

# AYSO 177



Long Beach • Los Altos • Belmont Shore

## Parent/Player Handbook



## **Vision Statement**

### **American Youth Soccer Organization:**

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

## **Mission Statement**

American Youth Soccer Organization's mission is to develop and deliver quality youth soccer programs which promote a fun, family environment based on the AYSO philosophies:

Everyone Plays  
Balanced Teams  
Open Registration  
Positive Coaching  
Good Sportsmanship

The core values guiding AYSO are:

Fun for all  
Education for all  
Ethics for all  
Accessible to all



The mission is accomplished by providing these essential services:

Coaching and referee programs including quality delivery systems

Quality administrative and operating systems with a support network

Strong financial position

Special network for volunteers, supported by a national staff

Program research and development

### **Character Counts**

AYSO is a coalition member of the Josephson Institute of Ethics, and is committed to supporting the Character Counts program.

Its Six Pillars of Character are:

Trustworthiness

Respect

Responsibility

Fairness

Caring

Citizenship

### **Child Protection**

AYSO is committed to providing a “child safe” program, where children can develop in a safe, fair, and fun environment.



# *Welcome to AYSO Region 177*

P. O. Box 15243  
 Long Beach, CA 90815  
 (866) AYSO-177  
 www.ayso177.org

The Regional Board conducts the business and affairs of the Region and consists of the following Board positions and Committees:

<i><b>Board Positions</b></i>	<i><b>Committees</b></i>
Commissioner	All Star Coordinator
Assistant Commissioner	Assistant Regional Coach Administrator
U05 - U08 Commissioner	Assistant Referee Administrator
U10 - U12 Commissioner	Assistant Registrar
U14 – U19 Commissioner	Auditor
At Large Position (2)	Belmont Cup Coordinator
Auxiliary President	Buyer
Child and Volunteer Protection Advocate	Conflict Resolution Committee
Coach Administrator	Director of Referee Instruction
Communications	Director of Referee Mentors
Field Permits & City Relations	Equipment
Recording Secretary	Field Maintenance
Referee Administrator	Pictures
Registrar	RAP Coordinator
Safety Directory	Scheduler
Team Parent Coordinator	Sponsor Coordinator
Treasurer	Spring Season Coordinator
	Statistician
	T-Shirts
	Trophies
	Unlimited Cards
	VIP Coordinator
	Webmaster
	Web Consultant
	Yearbook

Board Meetings are held monthly and are open to the public. For a current listing of Board Members and a Calendar of Events, please refer to the Region’s website at [www.AYSO177.org](http://www.AYSO177.org).



## ***INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND PLAYERS***

### **ELIGIBILITY**

All boys and girls, between the ages of 4 ½ and 18, based on their age as of July 31, shall be eligible to register for the program, subject to field availability and volunteer support and such rules as may be issued by the Regional Board.

### **REGISTRATION**

New players must submit a Registration Form, certified birth certificate and the Registration Fee prior to any player being registered with our Region. Returning players may have received pre-printed Registration Forms from their coaches at the end of the previous season. Registration information and forms are available on the Region's website.

The registration fee for each player participant shall be fixed annually by the Regional Board. Such fees may be waived in whole or in part with respect to any participant at the discretion of the Scholarship Committee if in its judgment the requirement of the fee would create a hardship for the participant or his/her family. A full refund shall be made only if the player has not attended a scheduled practice. A \$35 refund will be made if the player has attended a practice but not received a uniform or, received a uniform but returns it in its entirety. No refunds will be made after season play has started.

### **TEAM ASSIGNMENTS**

Team assignments shall be made by the Registrar and the Division Directors. Retention of players on any team shall be limited to the head coach's child(ren). Except for the foregoing, there shall be no automatic retention of players from the previous season. Every attempt shall be made to balance the skill level of teams within each division. Once teams are formed, no transfer of any player from one team to another may be made without the approval of the Registrar, the coaches of both teams involved, and the parent or guardian of the player. Players are contacted by their coach in mid-August to advise of practice location and time.

Player movement up or down from the age appropriate division will not be allowed except for players whose birth dates place them in the Under 14 Division and the player is a freshman in high school who anticipates playing on the high school soccer team. In order for this player to meet CIF guidelines, he/she may be moved up to the Under 16 Division.



