

# A PARENT'S POCKET GUIDE TO



WWW.AYSO.ORG

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THE NATIONAL AMERICAN YOUTH SOCCER ORGANIZATION.



- EVERYONE PLAYS® IN AYSO
- WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT
- INSIDE THE GAME OF SOCCER

WELCOME



TO AYSO

TO BE THE NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED YOUTH SOCCER PROGRAM OF CHOICE.



WELCOME TO THE AYSO FAMILY!

We're so happy that you and your family have chosen AYSO as your youth soccer program. We know you'll have a great season – and many more down the line. To show our appreciation, we're giving away special AYSO prize packs to random AYSO families all over the country.

### WHAT MAKES AYSO THE BEST YOUTH SOCCER PROGRAM?

Founded in 1964, AYSO is a child-first and child-focused non-profit organization. Every decision, every rule and every program has “what’s good for kids” as its basis.

Here are a few things that make AYSO the best youth soccer program for your child:

### AYSO'S VISION

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

### AYSO'S MISSION

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

The mission is accomplished by providing these essential services: Coach 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 and program research and development.

AYSO HAS BECOME THE LEADER IN YOUTH SOCCER BY USING ITS SIX PHILOSOPHIES TO ACCOMPLISH ITS MISSION.

**1** **EVERYONE PLAYS<sup>®</sup>**  
at least half of every game

**OPEN REGISTRATION** **2**  
register anywhere

**3** **BALANCED TEAMS**  
no stacked teams

**4** **POSITIVE COACHING**  
building confidence

**GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP** **5**  
winning and losing gracefully

**6** **PLAYER DEVELOPMENT**  
improving skills



# ?SOCCER?

## How is it played?

Soccer is a simple game. It requires a field, a ball, two teams of players and a referee. It's played on a rectangular field about the size of a football field. Smaller fields may be used for younger players.

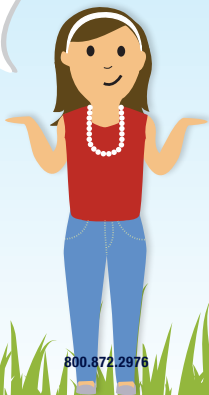
Each AYSO game is broken up into two halves (four quarters) of equal length. The length of the halves depends on the age of the children playing.

## What does my child need?

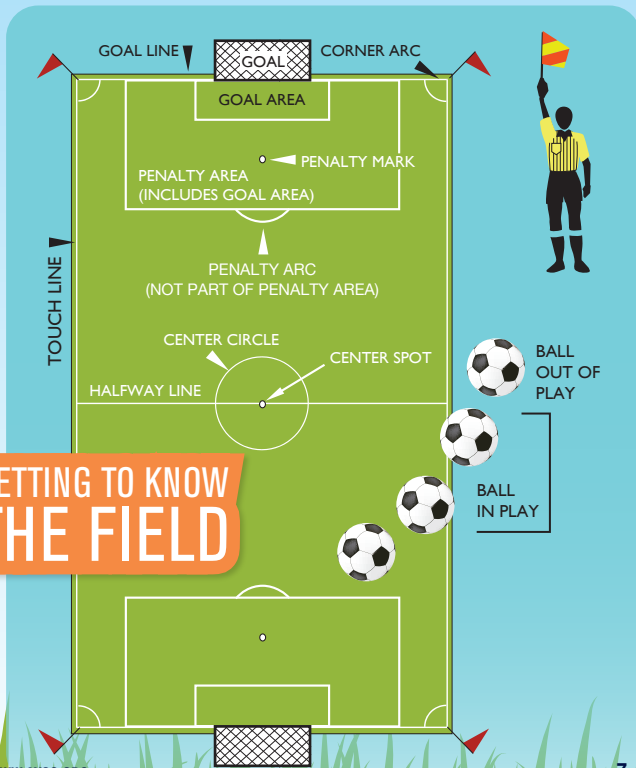
Every player needs a jersey, shorts and socks - all of which are provided by your AYSO Region.

YOUR SHOPPING LIST SHOULD LOOK SOMETHING LIKE THIS:

- Shin guards
- Cleats
- Soccer ball (*highly recommended for practicing at home*)
- Re-useable water bottle *\*optional*
- Soccer bag *\*optional*



## GETTING TO KNOW THE FIELD



NEW TO SOCCER?  
LEARN THE BASICS AND GET INVOLVED!

# SOCCER GLOSSARY

getting to know soccer terms

## KICKOFF

A kickoff is taken from the center circle to start the game or the second half and to restart the game after a goal.

## THROW-IN

Once the ball has gone "out of bounds" on the side boundary lines (touch lines), a throw-in is given to the team that **did not** last touch the ball. Throw-ins are taken from where the ball left the field and are thrown with two hands.

## GOAL KICK

Once the ball has gone "out of bounds" on the goal line by the offensive team, a goal kick is taken by the defending team. The ball may be placed anywhere in the goal area for the kick.

## CORNER KICK

If the defense kicks the ball over its own goal line, a corner kick is given to the attacking team. The ball is placed near the corner flag.



