity, each parent will be given the opportunity to play the activity (game) with the group (team).

Each Jamboree session will end with a 20 minute short-sided game (3v3). Details regarding the game are explained later in this document. 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.

3 v 3 Game Set-Up and Guidelines

Each player in the U-5 division can receive a uniform, since it is part of the fun to get dressed up for “the big game”. Having fun will make the kids want to come back. The uniforms should be identical for all players. Each week before the game portion of the day begins, players will be divided into groups of 4 (3 on the field with 1 substitute/reserve). Based on how many players arrive, pinnies (different colored “vests”) to differentiate the “teams” for games for a particular weekend will be used.

Session Schedule

Sessions (with children) should last one hour and fifteen minutes including organizing time and breaks-NO MORE.

15 minutes	Days activity explanation by the Master Coach for all helpers
10 minutes	Training Group formation
	Assigning players to groups
20 minutes	Training Activities (no more than two per session)
10 minutes	Game organizing and water break
20 minutes	3 v 3 game (played in two halves of 10 minutes each with a short break at the quarter to make substitutions and get a quick drink)

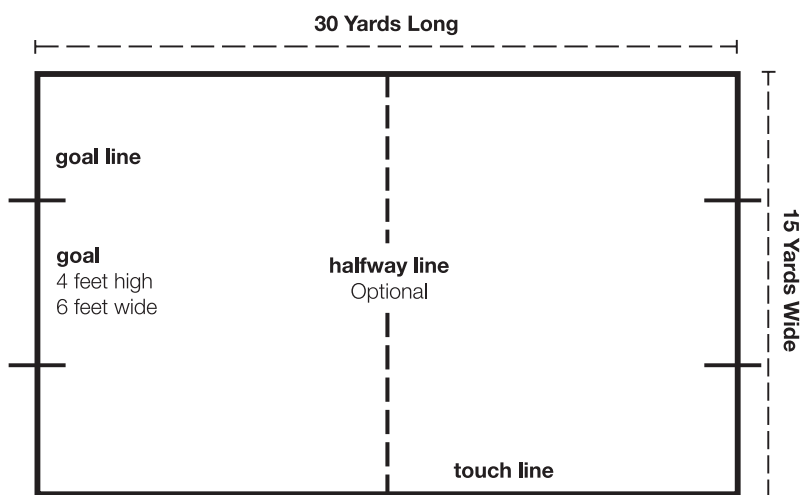
U-5 Program Guidelines

During the game, one parent from each group assigned by the Master Coach shall be selected to act as the game supervisors for the week. These parents should be requested to keep the game going. All other parents should be encouraged to cheer positively and refrain from “coaching” (giving directions) from the sideline. This is the time for the kids to play - LET THEM!

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.



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.

The Ball:

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

The Training Group:

Each U-5 training group should have a maximum of 4 or 5 on the group. Games are played with 3 players per group 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 group kicks off to start the game and the other group kicks off to start the second half. Following a goal, the group scored upon kicks off.

The Kick-off:

The kick-off is taken from the center of the field with each group in their own half and the group 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 lines) or the goal lines (end lines) 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 lines (end lines) 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, 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 group 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.

U-6 Guidelines

Activity Day at U-6

The U-6 activity day consists of a 60-minute session:

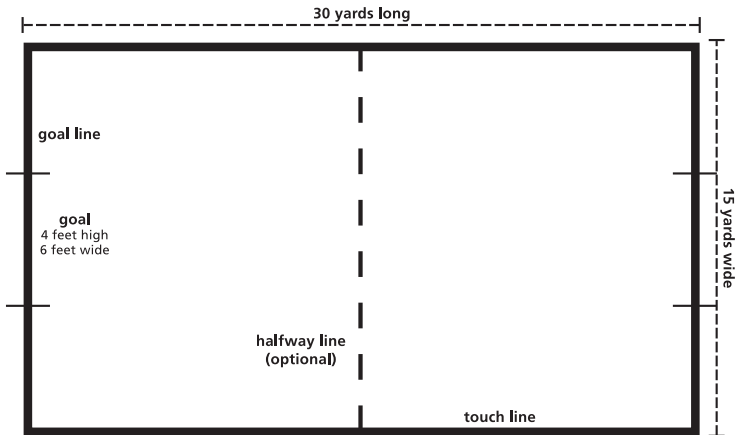
35 minutes of technical development and one 25-minute game.