## **EQUIPMENT**

**UNIFORMS:** A uniform consisting of shirt, shorts and socks is provided for your child's use at the beginning of the season and is yours to keep when the season ends. You are responsible for taking care of the full uniform. Do not iron the jersey. Uniforms are **not** to be worn at practice, only for scheduled games. Players may not wear rings, watches, chains, necklaces, earrings, or hard pony tail holders or barrettes as these items may cause injury during play.

**SHOES:** Although not required, it is strongly suggested that players wear soccer shoes - the low-sided "football" style shoes with rubber or plastic molded cleats (no metal). Shoes with toe cleats are *not* allowed. Shoes should fit comfortably with athletic socks.

**SHIN GUARDS:** It is only common sense to protect the vulnerable shins. Shinguards can and do protect the player. A National Rule makes shin guards *mandatory*. They may be purchased from the region, local sporting goods stores, and stores such as Wal-Mart, K-Mart and Target. New lightweight shinguards provide freedom of movement without being heavy and cumbersome. ***A PLAYER MUST WEAR SHIN GUARDS AT ALL PRACTICES AND GAMES.***

**BALL:** Each player is encouraged to practice with a ball and it is recommended that a "real" soccer ball is obtained. For Divisions Under 8 (U8) and Under 6 (U6): Size "3"; Divisions Under 12 (U12) and Under 10 (U10): Size "4"; Divisions Under 19 (U19), Under 16 (U16) and Under 14 (U14): Size "5". A player needs to practice with a ball to develop skill and coordination. Any time spent with the ball makes for a better player and active parent participation is a great encouragement. It is strongly recommended that the player's name is put on the ball for identification.

## **PRACTICE**

For regular season teams practice will not exceed 2 hours, twice a week, for Divisions Under 19, Under 16, and Under 14. Under 12 and Under 10 practices will not exceed 1 ½ hours, twice a week. For Divisions Under 8 and Under 6, practice will not exceed 1 hour, twice a week. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardian to make sure that their child attends practice. If a player is going to miss practice the coach or the team parent should be notified as soon as possible.

As all of the coaches in AYSO are volunteers, practice times are scheduled at the coach's convenience during the week (Monday through Friday) and coordinated with the Region for field availability. Practice fields are located at various parks and school locations in Long Beach. Each player must arrange to arrive on time and be picked up on time. Shorts are better suited for the game of soccer than long pants. In cold weather, sweatpants are recommended as jeans can restrict motion. Cleats are best suited for most fields and should be worn at practices. It is recommended that each player bring an appropriately sized ball to practices.



## **GAME SCHEDULE**

Games are to be played according to the schedule; however games may be canceled due to inclement weather. Cancellations will be posted on the website as soon as possible or the AYSO 177 hotline number, (866) AYSO177. All games are scheduled on Saturdays at parks and schools in Long Beach. Game schedules and a map of field locations can be located at our Region's website.

## **PARENT PARTICIPATION**

THE REGION AND THE *CHILDREN* NEED YOUR PARTICIPATION. Attend practices and games. PARENTAL SUPPORT IS CRUCIAL. Learn about the rules of the game by reading "The Rules of Soccer: Simplified" included in this Handbook. Above all, show tolerance of the players' mistakes and weaknesses. When attending games, cheer for all players on both teams as well as your own child. Every parent is requested to volunteer in some area of the program and there are various jobs available. Before your team's meeting, read the section on Volunteering in this handbook and offer to help.

## **REGIONAL PHILOSOPHY**

The goal of the AYSO organization is to encourage the growth of soccer and promote positive child development. Although everyone engaged in sporting competition should have a desire to win, this desire should not be pursued to the exclusion of good sportsmanship, fair play and participation. AYSO is a parent based volunteer organization providing a soccer program for all children regardless of experience or skill level. Registration of your child in our program implies responsibility to the team and adherence to the five principles of AYSO: **Everyone Plays, Balanced Teams, Positive Coaching, Open Registration, Good Sportsmanship.**

## **EVERYONE PLAYS**

Each player is guaranteed to play at least 3/4 of every game, unless prohibited by roster size, regardless of his or her level of skill or aptitude, *if the child:* ARRIVES ON TIME AT THE PLAYING FIELD FOR SCHEDULED GAMES PREPARED TO PLAY IN THE PROPER COMPLETE UNIFORM (SHOES, SHIN GUARDS, ETC.) AND IS NOT HANDICAPPED DUE TO ILLNESS OR INJURY. In U14 this may be reduced to ½ due to lack of attendance at practices or a poor attitude. U16 – U19 players are required to play ½ of each game they are in attendance.

