



AYSO

AMERICAN YOUTH SOCCER ORGANIZATION
a nonprofit corporation dedicated to youth soccer

Region 104 • Albuquerque

Revision Date August 2011

COACH HANDBOOK

POLICIES, GUIDELINES, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR TEAM MANAGEMENT

This is not a book of “how to” coach youth soccer. You will learn how to teach players individual and team skills at coaching clinics. Rather, this Handbook serves as a guideline to inform you of policies, procedures and suggestions to help you manage your team.

AYSO – NATIONAL.....	4
AYSO's Mission & Vision.....	4
To Be The Nationally Recognized Youth Soccer Program Of Choice.....	4
REGION 104 OPERATIONS.....	4
THE SEASON.....	4
ORGANIZATION.....	4
COMMUNICATION.....	5
www.Ayso104.Org.....	5
Event line - 342-2976.....	5
E-Mail.....	5
COACH TRAINING REQUIRED.....	5
COACHING CLINICS.....	5
TEAM ROSTERS.....	6
MEDICAL RELEASE FORMS.....	6
UNIFORMS.....	6
SAFETY.....	6
Lightning.....	7
Lightning Safety Procedures.....	7
Dehydration.....	7
Education.....	7
Observation.....	7
Intervention and First Aid.....	8
Hypothermia.....	8
WHEN THERE IS AN INJURY.....	8
ACCIDENT REIMBURSEMENT PLAN.....	8
CHILD/VOLUNTEER PROTECTION.....	9
Two Adults Must Be Present.....	9
Never Leave Players Alone.....	9
EQUIPMENT.....	9
Player Equipment.....	10
Game Field Equipment.....	10
RETURNING EQUIPMENT.....	10
DIVISION COMMISSIONER.....	10
COACH RECRUITMENT.....	10
LIAISON FOR COACHES.....	10
Coach Replacement.....	11
FIELD MARKER RECRUITMENT.....	11
REFEREE RECRUITMENT AND SCHEDULING.....	11
DIVISION REGISTRAR.....	11
TEAM ORGANIZATION.....	12
TEAM MANAGER.....	12
TEAM MEETING.....	12
HANDOUTS.....	13
ASSISTANT COACHES.....	13
TRANSPORTATION & CAR POOLING.....	13
PLAYER ABSENCES FROM PRACTICES AND GAMES.....	13
AYSO KIDS ZONE.....	13
DUAL FAMILIES.....	13
WEATHER PROBLEMS.....	14
AYSO EVENT LINE 342-2976.....	14
LIGHTNING.....	14
ADVERSE WEATHER.....	14
GAME CANCELLATIONS.....	14
REFEREE Game CANCELLATIONS.....	14
Make Up Games.....	14
CONDUCT AT GAMES.....	15
COACH CONDUCT DURING GAMES.....	15
RED CARDS.....	15
GAMES.....	15

PRE-GAME PREPARATION.....	15
PRACTICE.....	16
PRACTICE FIELD REGULATIONS.....	16
PRACTICE TIME.....	17
REFEREES.....	17
U-9 and Younger.....	17
U-10 and Older.....	17
SOLVING PROBLEMS.....	18
PLAYER PROBLEMS.....	18
PARENT PROBLEMS.....	18
TEACH PLAYERS THE RULES.....	18
PLAYOFFS & SPECIAL PROGRAMS.....	18
CONCLUSION.....	19

AYSO VOICE MAIL • 342-2976

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First, thank you for coaching. As a coach, you will have the most contact with the children and as a result, the greatest impact on the children playing on your AYSO team this year. Experienced or new to soccer coaching, welcome to the American Youth Soccer Organization. In our all-volunteer organization, your involvement as a coach is most important. Without our fine corps of coaches, AYSO could not exist. Be proud of your role as Coach for an AYSO team.

AYSO – NATIONAL

AYSO, founded in California in 1963, is a nationwide, non-profit organization whose sole purpose is to promote youth soccer. AYSO is organized geographically by section, area, and region. The United States is divided into Sections, which encompass several states. Each Section is divided into several Areas and each area is divided into Regions. The Region (community) provides the local program. Each Region is self-governed by a Board of Directors, and operates within the guidelines established by the AYSO national office in Hawthorne, CA. Nationally, AYSO now has over 650,000 players, with players represented from every state. The AYSO National web site is: www.ayso.org.

