



AYSO Region 7 Guidelines U6 and U8 Divisions

These guidelines are not about professional soccer. They're about what is best for our youngest players. They're also for coaches, parents, referees, spectators, and anyone concerned with the development of soccer players in our U6 and U8 divisions – kids aged 5, 6, and 7 years old.

Why short-sided soccer? The main reason is that these younger players need to get more touches of the ball. Most educators agree the early learning experiences are the most important and produce the most retention.

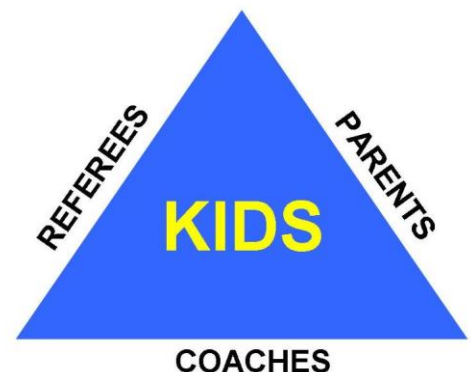
Instead of viewing soccer from an adult perspective, using the 11-a-side (11 v 11) game as a reference, we need to remember:

- Boys and girls must be treated as young children, not as mini-adults.
- Because they are so young and essentially self-oriented, they relate naturally to a friend or two, and not to large groups of 11.
- They cannot sustain prolonged activity or prolonged inactivity.
- Their concentration span is limited, so frequent changes of pace and activity are necessary. Even standing the entire team in a line is a challenge at this age - fun and activity must always be a focus.
- Children love to learn, so skill development, team play and cooperation come naturally with opportunities for unpressured play.
- Every player needs to get more chances to kick the ball many times during practice and in a game.
- "The Game is the Great Teacher."
- Children play games to have fun.

AYSO is an all-volunteer organization and every volunteer deserves to be treated with respect and appreciation. This applies to coaches and to referees. Everyone involved wants to see kids have fun playing soccer.

Some things to remember

- Everyone is a volunteer
- Coaches coach, referees referee, and parents cheer
- Your kid will see and remember how you behave.
- Be the best example for your kid
- This is not the world cup
- There are no college scouts
- Relax and have fun!





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General Guidelines

No Changes	<p><i>No aspect of these guidelines may be changed at any time, except by the region 7 board.</i></p> <p>For instance, U8 matches are played in 7 v 7 format with $\frac{3}{4}$ player and $\frac{1}{4}$ goalkeeper rules. Even with the best intentions the format of the game may not be changed for a given match. This applies to all aspects of these guidelines.</p>
Players' Equipment	<p>The following are mandatory for ALL GAMES AND PRACTICES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shin guards, worn under soccer socks • Soccer cleats recommended, but tennis shoes are acceptable • NO JEWELRY OF ANY KIND - even pierced earrings are prohibited. • Nothing hard may be worn in the hair. <p>Players must wear their uniform as distributed for all games. No individual or team names may be added to the uniform.</p>
Coach Behavior During the Game	Coaches may not enter the field during play and must remain in the Technical Area, approximately 8 yards on either side of the halfway line. Coaches should be positive, instructional and encouraging (PIE) with the players at all times. Coaches should do their best to let the players play, remembering that children will either play the game or stop to listen to them.
Parent/Spectator Behavior During the Game	Parents and other spectators must stay out of the technical area and may not coach players from the sidelines. They are expected to cheer and offer positive encouragement to all of the players. Only players and the referee are permitted on the field
Field Size and Markings	Field dimensions are laid out in accordance with age of the players and the playable space available. Field markings are no different from full-sided soccer games except that the size of the areas marked will be adjusted to suit the overall field dimensions, and U6 fields do not include a penalty area or penalty mark.
Field Set-up and Tear-down	Set-up is done by parents of both teams of the first game of the day and tear-down is done by parents of both teams after the last game of the day.
Location of Teams	Home team and supporters occupy the north or west side of the field (depending on orientation of the field).
Balanced Numbers	In the event that a team is missing players such that play would be unbalanced (more than one player advantage), then the coach with more players has the responsibility to have a player or players shift to the team with fewer players for balance. Since players may not like to play against their own team, please rotate the players (in U8, do this at the same time as the goalkeepers are changed). If a U6 team has more or less than 10 players, adjust the number of players on the field to allow all kids to play the entire game.
Injuries	Referees can stop play at any time for injuries. Referees check injured players first and coaches and parents must remain off the field until signaled by the referee.
Starting and Ending On Time	Games must end five minutes before the next scheduled game. If a game starts late for any reason, the game must be shortened as needed so that the next game starts on time.
Start of Game	The home team coach chooses which side of the field to defend and the game is started with a kick-off by the visiting team.
End of Game	The game ends when time expires or five minutes before the scheduled time of the next game. Opposing players and coaches line up and shake hands after the game and then thank the referee. Only then are players permitted to receive refreshments/snacks.