## **COACHES**

As a parent, you can help your child's coach by introducing yourself and thanking them for their interest in coaching a team. Support the coach's request that your child be on



time for practices and games. If you do not stay for the entire practice session, pick up your child promptly at the end of practice. Be positive with your comments and remember that a coach has a reason for his selection of player positions. Don't criticize the coach because you think your child should play a different position. Offer help at practices. Remember that coaches volunteer their time and energy to instruct and help your child, and they need your cooperation and support.

### **REFEREES**

AYSO Referees are entitled to the highest respect from coaches, players and spectators. The referee's mistakes (and there will be mistakes) shall be accepted without complaint. Many of the referees have no children playing in our Region and all of them gladly give their time to help us. Please *show them the respect they deserve* - they are volunteers, and express your appreciation for their commitment to our soccer program. The region is always in need of referees. If you are interested, contact the Regional Referee Administrator.

### **SAFETY**

Safety of all the Region's program participants is always a primary objective. Soccer is a physical sport and minor injuries may result. Normal first aid practices (ice, bandages, etc.) should be utilized. Proper soccer techniques (kicking, goalkeeping, heading, etc.) will be taught by your team's coaches.

Eat far enough ahead of soccer practices and matches so that food doesn't upset your player's stomach. Eat a healthy meal about 3 or 4 hours before your practice or match. If you must snack, eat only a small quantity of complex carbohydrates—foods such as cereal, English muffins, pasta or a piece of toast. ***Just make sure you don't eat less than an hour before the game!*** Thirty minutes after any competition, eat a meal high in complex carbohydrates to help restore your body's blood sugar (glycogen levels).

Three hours before any sport activity, drink a couple of glasses of water (12 oz. sized glass). Don't gulp! Sip the water slowly. One hour before game time, drink a little more water. During the match, drink a little water every 15 minutes or so. **Drinking fluids is important!** After the game, drink more water.

All AYSO registered players, coaches, referees and volunteers are covered for accidental injury while participating in Region activities under the Soccer Accident Insurance. This coverage only applies after your own health plan has been utilized. More information on insurance information can be found on our Region's website.

### **SIDELINE ETIQUETTE**

AYSO soccer encourages positive self-esteem, discipline, personal responsibility, teamwork, acceptance of and learning from disappointment and success, as well as



perseverance. It is also an enjoyable game to watch as well as to play. We believe that quality soccer can and should be developed, and that it can and should be fun. Therefore, the emphasis of our program is not on who wins but how the players and teams develop, and most importantly, did they have fun in doing so? We want all participants to reach their full, *age-appropriate* potential and to enjoy themselves in the process.

As spectators, we must realize that the players are trying their very best and deserve *our very best* in the way of support and encouragement. Negative comments have no place on the field or on the sidelines. We need to recognize that the effort of each player is 100% well intended and encourage each player to maintain that effort. It is also important to recognize all good play being demonstrated, *regardless of which team the player is on*.

The area off the field that the spectators occupy is on your own team's side, no closer than two yards from the touch line, and between the penalty areas. Under no circumstances will anyone be allowed behind the goal lines. Familiarize yourself with these field markings and remain within the area defined.

Allow the coach to be the sole source of coaching during the match, communicating tactical or technical adjustments to the players. As a coach, be sure that your coaching during the match is limited to positive, instructional or encouraging comments. Giving play-by-play instructions to all players thwarts their ability to put into effect the lessons you have stressed in practices and disallows them the opportunity to think on their feet.

The area off the field that the coaches occupy is called the "technical area" and is on your own team's side, no closer than one yard from the touchline, and up to ten yards from either side of the halfway line. The "technical area" is limited to the head coach and one assistant coach for that team. Not only are these to be the only persons occupying the "technical area," they are the only persons who may coach (give tactical or technical information) during the course of the match.

