



# U-8 Guidelines

AYSO's **Vision** is to provide world class youth soccer programs that enrich children's lives.

AYSO's **Mission** is to develop and deliver quality youth soccer programs which promote a fun, family environment based on AYSO's Six Philosophies:

- Everyone Plays®
- Balanced Teams
- Open Registration
- Positive Coaching
- Good Sportsmanship
- Player Development

## Introduction

The objective of this program is to provide young players and their parents with a "pressure free" introduction to the beautiful and simple game of soccer. At this age players should be exposed to soccer by playing simple, fun activities and games that require little to no practice, and a minimal time commitment.

Practice time is designed for the coaches to play games with the kids that will teach them the fundamentals of soccer.

The Saturday game is designed to allow players to discover the game for themselves.

## 5 v 5 Game Set-Up and Guidelines

- Coaches should meet each other on the field with the referee before the game. Both coaches should demonstrate teamwork by communicating and working with each other to ensure that both teams are having fun.
- Each team will have five players on the field at a time. No goalie.
- Teams will play four ten minute quarters. Substitutions may only occur at the break.
- The quarter breaks should only take as long as it takes to get a drink and to get the substitutes onto the field. (Two minutes)
- The half time break is 5 minutes.
- 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.
- The mercy rule is a goal differential of seven. Try not to reach that. Coaches are there to ensure that both teams are learning and enjoying the game. If you have to mix up the teams to do that, than do it.

During the game, the job of the coach is just to keep the game going. Encourage the positive things and try to limit the directions. Most of the coaching should be done at practice; the game is where the players discover what they can do. We want them to be creative and independent players.

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!

**Player Equipment:**

Shoes and shinguards, covered by the 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 No Goalie Rule:**

At this age we want to emphasize playing in the field and allowing the players to run and explore the game. We want to encourage them to shoot. We want them to learn the importance of playing defense. We prefer that in the short practice time the coaches have each week that they are able to work on field play and not teach goalkeeper techniques. To help accomplish all of these objectives we will play without a goalie.

Out of respect for the intentions of that rule we ask that teams not keep a defender back in the goalie position.

We also hope that teams will avoid letting a player wait in 'offside' position. (Cherry-picking)

We are trying to teach them the proper way to play so that they are better players in the future. Try not to let the players focus on just doing what it takes to win today.

**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 6 yards from the ball. Do not insist the opponent be a minimum of precisely 6 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 official will determine when the ball is in and out of play.

**Throw in:**

When the ball goes out of play in U-8 games across the touch line (side lines) 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. In U-8 games, if the throw in is taken improperly, the team will be allowed additional attempts until successful. If a player is really struggling, then on the third try, let it go. Work on that at practice. Keep the game moving and fun.

**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.

**Fouls and Other Stoppages:**

The official is responsible for calling all fouls. Teach the players to respect his/her ability to call the game. All others should attempt to refrain from voicing their opinion. Kids have no problem learning to question authority when they are teens, we do not need to demonstrate it to them at this age.

No yellow or red cards are given in U8.

Penalty kicks are direct free kicks from outside the box.

Offsides will be taught, but not enforced.

**Ball**

At this age we use a size three ball for all games.