You are East Albuquerque is AYSO Region 104, Area C, Section 12. We serve approximately 3,000 children.

AYSO'S MISSION & VISION

TO BE THE NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED YOUTH SOCCER PROGRAM OF CHOICE

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

AYSO is proud of its "Open Enrollment" policy. Any child can join a team, play 16 games (8 games in the Fall and 8 games in the Spring), is guaranteed to play at least one-half (1/2) of every game, gets a uniform and trained coaches and referees, all for under \$100.00 per year. "Everyone Plays" is the hallmark and motto of AYSO.

AYSO encourages healthy, positive sports competition. We stress FAIR, FUN, and SAFE play. It is our desire to foster physical fitness, knowledge of the sport, agility, quick thinking, and aggressive offensive and defensive play. Dangerous play, abusive language to coaches, referees or players, and irresponsibility will not be tolerated.

Remember, the children are learning to play the game. Encourage them to try every position. In younger divisions, provide an opportunity to play all the positions so players learn the whole game.

REGION 104 OPERATIONS

THE SEASON

The season consists of two eight-game sessions. Fall Season starts after Labor Day and runs through October. The Spring Season games are played in March and April. Game schedules are published at www.ayso104.org prior to each season. Teams stay together for the fall and spring seasons. Teams are reformed every fall by random computer selection based on geographic codes.

ORGANIZATION

Your organization is made up of 100% volunteers dedicated to the Vision and Mission of AYSO desiring to make the experience of the players and parents a great one. Your regional board and staff are here to make your experience as a Coach a wonderful one.

COMMUNICATION

If you have questions, suggestions, or problems, please contact us. Please use the “chain of command”—start with the Division Commissioner (DC). Your DC is your first contact and can direct you to the next level if necessary. Here are the places to find your contact information:

WWW.AYSO104.ORG

Region 104 has a web site that provides almost instant communication.

EVENT LINE - 342-2976

The event line will give you up the date information on registration, game cancellations and various other topics.

E-MAIL

E-mail is the Board’s official and **preferred** form of communication. It is by far the fastest form of communication. Key volunteers have listed their e-mail addresses on the web site. Please provide your e-mail address to your Division Commissioner as soon as possible to facilitate communication.

COACH TRAINING REQUIRED

All AYSO coaches and assistant coaches must complete an age appropriate level coaching course every two years. All AYSO coaches, assistant coaches, and referees must complete a **Volunteer Application** form annually, and attend a Safe Haven (Child and Volunteer Protection) training. **UNIFORMS WILL NOT BE DISTRIBUTED TO THE COACH UNTIL PROOF OF SUCCESSFUL SAFE HAVEN TRAINING IS RECEIVED BY THE DIVISION COMMISSIONER.** The Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 requires that each organization develop and conduct their own training to protect children and volunteers that addresses the specific risks associated with the organization’s activity.

AYSO uses only AYSO qualified and certified coaches and coach instructors. At this time, there is no cross-certification between soccer organizations for coaches. AYSO National is pursuing this issue.

COACHING CLINICS

Region 104 offers many opportunities to obtain and maintain coach training and certification. Typically, coach training is offered in late July and August, in late January and early February.

Coach Clinic	Coaching Player Ages	Availability
U5/U6	4-6	Requires taking Online training as well as Field Session
U7/U8	6-8	Requires taking Online training as well as Field Session
U9/U10	8-10	Requires taking Online training as well as Field Session
U12	10-12	Required Classroom and Field Session
Intermediate	12-14	U12 must be completed
Advanced	14 and Older	Intermediate must be completed. Required for Competitive teams
Adv. Recert.	Advanced Coaches	Annual Requirement
Instructor		By Invitation

Go to our website for current course dates: www.ayso104.org

REGISTRATION OF PLAYERS

Open Registration occurs in the Spring/Summer following the season. Players are randomly placed on teams based on age, sex, neighborhood school codes, area, etc. This is how Region 104 **Balances** teams.

Coaches:

- Are not allowed to influence the formation of teams

- **Are** guaranteed to coach their own child
- May not move players onto or off of the team
- Must respect the specific procedures for move requests
- Must not attempt to influence the move decision.