An important aspect of the AYSO program is *Sportsmanship*. Our children need to experience:

1. The fun of hard fought but fair competition
2. Winning graciously
3. Losing graciously
4. Improving one's abilities through practice
5. Learning the social skills involved in being a member of a team, *and*
6. Acknowledging good play by teammates as well as opponents

One of the ways in which our children can learn and continue to have these experiences is by our demonstration of good sideline behavior. *Our children learn by watching, and imitating our conduct*. Keep a positive outlook and demonstrate it by supporting the coaches, players and referees, in spite of any mistakes they may make during the course of a match.



ALWAYS pick up all trash on your sideline! Our parks and schools are generous to allow us to utilize their facilities for our soccer program. Be sure to pick up after yourselves.

### **PARENTS' PLEDGE**

As a parent, you play a special role in contributing to the needs and development of youngsters. Through your encouragement and good example, you can help assure that all the boys and girls learn good sportsmanship and self-discipline. In AYSO, young people learn to work together, to sacrifice for the good of the team, to enjoy winning and deal appropriately with defeat - all while becoming physically fit and healthy. Best of all, they have fun.

*SUPPORT YOUR CHILD:* Supporting your child by giving encouragement and showing interest in their team is very important.

Help your child work toward skill improvement and good sportsmanship in every game. Teach your child that hard work and an honest effort are often more important than victory - that way your child will always be a winner despite the outcome of the game!

*ALWAYS BE POSITIVE:* Parents serve as role models for their children. Become aware of this and work to be a positive role model. Applaud good plays by your child's team as well as good plays by the opposing team.

Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from youth sports activities.

*REMEMBER—YOUR CHILD WANTS TO HAVE FUN:* Remember that your child is the one playing soccer, not you. It's very important to let children establish their own goals - to play the game for themselves. Take care not to impose your own standards and goals on them.

Don't put too heavy a burden on your child to win games. Surveys reveal that 72% of children would rather play for a losing team than ride the bench for a winning team.

Children play for the fun of playing.

*REINFORCE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR:* Positive reinforcement is the best way to help your child achieve their goals and their natural fear of failure. Nobody likes to make mistakes. If your child does make one, remember it's all part of learning, so encourage your child's efforts and point out the good things your child accomplished.

*DON'T BE A SIDELINE COACH OR REFEREE:* Coaches and referees are usually parents just like you. They volunteer their time to help make your child's youth soccer experience a positive one. They need your support too.



That means refraining from coaching or refereeing from the sidelines. As a volunteer organization, there's usually always an opportunity for you to take your interest in coaching or refereeing to the next level and become one yourself!

## ***VOLUNTEERING***

AYSO is a national non-profit organization established in 1964 to teach the game of soccer and develop positive character traits in children through their participation in a quality sports program. Our local region administers this program strictly through the efforts of volunteers. In order to provide the quality program our kids deserve, we need YOU! Following is a list of opportunities for you to consider. All volunteers will receive instructions for selected jobs. Remember: **No Previous Experience is Necessary!**

*COACH:* One of the most rewarding opportunities. First time AYSO coaches must attend clinic.

*ASSISTANT COACH:* Assists the team coach during practices. You will learn a lot about soccer and coaching, and enjoy working with the players.

*REFEREE:* Must attend Referee Training Class. Uniform provided by the Region. Contact the Regional Referee Administrator if you're interested. You will learn the rules of soccer and how to conduct the game, and enjoy participating in the game with the players.

*ASSISTANT REFEREE:* Assists the referee, calling the ball in and out of play, and offside. Must attend Referee Training Class. Uniform provided by the Region.

*TEAM LINESPERSON:* This person would, after brief instruction from the referee, signal the referee from the sideline with a flag if the whole of the ball crosses the touchline. This person is needed if there are not enough referees or assistant referees available for the game.

*TEAM PARENT:* Administrative assistant to the coach. The Team Parent is the primary communicator between the coach and the parents. Oversees and coordinates other parents in several areas: game schedules, refreshments, parties, banner making, telephoning information and anything else that pertains to the specific team. A Team Parent Meeting provides pertinent information necessary to perform duties. Coaches greatly appreciate a committed volunteer to fill this position.

*ASSISTANT TEAM PARENT:* Assists the Team Parent in his/her duties.

*GAME DAY REFRESHMENTS:* Generally, each family is assigned a specific game to bring refreshments. Also, coaches and referees appreciate being offered refreshments, so please bring a little extra. Usually the coach's family is exempt from bringing



refreshments.