Field

DIMENSIONS: 30 yards long, 15 yards wide (maximum).

MARKINGS: Distinctive lines can be used but are not required. Field can be marked using 20 flat pro-cones to mark all four sides.

U6



Goals

Maximum four feet high and six feet wide OR four tall cones, two each set six feet apart.

Ball

Size 3

Players

NUMBER: Three per team on field; no goalkeepers. Five max on roster.

SUBSTITUTIONS: Between periods, at halftime and for injuries.

PLAYING TIME: Minimum of two periods per game and no player should play four periods until everyone has played three.

TEAMS: Separate girls and boys teams at all levels of play. Only players should be allowed on the field, with the exception of a coach from each team who will manage the game.

Players' Equipment

FOOTWEAR: 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.

SHINGUARDS: MANDATORY, must be covered entirely by socks.

Duration of Game

Four five-minute periods.

Half time break of 5–10 minutes.

Start of Play

The game should be started with a kick-off in the middle of the field.

The coaches determine which team starts the game with a coin flip and the opposing team starts the second half.

Coaches will ensure that opponents are at least five yards from the spot of the kick.

Ball In & Out of Play

To be determined by coaches.

Fouls & Misconduct

To be assessed by coaches.

Direct free kick for all fouls, with the opponents five yards away from the ball.

Official

There is no need for fully qualified referees to manage U-6 games. One or both of the coaches should “officiate”. 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. Let the players have the freedom to play with minimum interruption.

U-6 Jamboree

The Jamboree is an alternative method of conducting the standard U-6 short-sided program. Following are guidelines for how to put together and run a Jamboree for your region.

Organization

Master Coach: To run a jamboree, the first step is to find a “master coach.” The master coach should be certified (at a minimum) as an AYSO Advanced Coach and Advanced Coach Instructor. The Regional Coach Administrator should work with the Regional Commissioner to determine the most qualified (and willing) instructor.

The master coach is in charge of the field! The purpose of the master coach is to guide new players through skills, activities and training games with the help of the parents, which will, in turn, ease the parents into learning how to coach.

Throughout this process, parents of each team will guide their team through the activities and games with the help and supervision of the master coach. The master coach should introduce and demonstrate each section first, then circulate to help the parents as they help the kids, giving all a positive learning experience.

Teams

Teams of five players on a roster should be formed before the season and have at least two parents per team who are willing to help on the weekend. Each player should receive a uniform, since it is part of the fun to get dressed up for “the big game”—and having fun will make the kids want to come back.

(Alternatively, teams may be formed each week at the beginning of the session based on how many players arrive, dividing them equally and using pinnies instead of uniforms.)

Session Schedule

Sessions should last one hour. Run as many sessions with as many players as is necessary throughout the day to have all players attend one session. (Example: 100 players = five sessions with 20 players [four teams] per session)

10 minutes Group Warm-Up and Stretches

25 minutes Skills and Training Games

Each week a new technique and/or piece of game knowledge should be introduced, demonstrated, practiced and then reinforced with training games that focus on the particular technique or piece of game knowledge.

5 minutes Water Break

25 minutes 3 vs. 3 Game (four five-minute periods)

During the game, one parent from each team should be selected to keep the game going. All other parents should be encouraged to cheer positively but refrain from “coaching” (giving directions) from the sideline. This is the time for the kids to PLAY.

U-8 Guidelines

Field

DIMENSIONS: 50 yards long, 25 yards wide (maximum).

MARKINGS: Distinctive lines recommended.