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Team Size, Game Format, Substitutions, and Practices

U6 Division

Team Size	U6 teams are formed with five players on a team and will play against other teams of the same size.
Game Format	U6 plays 5 v 5 games Only five players of a team shall be on the field at any time, but if a team has more or less than 5 players, adjust the number of players to allow all kids to play.
Game Duration	U6 games are 30 minutes (15-minute halves) with 5-minute halftime
Game Card	None. We do not track substitutions or score in U6
Substitutions	None. All U6 players are to play the whole game. A player may need or want to come off the field during play and it is okay if they do.
Goalkeepers	None. There are no goalkeepers in the U6 Division
Practices	U6 teams practice during the first half of each week's scheduled game.

U8 Division

Team Size	U8 teams are formed with about eight players on a team and will play against other teams of about the same size.
Game Format	U8 plays 7 v 7 games Only seven players of a team shall be on the field at any time, one of whom is the goalkeeper.
Game Duration	U8 games are 40 minutes (20-minute halves) with 5-minute halftime Substitution breaks approximately 10 minutes into each half.
Game Card	Each coach provides a completed Game Card to the referee before the start of the match. The referee uses the Game Card to track goalkeeper and overall substitutions during the match.
Substitutions	$\frac{3}{4}$ Rule - Every player must play at least three quarters of each game. Every player must be substituted before any player is a substitute for a second time. Everyone takes their turn, even the most skilled. Coaches and referees must keep track of substitutes. Players who are late or absent are not counted as being a substitute. Game cards are used only for the purpose of recording substitutes (and not for any score keeping information). Referees turn in the game cards after each match and Division Commissioners ensure that the three quarters rule is applied evenly between games throughout the season.
Goalkeepers	$\frac{1}{4}$ Rule - No player may play more than one quarter of the game in goal.
Practices	One practice per week, 60 minutes maximum.



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Referees

As a general practice, the home team provides the referee in a U8 game and both teams provide referees in a U6 game.

Referees must be registered AYSO volunteers, have active Safe Haven certification, be certified as AYSO referees, and be in uniform. The minimum referee age, certification level, and uniform are as follows

Division	Age	Certification	Uniform
U6	10+	U8 Official	AYSO referee t-shirt
U8	10+	Regional Referee	AYSO referee uniform

Coaches and assistant coaches coach, they do not referee. Referees will work cooperatively with coaches. Referees shall emphasize safety, fairness, fun, and learning.

The referee may briefly explain infringements to the player(s) and will help players with instructions and proper technique.

If assistant referees are not available, the referee may appoint club linesperson to raise a flag when the ball completely crosses a touchline.

The referee conducts a safety inspection before the match to ensure that the field is acceptable (e.g., goals are anchored) and the players are safely equipped.

The referee is responsible for tracking fair substitutions ($\frac{3}{4}$ rule and $\frac{1}{4}$ goalkeeper rule) in U8 matches. The referee will remind a coach who forgets the substitution rules and will suspend the match until the players are substituted correctly.

The overall purpose of the referee is to keep the game safe, fair and fun. It is better to ignore minor infractions than to destroy the flow of the game. Players of this age rarely commit deliberate infractions; however, they may be more likely to engage in dangerous or reckless play as they may not appreciate the impact of their action. While all direct free kick and indirect free kick fouls still apply, referees are encouraged to take opportunities to instruct the players, remembering that U6 and U8 players are just learning the game and rarely understand its laws.

Referee decisions are final. This includes decisions regarding safety of the players.



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Modifications to the Laws of the Game

Law	Modification
The Field of Play	*
The Ball	Size 3
The Number of Players	*
The Players' Equipment	
The Referee	*
The Assistant Referees	*
The Duration of the Match	*
The Start and Restart of Play	
The Ball In and Out of Play	
The Method of Scoring	
Offside	Not enforced
Fouls and Misconduct	All fouls are enforced Yellow and red cards are not shown
Free Kicks	All free kicks are direct. There are no indirect free kicks. Opponents must be a minimum of six yards (U6) or eight yards (U8) from the ball. No free kicks may be taken by the attacking team within the defending team's penalty area. If a defender committed the foul within the penalty area, the free kick is taken from outside the defender's penalty area nearest where the foul occurred.
The Penalty Kick	There are no penalty kicks
The Throw-in	Permit second throw-in if first attempt was illegal
The Goal Kick	
The Corner Kick	Opponents must be a minimum of six yards (U6) or eight yards (U8) from the ball

** This modification was described earlier*

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