*BANNER MAKER(S)*: Banners may be made from a variety of materials (felt, denim, fake fur, etc). or purchased. A banner bears the team name, the sponsor's name, player's names and an appropriate design, and is made in the team colors. It should be large enough to be seen from a distance (by the team on the other side of the soccer field). Best if completed by opening day. Kids love their team banners!

*AUXILIARY*: The Auxiliary supports our Region in promoting, advancing and expanding participation in youth soccer in the greater Long Beach area. Any person who is interested in the soccer program is eligible for annual membership in the Auxiliary. All team parents will automatically be considered members. The elected officers shall consist of a President, Vice President and Secretary. Other positions may be created. The Auxiliary President shall have a voting position on the AYSO 177 Board of Directors. The terms of office of the President, Vice President and Secretary shall not be more than two consecutive years.

**OTHER VOLUNTEER POSITIONS ARE AVAILABLE. IF INTERESTED, SEE THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONER TO VOLUNTEER. YOUR PARTICIPATION IS GREATLY APPRECIATED!**

## ***CHILD PROTECTION POLICY***

### ***Administration***

1. Region 177 is committed to the protection of all its children from all forms of abuse and neglect while participating in the program, and it promotes the awareness and prevention of child abuse in the community at large.
2. Region 177 shall have a *Child and Volunteer Protection Advocate*, who shall be responsible for overseeing the Child Protection Program in accordance with AYSO guidelines. He/she shall be a member of the Regional Board and will act as the main resource on child protection issues and shall be the region's liaison with the *Coordinator of Child Protection Advocacy* at the AYSO Education Department.
3. Region 177 requires all volunteers to complete, date and sign the appropriate volunteer application form and its authorization to AYSO to perform applicant screening. All volunteers shall be screened at a level appropriate to the level of risk.
4. Region 177 shall have the right to revoke the participation of any individual who lies or knowingly misrepresents information on the application form, or who violates the principles of these child protection policies. AYSO shall have the right to revoke both



the registration and certification of any volunteer who falsifies information, is found guilty of child abuse, or fails to fill in and return the volunteer application form.

5. The complaint, grievance, and appeal process shall be as described in Article Nine of the regional guidelines, with the addition of appeal to AYSO if it is the screening agency. The names and identities of the claimant and the defendant shall be protected at all times during the proceedings. The claimant need not be present to give evidence at any ensuing hearing, thus avoiding victimizing the child a second time.

6. A volunteer accused of abuse will be asked to resign voluntarily. If the volunteer refuses, the Board will move to suspend the volunteer until the matter has been resolved. Regardless of civil or criminal guilt for the alleged child abuse, the continued presence of the volunteer in the program will damage the reputation of the Region, even during the investigation and pretrial phase.

7. A volunteer accused of child abuse but subsequently cleared may apply for reinstatement in the Region. However, reinstatement is not a right, and reinstated volunteers are not guaranteed to return to their former positions.

### ***Training***

1. All coaches, referees, other volunteers who work directly with children, and the Child and Volunteer Protection Advocate shall be trained before working with children. Head coaches must be certified; assistant coaches and referees should be certified.

2. Only official AYSO materials and courses (or those approved by AYSO) may be used to train and certify these key volunteers.

3. Properly signed rosters of attendees will be sent to AYSO Education to validate each attendee's training, and certification, and to insure that the coaches and referees are registered with AYSO.

4. Courses and clinics shall be taught by AYSO certified and registered teachers and instructors, or be under the supervision of AYSO trained instructors. Only official AYSO programs, procedures, and policies will be taught.

5. Other volunteers will be trained before they do their jobs, including child protection training as appropriate. Whenever possible, "on the job training" will be avoided.

6. Volunteers shall be subject to ongoing evaluation, and additional training may be required to maintain good standing within the region and the organization.

### ***Supervision***

1. The Coach Administrator and Referee Administrator shall cooperate with the Child and Volunteer Protection Advocate to ensure the safety of the region's players.

2. The Coach Administrator and the Child and Volunteer Protection Advocate annually



shall meet with the head coach of each team, either jointly or separately, to review child protection and supervision responsibilities.

3. The Coach Administrator shall observe and review the performance of coaches to see that it conforms to the standards set by this Child Protection Policy.

4. The head coach of each team shall be responsible for assuring that at least two responsible adults (one of whom may be the coach) are with his or her team at all times. The head coach is also responsible for informing assistant coaches and team parent about child protection issues, supervision ratios, and reporting procedures.