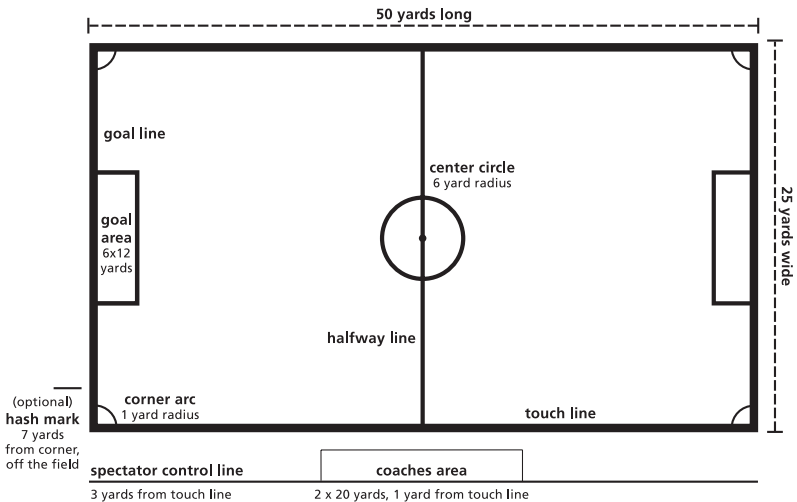
Halfway line the width of the field, marked equidistant between the goal lines.

Center circle with an six-yard radius in the center of the field.

Corner arcs with a one-yard radius at each corner of the field.

Goal area in front of each goal measuring 6 x 12 yards.

U8



Goals

Maximum six feet high and six yards wide.

Ball

Size 3

Players

NUMBER: Five per team on field; no goalkeepers.

Seven maximum on roster.

SUBSTITUTIONS: Between periods, at halftime and for injuries.

PLAYING TIME: Minimum of two periods per game and no player should play four periods until everyone has played three.

TEAMS: Separate girls and boys teams should be promoted at all levels of play.

Duration of Game

Four 10-minute periods.

Halftime break of 5–10 minutes.

Players' Equipment

FOOTWEAR: 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.

SHINGUARDS: MANDATORY for both practices and games, and must be covered entirely by socks.

Start of Play

The game should be started with a kick-off in the middle of the field.

The coaches determine which team starts the game with a coin flip and the opposing team starts the second half.

Opponents must be six yards from the center mark while kick-off is in progress.

Method of Scoring

See U-8 Coaching Manual.

Fouls & Misconduct

No offside is called.

Direct free kicks for all fouls, with the opponents six yards away from the ball.

Free kicks awarded the attacking team inside the defending team's goal area should be taken from the nearest point on the goal area line in front of the goal.

No penalty kicks.

Referees will work cooperatively with the coaches and eliminate the need for cautions and send-offs. Do not show yellow or red cards.

U-8 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.

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.

U-10 Guidelines

Field

DIMENSIONS: 80 yards long, 40 yards wide (maximum).

MARKINGS: Distinctive lines recommended.

Halfway line the width of the field, marked equidistant between the goal lines.

Center circle with an eight-yard radius in the center of the field.

Corner arcs with a one-yard radius at each corner of the field.

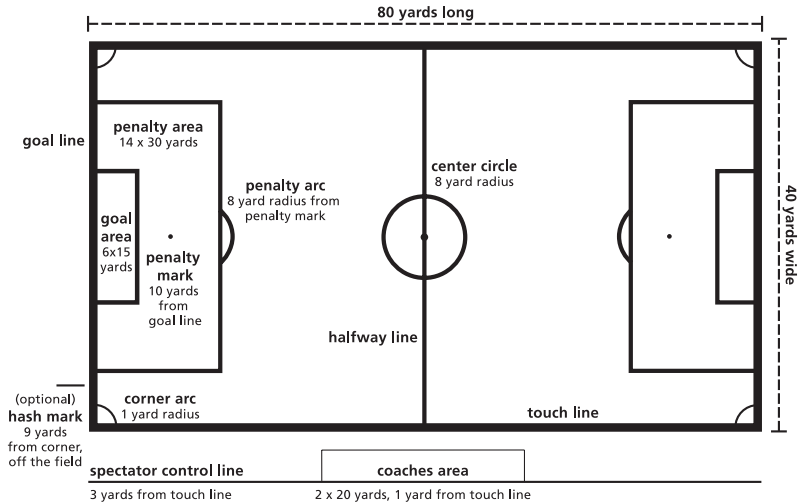
Goal area in front of each goal measuring 6 x 15 yards.