TEAM ROSTERS

You will receive your computerized team roster. Call the parents of each player on the roster to verify that the child plans to play. Notify your Division Registrar within 48 hours of any players who will not be playing. If you are short of players, call your Division Registrar for replacement players.

ALL OF THE PLAYERS ON YOUR TEAM MUST BE CURRENTLY REGISTERED WITH AYSO AND ASSIGNED TO YOUR TEAM. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES MAY A COACH PRACTICE OR PLAY AN UNREGISTERED PLAYER OR A PLAYER ASSIGNED TO ANOTHER TEAM.

If a player quits for any reason, you must notify the DIVISION REGISTRAR. Coaches cannot drop or “kick a player off” a team. Contact your Division Commissioner if there is a problem.

MEDICAL RELEASE FORMS

The Medical Release forms are now part of the Registration Form. You must have these forms with you at each practice and each game; otherwise you may not hold practice. If a child is transported for medical treatment, the form must be sent with the EMS (Ambulance) staff.

UNIFORMS

At the beginning of the season, you will receive a uniform (socks, jersey, and shorts) for each registered player on the team, a goalkeeper jersey (older ages), two soccer balls, and mesh equipment bag. Teams are required to wear their complete issued uniform for games. If there is a problem with the jerseys, shorts, or socks, the coach must contact the equipment manager. Uniforms for any added players will be ordered at the time they register. Request this from your Division Registrar.

DO NOT DISTRIBUTE UNIFORMS at the Team Meeting. Wait until the week of the first game. Players will drop. Changes will occur. Keep a record of each player’s jersey number. Jersey numbers must be recorded along with the first and last name of each player on the lineup cards you will present to the referee prior to each game.

Keep in mind that uniforms are sized by number. The smallest uniforms will be jersey #2, 3 and 4. The largest uniforms will have the highest jersey number such as 13 or above. **DO NOT** put players’ names or nick names on the outside of uniforms or equipment bags.

At the games, each player must be in proper uniform to be eligible to play! Proper uniform is the issued jersey (which must be tucked into the shorts while playing), issued shorts and issued socks. Shin guards (mandatory) are to be worn **underneath**, and be completely covered by, the sock. On cold days, if the player needs additional clothing, warm-ups may be worn under the uniform.

SAFETY

THE SAFETY OF YOUR PLAYERS IS YOUR PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY. Therefore, you must do whatever is necessary and reasonable to protect players from injury.

Players may not participate in practice or games if they are:

- Not wearing shoes and shin guards
- Wearing a cast or physical appliance

- Unwilling to remove all jewelry and inappropriate hair fasteners or apparel (AYSO does not allow any player to wear any jewelry, metal or plastic hair fasteners)
- Bleeding or have blood on their clothing
- Wearing anything that, in the opinion of the referee, is unsafe or improper

If a practice or a game field is found to be in a condition that is dangerous to the players, coaches, or referees, notify the Field Coordinator and the Safety Director immediately.

If it is raining/snowing and the game is called (ended, postponed, postponed to be rescheduled), do not scrimmage due to risk of injury to the children and damage to the fields. After all, the game was called because of a safety issue.

LIGHTNING

Lightning causes over 100 deaths in the US annually -- more than hurricanes and tornadoes combined. Nationally, lightning ranks second only to flash floods in weather-related deaths. Lightning is the most frequent important weather threat to personal safety during the thunderstorm season. New Mexico ranks second in the country for number of lightning strikes. Many lightning injuries happen between late spring and early autumn during outdoor recreational activities. Lightning often strikes outside of heavy rain and may occur as far as 10-15 miles away from any rainfall.

LIGHTNING SAFETY PROCEDURES

- If you see lightning, leave the field. Seek shelter immediately inside a sturdy building or hardtop car.
- Educate parents to watch the weather during their child's practice. If lightning is present, parents should plan to pick up their child early. Discuss this in your parent meeting.
- Coaches must develop a Lightning Safety Plan based on their practice and game field location.
- It is OK to sit in cars, or stay in a nearby building in hopes of the storm passing. Allow at least ten minutes before re-entering the field (Pitch).
- Make sure shelter is available for all players and volunteers.
- Make sure all players, parents and volunteers are aware of your team's Lightning Safety Plan.