5. Once the head coach has assumed charge of the children on his or her team, he or she remains responsible until a duly designated adult has taken charge of each child after practice or a game. No child shall be left unsupervised after a game or practice. Parents who are unreasonably late or consistently tardy should be reported to the Child and Volunteer Protection Advocate for action. Each coach may establish a standing policy of where children may be picked up by late parents.

6. The supervision ratio shall be 1:8 or less; that is, one adult for every eight or fewer children, with the stipulation that there be two adults present at all times.

7. The Referee Administrator and the Child and Volunteer Protection Advocate annually shall meet with the referees, either jointly or separately, to review child protection and supervision responsibilities.

8. The Referee Administrator shall observe and review the performance of the referees to see that it conforms to the standards set by this child protection policy.

9. The game referee is responsible for providing a “child safe” atmosphere for the match, and has both the duty and authority to take any reasonable action to make it so. The referee is to report to the referee administrator and child protection advocate any cases of questionable conduct toward children by any coach, player, parent, sibling, or spectator before, during, or after the match.

10. For the protection of both the children and the volunteer, AYSO and Region 177 strongly recommends that no volunteer permit himself or herself to be alone with any child or group of children (except his or her own) during AYSO-sponsored activities.

11. Volunteers shall not have AYSO activities away from the practice or playing fields without prior notification to the Regional Commissioner, the Child and Volunteer Protection Advocate, *and* the parents. Such notification shall be in writing, stating the nature of the activity, the names of the children involved, and the names of the adult supervisors.

### ***Conduct***

1. Region 177 advocates and expects exemplary behavior by all its participants, and it



will hold a **strict line** on conduct as laid out in these policies, regardless of whether misconduct is committed by coaches, referees, players, siblings, parents, or spectators.

2. Demeaning verbalizations are not permitted, especially those abusive statements that deal with race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, gender, age, or sex.

3. In addition to verbal abuse, physical, emotional, sexual, and ethical abuses are prohibited, as is neglect of a child. Examples of potentially abusive behaviors include but are not limited to striking, hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, shaking, biting, yelling, threatening, insulting, mocking, demeaning, indecent gesturing, wanton gesticulation, ogling, suggestive posturing, inappropriate touching, lewd remarks, indecent exposure, unwanted physical contact, suggestions to cheat or to harm another, or unreasonable pressure to play when sick or injured.

4. 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.
  - \*Touching should be with the child's permission.
  - \*Resistance to touching must be respected.
  - \*Touching should never include the breast, buttocks, or groin.
  - \*Touching should be done in the open, not in private.
  - \*Touching should have a brief, limited duration.
  - \*Touching is age and developmentally dependent; what's appropriate changes over time.

## ***BUDGET***

As with most non-profit organizations, AYSO is self-funded and depends on several funding sources to provide a quality sports program for our children. The success of our funding efforts helps keep registration fees at a reasonable amount.

### *Player Registration*

The majority of the Region's operating funds are provided through our player registration fees.

### *Sponsors*

Regional and Team Sponsors greatly enhance the quality of AYSO's program in our community. Each team is asked to secure a Sponsor that contributes \$150 to fund our Region's program. For their contribution, each Sponsor is recognized with a plaque and in our AYSO 177 Yearbook.

### *Fundraising*

In addition to our Sponsor Program and Registration Fees, fundraising activities are held. Each player is asked to sell two (2) "Unlimited Cards" at \$10 each, or raise a total of \$20. These "Unlimited Cards" are supported by local restaurants and merchants by offering a discount to cardholders on specified purchases. A single trip to a local pizza



restaurant can recoup the cost of this card.

## ***SPORTSMANSHIP PROGRAM***

As a Region, we need to encourage our soccer families to play fairly and aggressively on the field but also play the game with honor and dignity. The Sportsmanship Program will help encourage both. Our Region can be both competitive as well as being good sports on the field as well as on the sidelines.

Our Program is very simple. Each week, each team will receive sportsmanship points from the game's referees based on five (5) categories. Each team can receive from one (1) to five (5) points in each of the following categories:

1. Conduct of players
2. Conduct of coaches
3. Conduct of spectators
4. Uniform appearance
5. Courtesy toward the referees

At the end of each month, the team with the most points will receive a pin and ribbon that will be placed on their team banner. At the end of the season, the team with the most points will be awarded a medal for each player and the coach will receive a certificate.