Penalty area in front of each goal measuring 14 x 30 yards.

Penalty mark ten yards from the goal line.

Penalty arc extending in a eight-yard radius from the penalty mark.

U10



Goals:

Maximum seven feet high and seven yards wide.

Ball

Size 4

Players

NUMBER: Seven per team on field; one of which is a goalkeeper.

Ten maximum on roster.

SUBSTITUTIONS: Between periods, at halftime and for injuries.

PLAYING TIME: Minimum of two periods per game and no player should play four periods until everyone has played three.

TEAMS: Separate girls and boys teams should be promoted at all levels of play.

Players' Equipment

FOOTWEAR: 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.

SHINGUARDS: MANDATORY for both practices and games, and must be covered entirely by socks.

Duration of Game

Four 12.5-minute periods.

Halftime break of 5–10 minutes.

Start of Play

The game should be started with a kick-off in the middle of the field.

The coaches determine which team starts the game with a coin flip and the opposing team starts the second half.

Opponents must be eight yards from the center mark while kick-off is in progress.

Fouls & Misconduct

Opponents must be eight yards from the ball on restart kicks.

Referees will work cooperatively with the coaches and eliminate the need for cautions and send-offs.

Referee

AYSO certified Regional Referees or higher are required for U-10 and older games. The referee 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.

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 (un-trained 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.

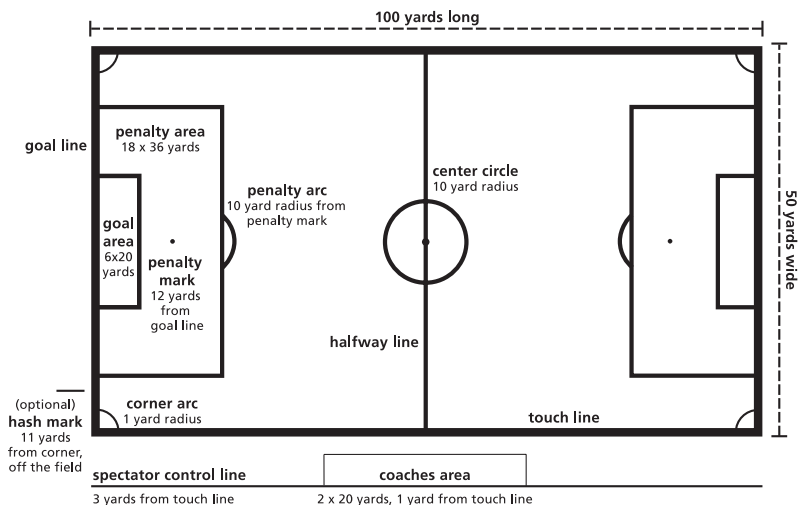
U-12 Guidelines

Field

DIMENSIONS: 100 yards long and 50 yards wide (maximum).

MARKINGS: No change from Laws of the Game.

U12



Goals

No change from Laws of the Game.

Ball

Size 4

Players:

Nine per team on field; one of which is a goalkeeper.

12 maximum on roster.

SUBSTITUTIONS: Between periods, at halftime and for injuries.

PLAYING TIME: Minimum of two periods per game and no player should play four periods until everyone has played three.

TEAMS: Separate girls and boys teams should be promoted at all levels of play.

Players' Equipment

FOOTWEAR: Soft-cleated soccer shoes or tennis shoes.

SHINGUARDS: MANDATORY for both practices and games, and must be covered entirely by socks.

Duration of Game

Four 15-minute periods.

Halftime break of 5–10 minutes.

Referee

The referee must be a certified regional referee or above.

No other changes from play as specified in FIFA Laws of the Game Printed for the American Youth Soccer Organization.

Overview of Intermediate, Advanced and National Coaching Courses

AYSO Intermediate Coaching Course

The Intermediate Coaching course is a fifteen hour course designed to link the technical aspects of the game with the ability of players to read the game.