Games - The Referee will determine whether it is safe to play. If at any time, a coach feels that players are at risk from lightning and the referee does not suspend or end the game, the coach may, upon notification of the referee, remove his or her team from the field.

DEHYDRATION

Staying hydrated during the course of exercise is crucial because water helps deliver oxygen to the muscles, fueling them in the course of physical activity. Without adequate fluids, the cardiovascular system is strained, the probability of heat injury increases, and performance is impaired.

The most serious effect of dehydration during exercise is the reduced ability to perspire and cool the body. Since perspiration is the body's chief method of heat loss in a hot - dry climate, dehydration can be a life threatening condition.

EDUCATION

Hydration begins the night before a game. Instruct players to drink 6-8 glasses of water (fluid) per day. Warn against drinks containing caffeine - which acts as a diuretic - including some orange sodas. Before bed, drink 16 oz of water. 1 - 2 hours before a game drink 16 oz. of plain cold water. Just before a game, drink 16 - 20 oz of water. During a game, drink 4-6 oz of plain cold water every 10 - 15 minutes. After a game, drink fluids beyond feeling that thirst is quenched.

OBSERVATION

Remember, thirst is not a good indicator of dehydration. By the time the body feels thirsty it is already 2% dehydrated. Watch for symptoms. The most typical symptoms in soccer players are irritability, lethargy, and muscle cramps. Watch your players. If in doubt, insist that the player step to the touchline to take water. (This is legal, so long as the player does not leave the field and is not part of, or obstructing play. If necessary, ask the referee for permission to substitute or to remove the player from the game.) Coaches should also be aware of the condition of spectators, especially older spectators and of the condition of the referee. Referees are as susceptible to dehydration as players.

INTERVENTION AND FIRST AID

Dehydration may lead to heat stroke. Intervene before this happens. Err on the side of safety. If a player or spectator is exhibiting any signs of dehydration, cease the physical activity. Move to a cool shady spot. Push cold fluids especially water. Loosen clothing. Place cold compresses on back of neck, armpits and groin. A player/ spectator is in danger of heat stroke if they are pale or chalky colored, no longer perspiring coupled with being unable to stand or walk straight, or are irrational (refusing all aid and intervention). Call 911 or have player/ spectator taken to hospital immediately. This is a life-threatening situation.

HYPOTHERMIA

Hypothermia occurs when exposure to cold causes a person's body to lose heat faster than it can be replaced. Hypothermia is caused by any combination of temperature, wet clothes, wind, fatigue, illness, dehydration, malnourishment, and alcohol.

Physical activity is a first line of defense. Remember that older people and young / small children are the most susceptible to hypothermia.

If the weather conditions are "miserable" but the referee has not ended the game, ask to consult with the referee and the other coach. There is no harm in ending a game early, playing shortened halves, etc.

WHEN THERE IS AN INJURY

If an injury has occurred, you must take steps to have it properly treated, and to protect against further injury. Beware of playing injured players before they are ready to resume play. Doing so may lead to a more serious injury, or one of a permanent nature.

Remember, the AYSO Accident Reimbursement Plan does not cover re-injuries. You may also be subject to liability by playing an injured player.

Before each practice and before each game, check the field for any dangerous conditions, and do what you can to remove or correct them. If the dangerous condition cannot be corrected, consult with the referee who may decide to terminate the game. Warn players to avoid minor dangers. Do not practice or play if there is any seriously dangerous situation. Be especially aware of broken glass, sprinkler heads, holes, and the like.

Make yourself familiar with basic first aid techniques, so that if an injury does occur, you know how to deal with it. The best thing you can do for a bruise or strain is to apply ice. This minimizes any internal bleeding and reduces swelling. If a head, neck, spinal or is suspected, ***do not move the child***. Call 911. Let trained Emergency Medical Staff make decisions about moving the child with any of these types of potentially serious injuries. Ice may also be applied in this case. Be careful of applying any supportive type bandages or devices, since this may only lead to further injury by giving the player a false sense of security in continuing to play while injured.

If you have a player who has been injured, be sure to obtain a ***Participation Release Form*** from the parents before allowing the player to return to practice or games. (See the Sample Forms Sections for a Participation Release Form.)