This Program promotes and recognizes the type of behavior and game play that AYSO stands for. You, as parents, play an integral role in the success of this Program.

## ***SOCCKER SIMPLIFIED***

### ***THE GAME***

Soccer is a simple game. All you need is a field, a ball, and two teams with the proper equipment and a referee. The field is approximately the size of a football field for older players and smaller for the younger players.

The game is played in two, timed halves of equal duration. To advance AYSO's "Everyone Plays" commitment, quarter breaks are made within each half to allow for player substitution. The duration of each half is determined by the age of the children playing - longer for older players and shorter for younger players.

Any kid of any size can become a skilled and successful soccer player, as physical size is not an important factor. And the best part for them is that due to the nature of the game, every kid gets a chance to participate in the action!



A team has a maximum of eleven (11) players on the field at any one time, although a game can be played with as few as seven on each team. In younger age divisions, Regions use short-sided teams, which give players more “touches” on the ball, and the ability to learn skills quicker. The kids find it more fun too!

### THE 4 POSITIONS IN SOCCER

*GOALKEEPER*: also known as the "keeper," this position is responsible for guarding the team’s goal and preventing the opposing team from scoring.

*DEFENDER*: this position’s primary duty is to prevent the opponent from having a good shot at the goal. The defender also works to gain possession of the ball and pass it to a teammate for an attack.

*MIDFIELDER*: also known as the "halfback," this position plays a "transitional" game from defense to offense and vice versa. Usually the midfielder is the most active player on the field and key to maintaining team continuity.

*FORWARD*: this position has the primary responsibility of scoring and also assists the midfielder in shifting play from defense to offense.

It’s important to remember that any player may score a goal, regardless of position.

### THE SKILLS

There are several basic skills in soccer that can be learned at any age and mastered by those players who continually practice them.

*PASSING* is kicking, pushing or heading the ball to a teammate or to a space where a teammate can run to the ball. A player may lightly tap the ball to a teammate several feet away or kick it strongly to move it down the field. The ball may scoot along the ground or may be kicked into the air.

Most players use two types of kicks to pass to a teammate or shoot towards the goal:

The *INSTEP DRIVE* which is a powerful kick.

The *PUSH PASS*, which is done using the inside of the foot. The push pass is more accurate than the instep drive, but is less powerful.

*DRIBBLING* is transporting the ball under control from one area to another. In soccer, you can’t use your hands, so players dribble the ball with their feet, using light taps on the ball to move it along the ground.

*CONTROLLING* (or trapping) is stopping the ball in flight or on the ground, and then controlling it by either dribbling or passing it to teammates. There are many ways to trap a ball:



Allowing it to hit your chest at an angle that deflects it to the ground where it can be controlled.

Allowing it to hit your thigh or your knee to deflect it to the ground where it can be controlled.

Using your foot to stop it.

*HEADING* is unique to soccer. It's used to stop or pass a ball that's too high to kick or control with your chest. It's also used effectively to score. However, don't use it until your coach shows you the proper technique!

### THE REFEREE

AYSO recommends the use of three (3) game officials:

One Referee and

Two Referee Assistants (formerly known as Linesmen)

The Referee is the ultimate authority during a game. There is no appeal. The Referee's chief responsibilities are to make the game as fun, fair and safe for players as possible.

The Referee enforces the rules - which in soccer are called Laws - by calling offenses and determining if goals have been scored.

The Referee Assistant provides vital assistance to the referee by signaling when the ball has gone out of play and which team gets possession. Referee Assistants also assist with substitutions, offsides and general control of the game

### THE EQUIPMENT

Soccer has limited equipment requirements. However, most AYSO teams play in uniforms (shirt, shorts and socks) supplied by the Region. Shinguards are mandatory during both practices and games. Soccer shoes are also advisable, but not required.

Regions provide all the field equipment such as goals, nets, and flags.

The Equipment List:

1. One Enthusiastic Player!
2. Shirt
3. Shorts
4. Socks
5. Shoes (soccer shoes are advisable, no toe cleats allowed)
6. Shinguards (mandatory)
7. Age appropriate ball. U6/U8 - #3, U10/U12 - #4, U14/U16 - #5

### THE RULES

*Rules in soccer are called Laws and there are seventeen (17) of them.*

We won't get into all seventeen here, but give you a general outline so that you can get a feel for how the game is played. Generally, the Laws require that referees stop the game when something has happened which is unfair or unsafe.