## THE TEAM

Teams in AYSO vary in size according to age. Smaller teams allow more touches on the ball and a better learning experience for younger players. This is how the world's greatest soccer stars honed their skills!

Even better, every child plays at least half of every game in AYSO – making Player Development a huge priority.

### HERE'S SOME NUMBERS:



DEVELOP MOTOR SKILLS  
THROUGH SOCCER  
FOR 3, 4 AND 5 YEARS

U-10

PLAY 7-V-7 (NO MORE  
THAN 10 ON A ROSTER)

U-6

PLAY 3-V-3 (NO MORE  
THAN 5 ON A ROSTER)

U-12

PLAY 9-V-9 (NO MORE  
THAN 12 ON A ROSTER)

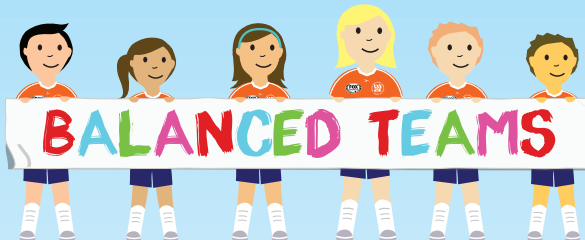
U-8

PLAY 5-V-5 (NO MORE  
THAN 7 ON A ROSTER)

12+

PLAY 11-V-11  
(FULL SIDED SOCCER)

AYSO'S BALANCED TEAMS PHILOSOPHY MAKES  
 SOCCER A SPECIAL EXPERIENCE.



All standard teams in AYSO are re-formed each season, giving players a chance to make new friends, play with new coaches and learn new skills.

Our **BALANCED TEAMS** philosophy models playground etiquette. Just think: When kids play sports on their own, everyone lines up and the two captains pick players. Good, medium and lesser skilled kids are evenly dispersed. All kids have the chance to play, learn and have **FUN**.

Same goes for AYSO! The objective is to prevent blow-outs and stacked teams, while providing valuable learning experiences for everyone.

**WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT BALANCED TEAMS?**  
**VISIT: [AYSO.ORG/ABOUTAYSO](http://AYSO.ORG/ABOUTAYSO)**

COACHES COACH. PLAYERS PLAY.  
 PARENTS CHEER.



In AYSO, parents and spectators are asked to be cheerleaders, not critics. This means cheering for all players (even on the other team), giving positive reinforcement and no coaching from the sidelines.

To help spread the word, AYSO created Kids Zone™ – a program that reminds moms and dads about the importance of setting a great example for their player. There's even a pledge parents can sign to commit to positive and encouraging behavior on game days. Sign it here!  
[www.AYSO.org/kidszone](http://www.AYSO.org/kidszone)



LEARN ABOUT ALL THE EXCITING PROGRAMS  
AYSO OFFERS YOUR FAMILY.

## STANDARD PROGRAM

AYSO's standard program is home to the majority of our players and volunteers and includes age divisions U-6 to U-16/19



AYSO's VIP Program provides a quality soccer experience for

children and adults whose physical or mental disabilities make it difficult to participate on mainstream teams.  
*Learn more:*  
[www.AYSO.org/vip](http://www.AYSO.org/vip)

## Schoolyard

Schoolyard – AYSO's youngest age division is more of a "Parent and Me" program rather than a competitive soccer experience. Kids learn basic soccer skills and play fun soccer games.  
*Learn more:*  
[www.AYSO.org/for\\_families](http://www.AYSO.org/for_families)



The AYSO Playground Soccer program is specially designed for 3 to 5 year olds and run by your own Region volunteers.

## TEAM AYSO!



EXTRA™ is designed for players who have the interest, skills and abilities for more competitive play and want their soccer experience to retain the spirit of AYSO.  
*Learn more:* [www.AYSO.org/extra](http://www.AYSO.org/extra)

AYSO United is AYSO's official club program. Our club allows players to enjoy more advanced play, participate in intense competition and receive cutting-edge training while still enjoying the benefits of AYSO and its Six Philosophies.  
*Learn more:* [www.aysounitedsc.org](http://www.aysounitedsc.org)



AYSO RUNS ON VOLUNTEER POWER.  
PARENTS LIKE YOU KEEP AYSO GOING.

## THE COACHES

AYSO coaches are volunteers that are trained and certified to instruct the age-group they are coaching.

Coaches are essential to the game. They teach children soccer skills and help them develop a positive attitude, teamwork and good sportsmanship.

Learn more about AYSO coaches! Visit [www.AYSO.org/coaches](http://www.AYSO.org/coaches)

Most coaches are parents, just like you, and chose to coach to spend time with their child and have a richer AYSO experience. Don't know anything about soccer? No problem! AYSO will fully train and prepare you for the position .

*Hey Coach!* is a great source for all AYSO coaches. This interactive newsletter gives coaching tips from the experts, training plans and all things AYSO coaching.

Interested in becoming a coach?  
Contact your Regional Commissioner.

## THE OFFICIALS

Referees are critical to soccer - the game can't be played without them. The referee's No. 1 priority is to keep the game safe, fair and fun for the players, coaches and spectators.