ACCIDENT REIMBURSEMENT PLAN

AYSO has an Accident Reimbursement Plan that covers all registered members of AYSO (including coaches and officials) who have submitted properly completed registration forms, while participating in sanctioned games or scheduled practices. This reimbursement plan pays only for those eligible expenses not covered by public, group or individual insurance carried by the parents or guardians of registered participants and only after submission of the claim to the primary insurance carrier first. This is not an insurance plan. It is meant to assist in the payment of medical bills that result from injuries while participating in a sanctioned AYSO practice or game. If an injury occurs which is covered by this plan, the Safety Director should be notified and will explain what procedures are necessary to submit a claim. All

injuries are to be reported to the Safety Director at 342-2976 ext. 329, and your Division Commissioner within 24 hours via the voice mail system or via e-mail. Please provide the following information to the Safety Director:

Player Name/Volunteer Name
Birth date
Parent Names
Address
City, State, Zip
Home and Work Phone Numbers
E-mail address

Please provide the Safety Director's contact information to the parents of the injured player.

The AYSO Accident Reimbursement Plan does not cover unregistered players. If you allow unregistered players to practice or play with your team, you will be removed as the coach.

CHILD/VOLUNTEER PROTECTION

The potential for abuse of children by adults is an unpleasant reality. Federal law requires all volunteer organizations that serve children, including AYSO, to have specific volunteer training and child protection policies. AYSO is required to have each volunteer who has direct contact with children (including all coaches and referees) attend a child and volunteer protection training course each year known as Safe Haven. This course is required even if the volunteer has attended similar courses with other youth organizations.

TWO ADULTS MUST BE PRESENT

The key to protection for players and volunteers is that no AYSO volunteer should ever be alone with a child. A second adult must be present when the first player is dropped off and a second adult must stay until the last player is picked up. NO EXCEPTIONS. One of the adults should be the same sex as the players.

NEVER LEAVE PLAYERS ALONE

No AYSO player should ever be left alone. Parents may not leave a child at a practice or game field unless two adult supervisors for that team are present. The coach and second adult should never leave a child at a game or practice field to wait for a ride. Wait for the parent. Try to contact the parent(s) by cell phone if available. As a last resort, deliver the child to the parent or take the child home until contact with a parent is made for return of the child to the parent. NEVER LEAVE OR BE WITH A CHILD ALONE. the last resort puts you, the volunteer at risk.

Coaches are responsible for educating parents about AYSO's safety policies. Abuse of this policy by parents should be reported to your Division Commissioner for resolution.

EQUIPMENT

Each team is issued one mesh equipment bag, one goalkeeper shirt (for U-9 and older ages), at least 16 official lineup cards, practice disks and one or two new soccer balls. You will receive this equipment from your Division Commissioner prior to the start of the season. If you missed the uniform and equipment pick up, call your Division Commissioner to make arrangements to pick up your equipment.

To help assure the safety of your players, DO NOT put player names on uniforms or the outside of player bags. Please do not put team names, numbers, or patches on the goalie shirt.

If you have any problems with the balls provided by AYSO, please bring them to the attention of the Equipment Manager. The balls can be exchanged or repaired.

PLAYER EQUIPMENT

Players must wear shoes (soccer cleats are not required), shin guards, and Socks that completely cover the shin guards for practice and games. The AYSO uniform shall be worn during the games. On cold days the player may wear warm clothes under the uniform, stocking caps, and gloves may (subject to the referee's discretion). Cleats must have rounded edges with no sharp corners or burrs (or metal cleats). Football or softball style cleats with rectangular cleats protruding outward from the edge of the sole or with a prominent front "toe cleat" are not allowed. The referee has authority to decide whether any shoe or other equipment is dangerous and cannot be worn.

GAME FIELD EQUIPMENT

Each game field is assigned a set of equipment which includes: goal nets, ties for the nets, 4 corner cones or flags, and an equipment bag in which to carry it. (Younger ages use only goal flags and corner cones).