*THE OBJECT:* The object of soccer is for players to get the ball into their opponent's goal using any part of their body except their arms and hands. Only goalkeepers may use their hands while inside their own penalty area.

*KICKOFF:* A kickoff is taken from the center circle at the beginning of the game, beginning of the second half and after each goal.

*THROW IN:* After the ball has completely crossed the side boundary lines - called touchlines - a throw in is awarded against the team that last touched the ball. The throw in is taken from where the ball left the field and must be thrown with two hands from behind and over the head, while both feet are on the ground and on or behind the touchline.

*GOAL KICK:* The goal kick is taken by the defending team each time the ball crosses the goal line and was last touched by an attacking player. The ball may be placed anywhere in the goal area and is not considered back in play until it has been kicked out of the penalty area.

*CORNER KICK:* The corner kick is taken by the attacking team each time the ball is kicked by the defense over its own goal line. The ball is placed within the three-foot arc in the corner of the field (nearest to where the ball went out of play) and kicked into play by the attacking team.

*PENALTY KICK:* The penalty kick is awarded when a defending player commits one of the 10 penal (major) fouls within their own penalty area while the ball is still in play. A player takes the penalty kick from the offended team from a spot 12 yards from the goal. All players must remain outside the penalty area, 10 yards from the ball and behind the penalty-kick mark until the kick is taken, except for the kicker and the goalkeeper. The goalkeeper's feet must remain stationary on the goal line until the ball is kicked. At the referee's signal, the kicker attempts to kick the ball into the opponent's goal and the goalkeeper tries to stop the ball from scoring.

*MISCONDUCTS:* There are two kinds of misconduct:

1. Actions resulting in a caution (yellow card) from the referee.
2. Actions resulting in a player being sent off or ejected from the field (red card).

A referee may also warn a player to improve his or her conduct (or unsportsmanlike behavior) before a caution is issued.

*OFFSIDE:* A player is offside if they are ahead of the ball, except if they:

1. Are in their own half of the field.
2. Have two opponents even with or between him and the opponent's goal line. The referee's "moment of judgment" is the instant the ball is played, not when it is received.
3. Are the first to receive the ball from a throw in, corner kick or goal kick.
4. Are not involved in active play by interfering with play, interfering with and opponent, or gaining an advantage by being in that position.



**FOULS:** There are two types; Penal (Major) Fouls and Non-Penal (Minor) Fouls.

Penal Fouls: There are 10 major fouls that result in a direct free kick and from which a goal may be directly scored against the opponents. To be a major foul, the offense must be, in the referee's judgment, intentionally committed.

The 10 Penal Fouls are divided into two groups:

These six require that the foul be committed carelessly, recklessly or with disproportionate force:

1. Kicking or attempting to kick an opponent.
2. Striking or attempting to strike an opponent.
3. Pushing an opponent.
4. Charging an opponent.
5. Tripping an opponent.
6. Jumping into an opponent.

These four require only that they be committed:

1. When tackling an opponent, making contact with the opponent before the ball.
2. Spitting at an opponent.
3. Holding an opponent.
4. Handling the ball deliberately.

There are five (5) Non-Penal fouls that result in an indirect free kick. At least one additional player of either team must touch the ball before a goal can be scored from an indirect kick.

*DANGEROUS PLAY:* including high kicking near another player's head or trying to play a ball held by a goalkeeper.

*FAIR CHARGE AWAY FROM THE BALL:* fairly charging when the ball is not within playing distance.

*IMPEDING THE PROGRESS OF AN OPPONENT:* getting between an opponent and the ball when not playing the ball.

*CHARGING THE GOALKEEPER:* shoulder-to-shoulder contact within the penalty area.

*GOALKEEPER INFRINGEMENTS:*

1. Taking more than four steps while controlling the ball with their hands or otherwise intentionally disrupting the flow of the game.
2. Playing ball with hands when ball is kicked by a teammate.

Rules covering Competition, Championships, Belmont Cup, All Stars, and Spring League can be found on the Region's website.

NOTE: For a complete copy of AYSO 177 Regional Guidelines, please contact our Regional Commissioner.