This course also links short sided play to the full 11 a side game. Players (U 14) must be used as demonstrators for this course.

This course teaches how a coach can incorporate the four elements of Skills, Tactics, Conditioning and Psychological motivation into their training sessions while developing a proper attitude with their players, making each player feel important, making training enjoyable and rewarding for players, understand each player's strengths and weakness and providing proper role modeling.

AYSO Advanced Coaching Course

The Advanced Coaching Course is an 18 hour course with an emphasis on player, team and match analysis. While the emphasis in previous AYSO Coaching Courses is largely about technical material, the Advanced Course is about discussion and evaluation among the participants after viewing technical, tactical and game related training activities.

AYSO National Coaching Course

The National Coaching Course is designed to further develop the skills and knowledge of AYSO Advanced Coaches. The emphasis is on greater understanding of Player Evaluations, Laws of the Game, Tactical Development, Match Analysis, Anatomy/Physiology and Practical Coaching. The National Coaching Course is a week-long residential camp concentrating on helping coaches develop a higher level of understanding but finding a new sense of appreciation, enthusiasm, and self confidence as a soccer coach.

Length and Duration of Training (Practice) Sessions

as Recommended by the National Coaching
Program & National Coaching Commission

Age Group	Training Session
U-5	None
U-6	None
U-8	1 hour session – once a week plus the game
U-10	1 hour session – twice a week plus the game
U-12	1 hour session - twice a week plus the game
U-14	1-1/2 hour session – twice a week plus the game

Frequently Asked Questions – National Coaching Program

Answers provided by the AYSO National Coach and the National Coaching Commission

Why do we play short-sided games and is it mandatory?

AYSO highly recommends that all children under the age of 12 play short-sided (less than 11 players per team) soccer for the following reasons:

Young soccer players need special consideration:

- They are children playing a child's game
- They must be regarded as young children, not mini adults
- They are essentially self-oriented and relate naturally to one or two others, not to large groups
- Fun and activity factors must be a central part of a child-centered program

Educators agree early learning experiences are the most important and produce the most retention:

- Most children cannot sustain prolonged activity
- They function best in suitable starts and stops (rest periods)
- Concentration span is limited, so frequent changes of pace and activity are essential

Children love to learn:

- They learn a great deal more when the ratio of teacher (coach) to student (player) is reduced
- With small numbers and the simple nature of the game, the best teacher is the game itself
- With fewer players on the field, each player gets more touches on the ball and has greater opportunity to change location in a fast-flowing, fluid game
- Playing short-sided allows players to make simpler decisions and develop an earlier, better understanding of organization of play
- Smaller fields mean more players are directly involved in play, creating increased levels of both concentration and interest
- The reduced field size encourages more shots on goal by all players, therefore more goals scored

Residual benefits:

- Parents are introduced to the game in smaller, more understandable doses
- Short-sided soccer is a great place to train new referees
- The rest of the world is playing short-sided and we are part of the soccer world

Can we have paid trainers?

In the AYSO Reference Manual under Article One: Use of AYSO Name, Trademarks, Mailing List, AYSO's Licensing Program, Paying Volunteers, Part 2.5 in the last paragraph it states: AYSO is a volunteer organization and does not condone or approve of the use of paid volunteers such as trainers or coaches. The use of such personnel is contrary to the basic philosophy of AYSO.

Now, if your question is about using a soccer camp company to provide trainer type activities; the following is read from the National Coaching Commission and the National Board of Directors. The National Board of Directors must be assured that any such program will not overburden or conflict with the current existing programs and philosophies of AYSO.

So:

- Trainers may not be used to benefit individual teams or players within a Region. Such training must be offered to all players within the Region.
- The curriculum used must be consistent with the practices of AYSO and must be approved by the AYSO National Coach.
- All trainers must be approved in writing by the Regional Commissioner, Area Director and Section Director

Does each player have to play ½ of every game, or can it be averaged out across the season?