Each week, it is the responsibility of the Home team to:

- For the **FIRST** game- Set up the equipment at the assigned game field allowing at least 30 minutes for your parents to put up the nets/flags to avoid delay in starting the game.
- Of the **LAST** game of the day takes down the nets, ties, cones, and/or flags and keeps the game field equipment until the next game. That team will be the first Home team the following week.
- Take a hammer for the stakes and a small stool or ladder to reach the cross bar of the goal.
- Recruit parents to set up the field so you can warm up your players properly.
- Put up nets using ties provided to tie the nets to the goal post.
 - a. Velcro ties are provided when possible.
 - b. If something other than Velcro is supplied, tie in a fashion that makes it easy for the next team to remove the nets.
 - c. **Do not use tape, twine, or loose ends of the nets for ties!**
 - d. The team taking down the nets should not cut the ties except as a last resort. Then cut only the ties, **DO NOT CUT THE NET!!**
 - e. Please check the equipment when taking the nets. If ties, stakes, etc., need to be replaced, call your DC.

Each week, it is the responsibility of all teams to:

- Not allow anyone to hang on the cross bar or the nets.
- Take care of the fields and equipment!

RETURNING EQUIPMENT

If you are the last home team to play at the end of the fall or spring season, it is your responsibility to turn in the Field Equipment – nets, flags, and cones to your DC.

DIVISION COMMISSIONER

Each Division has a Commissioner. The Division Commissioner (DC) has several areas of responsibility.

COACH RECRUITMENT

The DC assures that each team has a coach before the season begins. If no coach is assigned to a team, the DC recruits a coach via a meeting with parents of the team. If no parent steps forward to coach, the team may be disbanded and players assigned to other teams **WHEN POSSIBLE**. The DC works with the Regional Coach Administrator (Chief Coach) to ensure all coaches have appropriate training.

LIAISON FOR COACHES

The DC is your first contact for any general problems, questions, etc. The DC may refer you elsewhere, but is your primary contact person. The DC may call a coaches meeting in the fall and in the spring that you, the assistant coach, or your team parent **MUST** attend. Frequently this meeting is combined with the Annual Coach/ Referee Meeting. The DC provides information about training, special events, volunteer opportunities and conflict resolution.

COACH REPLACEMENT

If you find that you are unable to complete the season as head coach, **contact your DC immediately**. Recruiting a replacement is always appreciated. Please remember that all coaches, even replacements, must be registered volunteers, certified in Child and Volunteer Protection and trained as a Coach.

FIELD MARKER RECRUITMENT

The DC recruits Division Field Marking volunteers. The DC finds these volunteers through the coaches. Fields are marked weekly. The field marker will be given the use of AYSO sprayers and enough paint for each season. Instructions and field dimensions are provided.

REFEREE RECRUITMENT AND SCHEDULING

Coaches are responsible for recruiting Referees and Assistant Referees for their team. Referees are responsible for safe, fun, fair play at games. They are volunteers and, like coaches, improve in their job performance with practice and experience.

The Chief Referee coordinates referee training and works with Division Referee Schedulers to make referee game assignments. In the U-5 through U-9 Divisions, each home team will provide a trained referee to officiate the game. If a trained referee is not available, the coaches will divide the refereeing responsibilities, with each coach refereeing half the game. It is in the best interest of all, to make sure your team has a trained and certified referee affiliated with it. Even if you are certified as a referee, you should be recruiting another person early in the season to be your teams referee.

In U-9 through U-19, we use an on-line referee scheduling program to assist with the assignment of referees in those games. At U-9, referees should sign up on line for games where they are affiliated (e.g. they have a son/daughter/friend/relative playing in that game). This means signing up as the center referee (CR) when their team is designated the home team, and signing up as AR for games where their team is designated as the visiting team. At U-10 and older, referees sign up as CR in games where they do not have any team affiliation. For these ages, self-assignments should be done in coordination with the Division Referee Scheduler. It's typical for these referees to sign up for the game that immediately precedes or follows their own child's game.

Divisions where team-affiliated referees are used, please remind your referee to be in proper uniform.

Remind parents and spectators that our referees are volunteers. Also remind them that the referee is the only and final authority on the pitch.

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

DIVISION REGISTRAR

The Division Registrar works with the Head Registrar to register and drop players. After the computer randomly creates the teams, the Registrar is responsible for the composition of teams.