AYSO recommends the use of three game officials - one referee and two assistant referees.

Similar to coaches, most referees are parents like you. AYSO fully trains and prepares all who volunteer to help out their Region and officiate games.

AYSO referees are volunteers that are trained and certified to call games.

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A REFEREE?  
CONTACT YOUR REGIONAL COMMISSIONER.

Visit [ayso.org/referees](http://ayso.org/referees) to learn more about AYSO referees and the Whistle Stop newsletter.





AYSO follows the Laws set by Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA). As a parent, it's important to learn some of the most important Laws of the Game, like Law Four and Law Five.



## LAW 4

### The Players' Equipment

"A player must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous." All items of jewelry, hair adornments or anything that may be considered "hard" and could potentially hurt the player or other players on the field must be removed before stepping out onto the field. If the item cannot be removed, the player will not be permitted to play in the game.

These items includes: rings, earrings, bracelets, bobby pins, barrettes, hair beads, etc.

## LAW 5

### The Referee

"Each match is controlled by a referee who has full authority to enforce the Laws of the Game in connection with the match."

The referee has the ability to enforce the Laws of the Game as deemed appropriate based on the "spirit of the game" and the intensity of play. Arguing with the referee about his decision may result in disciplinary actions. The referee's decisions are final.

For more information, please visit:  
[www.ayso.org](http://www.ayso.org)



## Soccer Activities

### Perfect for the Offseason

We know you and your player are excited for the upcoming season – we just want you to know that once the season ends, the excitement doesn't have to! Here are two fun activities that you and your budding soccer star can do together in the offseason:

#### 1. Soccer Tennis

To play, find a tennis court and take turns kicking the ball back and forth over the net. Can't find a tennis court? You can create a "net" by drawing a line on the ground with street chalk.



#### 2. Soccer Bowling

Line up water bottles (or other unbreakable items) in the traditional bowling formation and kick the ball (keeping it on the ground) to knock over as many "pins" as you can. Tally the score after 10 rounds!



PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT – STAY ACTIVE  
WITH FUN ACTIVITIES.

## YOUR JOB AS A PARENT



If possible, donate some time to AYSO.

While your schedule may not allow you to volunteer as a coach or referee, there are many volunteer jobs that need filling and don't take much time, including:

### 1 TEAM PARENT:

Helps distribute uniforms, organize snack-duty and plan picture day.

TIME COMMITMENT:

**4 hrs.**  
a season

### 2 CONCESSION STAND:

Someone has to sell the snacks! Serves concessions and other items.

TIME COMMITMENT:

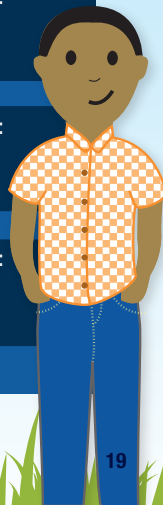
**4 hrs.**  
a season

### 3 FIELD STRIPER:

Helps line the fields for game days.

TIME COMMITMENT:

**4 hrs.**  
a season



# FAQ: ALL THE INFO YOU NEED TO KNOW

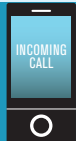
## WHO DO I CALL?



You'll want to contact your AYSO Region for information. The Region website should have most of the info you're looking for: game schedules, registration dates, etc. If you have questions or concerns, contact your Regional Commissioner. His/her info should be listed on the Region site.

## WHEN WILL MY KID'S COACH CALL?

Teams usually begin practice 2-3 weeks before the season starts – the coaches call the parents around that time. They will give you all the info you need, i.e. practice times and locations.



GOT QUESTIONS?  
WE'VE GOT ANSWERS.

## HOW OFTEN ARE PRACTICES/GAMES?

Practices are held once or twice a week; sometimes the youngest players have a combined practice and game one day a week. Games are usually held on weekends – the location will be determined by your Region.



## MY CHILD WITHDREW – CAN I GET A REFUND?

We're sorry to see you go! Refund policies are set locally by the Regions, and do vary. Please refer to your Region's website for complete information.



## WHAT'S MY REGION WEBSITE?

You can find that information by visiting [www.AYSO.org/region\\_locator](http://www.AYSO.org/region_locator). Type in your zip code and your Region number and the website address will pop up.



### MORE QUESTIONS?

VISIT [WWW.AYSO.ORG](http://WWW.AYSO.ORG)

FOR MORE ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS.

## MAKING AYSO TRULY A SAFE HAVEN

You can trust your child with AYSO - our Safe Haven program makes AYSO a safe place for your player and our volunteers. Safe Haven was the first of its kind in youth sports and does four important things:

- 1 Creates and enforces policies to keep members/players safe
- 2 Screens volunteers
- 3 Trains volunteers
- 4 Promotes education and awareness



THESE COMPONENTS HELP CREATE A SAFE, FUN, FAIR AND POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT - A "SAFE HAVEN" FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS.

LEARN MORE ABOUT SAFE HAVEN AT [WWW.AYSO.ORG/SAFEHAVEN](http://WWW.AYSO.ORG/SAFEHAVEN)



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