True to one of AYSO's founding philosophies, Everyone Plays, every player must play at least ½ of EVERY game. Additionally, it is strongly recommended that no player play four (4) quarters before all players have played three (3) quarters. The only exception to this rule would be a serious injury that truly prevents the player from participating or if the player arrives to the game after it has commenced, in which case the following National Rules and Regulations apply:...if the player arrives in the first quarter, the player must play a minimum of two (2) of the remaining three (3) quarters...if the player arrives during the second or third quarter, the player must play a minimum of one (1) quarter.

When and where is the next coaching course I need to take:

All coaching courses that are registered with the National Support & Training Center are entered into eAYSO. An Excel or Acrobat file of these courses, are available on the Instructor Help page at www.aysohelp.org. On the home page, find the blue box on the right titled General and click on the Roster Status option, then open the file for current year rosters. Once open, you can sort through the courses to find the one you want within your region or area. If you have questions, call (800) USA-AYSO, ext. 5474.

What are the various levels of coach certification?

AYSO offers coach training for every level of play. The various “levels” are as follows and each one has its own course:

U-6, U-8, U-10, U-12, Intermediate, Advanced and National

What are the requirements and time involved with the various coach certification?

AYSO’s U-6, U-8, U-10, and U-12 courses are all considered “stand-alone” courses, meaning that you may take any one of them without having taken any prior courses. The U-12 course then becomes the pre-requisite for taking the Intermediate course, which is the pre-requisite for taking the Advanced course, which is the pre-requisite for taking the National course. Course times are as follows:

U-6 Coach – 2 hours

U-8 Coach – 2 hours

U-10 Coach – 3 hours

U-12 Coach – 5 hours

Intermediate Coach – 15 hours

Advanced Coach – 18 hours

National Coach – 56 hours

What and/or where is my certification?

Record of all coach training is stored in AYSO's on-line database, www.eayso.org. Every individual that has filled out a Volunteer Registration Form is entered into the database and record of all training is attached to the individual's file. Anyone is allowed access to eAYSO by going through a short, one-time registration on the home page. Once in the database you may view your own records by going to Look-Up/Volunteer and looking up your record. Once there, click View Certifications. Alternatively, you may call the AYSO Programs Department at (800) 872-2976 and someone there will assist you. If your records do not reflect the training you have taken, please call (800) 872-2976, x-5474.

Can an individual under 18 years of age be a coach?

No, but they may assist the team. Though AYSO appreciates and encourages young people to participate in all aspects of soccer including coaching, an individual under 18 years of age may not be listed as the Head Coach or Assistant Coach on the official roster due to liability purposes. They can certainly assist in training and even making decisions regarding the team, but may not ever be left alone with players and may not be listed on the official roster.

How do I become an AYSO coach?

AYSO is a volunteer organization and the smallest local groups run by volunteers are referred to as regions. To become a coach in your local region, you can attend the registration and sign up there to coach. Alternatively, you can contact the Regional Coach Administrator who is in charge of all the coaches for the region and discuss the process with them. If you need contact information, you can contact the Programs Department of the AYSO National Support & Training Center at (800) 872-2976, ext. 5474.

Does an AYSO coach have to have a child on the team?

No. Anyone over the age of 18 can volunteer to be a coach in AYSO. Generally speaking, most coaches are the parents of a child on the team, however, AYSO welcomes and encourages anyone who wants to volunteer to come out and coach!

Integrating the “VIP” Player into Your Region

A VIP (Very Important Player) is a player whose physical and/or mental challenges make it difficult to successfully participate on a mainstream soccer team.

What is successful participation? It should be defined by the player’s enjoyment and the safety of all team members.

The player who has only a physical disability is likely to have many of the expectations and capabilities of a non-disabled player and should be coached accordingly. Every effort should be made to integrate these players into mainstream teams, as much as safety allows.

VIP is an AYSO program designed to provide a quality soccer experience for VIP players. VIP teams offer many players with disabilities the least-restrictive and safest environment in which to learn and enjoy the game of soccer. Contact your regional commissioner, regional coach administrator, regional VIP administrator or the National Support & Training Center to obtain AYSO’s special VIP training materials and information on how to begin a VIP program.