The Division Registrar:

- Keeps the waiting list for players who want to join teams;
- Takes money and registration forms to add players;
- Drops players;
- Moves players between teams;
- Moves younger siblings up one year to play with older sister or brother

TEAM ORGANIZATION

To be effective, a coach must organize other team parents to do the jobs that take your time and energy away from practices. A Team Manager, Referee, Assistant Coaches, Assistant Referees, and Registration Volunteer all have jobs to do in support of the coach and team. (See *Coach's Staff* in the Sample Forms Section.) Practice time is precious. Your time is valuable. Recruit parents to do these other jobs so you can focus on planning and coaching your practices.

The initial Team Meeting is the time to get parents to commit to these other jobs. Do not conclude your team meeting until a parent volunteer fills every job.

TEAM MANAGER

This person usually creates the team list, makes, and distributes schedules for the games, snacks, and second adult at practices, coordinates team picture schedules and acts as or organizes a phone committee. Recruit a Team Manager before the Team Meeting if possible. Have him/her help prepare the Team list and other handouts for the Team meeting.

TEAM MEETING

Schedule a Team Meeting. Let parents know well ahead of time the date, time, and location. It is best to have the meeting at the time and place of practice. Ask **all** parents and players to attend. This meeting is your single most important management job for the entire season. At this meeting you need to:

- Establish your authority as coach.
- Tell players and parents what you expect from each of them all season. Remind them if they do not exhibit proper behavior what they can expect you to do. This will greatly reduce conflict when you confront a parent.
- Teach the Team Age (U-?) and Team Number to parents and players. AYSO Region 104 uses the Team Number and Age Group to set schedules and locate information. Tell parents to be sure to use the Team number and age group when seeking information from AYSO staff. Information without the team number is meaningless to anyone except your team.
- Inform players and parents about the AYSO Safety policies concerning Lightning, Dehydration, Hypothermia, Child and Volunteer Protection, player pick up/drop off policies and the “**Two Adults**” rule.
- Tell parents about AYSO’s standards of conduct for parents and coaches at games and practices including the fact that AYSO is a No Smoking, No Alcohol, and No Drugs organization.
- DEMAND and represent the tone for how you expect players to act toward coaches, referees, and each other. Include explicitly that a call by the Referee is the call. Do not allow either you or your parents to disrespectfully criticize any call by any referee. Use your DC to complain and the AYSO Region 104 Staff will take care of the situation.
- Tell parents who to contact and how for weather or field problems.
- Tell parents that players must be on time to practices and games, properly prepared—shoes and shin guards on, laces tied, water bottle filled with water, sunscreen, and dressed for the weather.
- At the games, each player must be in proper uniform to be eligible to play! Proper uniform is the issued jersey (which must be tucked into the shorts while playing), issued shorts and issued socks. Shin guards (mandatory) are to be worn underneath and/or be completely covered by the sock. On cold days, if the player needs additional clothing, warm-ups may be worn under the uniform.
- Ask parents (not players) to notify you, in advance if possible, if the player will miss practice or a game.
- Explain that we are a volunteer organization and that you cannot operate without parent support. Stress commitment from the player and the parents for the whole season.
- Recruit a Team Manager, Referees, Assistant Coaches, Assistant Referees, and a Registration Volunteer.
- **DO NOT DISTRIBUTE UNIFORMS** at the Team Meeting. Wait until the week of the first game—players will drop. Changes will occur. Uniforms are issued in general sizes by number with #2 being the smallest uniform and #13 and up being the largest. Distribute uniforms based on player size, **NOT** by letting players choose numbers. Yes, the uniforms seem large in September. By next April, the uniforms will fit most of the players perfectly.
- Keep a record of each player’s jersey number. Jersey numbers must be recorded along with the first and last name of the each player on the lineup cards you will present to the referee prior to each game.
- Inform parents to not park in front of neighborhood homes. Walk a bit farther first. This is out of respect.
- Inform parents that they need to pack out any trash and not use the part receptacles for their garbage.

HANDOUTS

Before this meeting, make enough copies of the following information for every family on your team.

- Team contact list with names of parents, players and phone numbers.
- Practice days and times and park location.
- Second adult at practice schedule, if needed.
- Game and snack schedule if available.
- Your instructions in writing. (Sample of *Parent Letters* may be found in the Sample Forms Section or may be downloaded from the AYSO web site, www.ayso104.org.)

ASSISTANT COACHES

Get at least two assistant coaches if not already assigned. Experience is NOT essential. The more people involved, the easier it is for you. Please note that because of the “random” requirement for forming teams, requests for a specific assistant coach will not be honored. If you are lucky enough to get your favorite assistant coach assigned to your team, it is because the computer made the random assignment. **Reminder – at games only the Head Coach and one Assistant Coach may issue instructions to players.**

Those under the age of eighteen (18) are welcome to volunteer as assistant coaches but may not act as a team’s head coach. The minor is to be encouraged to help with all coaching activities and should be allowed to be actively involved. In the event that the head coach cannot make a game or practice, an approved and Safe Haven-trained adult must be present and actively participating with the team. The trained adult must take responsibility for the team and all aspects of the game and practice. Minors must also take the Safe Haven course so that they gain an understanding of the policies.

TRANSPORTATION & CAR POOLING

Transportation problems are to be resolved between parents, not by the coach. It is the coach’s responsibility to create a team atmosphere that encourages parents to help each other. It is the responsibility of each parent to ensure that players are on time for practices and games. Expect players to be punctual at practices and to be at games at least 35 minutes prior to game time. Parents are expected to be there when practices and games end. **STRESS THIS!!**

PLAYER ABSENCES FROM PRACTICES AND GAMES

Tell the parents you expect them, not the player, to call you before the day a practice is missed. You need to know 48 hours in advance if a game will be missed. Only in a very few cases, may such absences have a bearing on the player’s participation in the game to follow. If a player misses three games, he/she is subject to being dropped from the team, with the permission of the Regional Coach Administrator (Chief Coach) and Regional Commissioner. We have children on waiting lists who wish to play. If you encounter a situation in which the player and player’s parents are not participating, and more importantly, **NOT COMMUNICATING**, notify your Division Commissioner immediately for assistance.

AYSO KIDS ZONE

As part of AYSO's education agenda, Kids Zone is a dynamic program targeted to eliminate negative sideline behavior. It is aimed toward producing a thoroughly positive impact on everyone involved in youth soccer. Each parent will sign a Kids Zone Pledge, copies should be kept with the registration and medical release forms.

DUAL FAMILIES

You will probably have players whose parents are divorced, separated, or don’t live together. Find out (discretely) if both parents are in town and active in the child’s soccer activities. Ask about putting parent’s names together and telephone numbers on the team roster. Make extra copies of any parent handouts or notices—give copies to both parents. Avoid using players as messengers to parents. Give information directly to the adults. Some divorced parents communicate well about their player. Others may not speak. It helps to know the situation.

WEATHER PROBLEMS

All games and all players are to show up at games unless they have heard from you or your Team Manager. The referee has sole authority at the field in the matter of ending a game due to weather and that decision is final. Call the AYSO phone number for weather cancellations—342-2976.

AYSO EVENT LINE 342-2976

A recorded message will be available by 8:00 a.m. on game day if the weather is questionable that morning. Call **342-2976** for the message. If games are canceled by AYSO, all games that day will be canceled. The team that has the field equipment (nets, flags, cones, etc.) keeps the equipment and contacts their Division Commissioner during the week to arrange to get it to the field the next Saturday.

LIGHTNING

The Region 104 policy is: If lightning is visible, leave the field immediately and go to pre-determined lightning shelters such as a building or hard-topped automobile. You may wait out a storm. Wait at least ten minutes before re-entering field.

You **MUST** follow this policy. **IT IS MANDATORY.** Make sure your letter to parents includes the lightning policy. Make sure they understand that if practice or a game is terminated due to lightning, they must be on hand to pick up their child.

ADVERSE WEATHER

Both you and the parents must monitor adverse conditions—excessively hot or cold--- to protect players. Encourage sunscreen for all games. Push water consumption, even when it's cold.

GAME CANCELLATIONS

Games will be played as scheduled unless cancelled by AYSO because of weather, or cancelled at the field by the referee.

- Games may be cancelled city-wide for snow, extreme cold, lightning or other weather conditions dangerous to players.
- Games are also cancelled as a result of heavy rain to prevent damage to the fields.
- The referee may cancel games at any field, at any time, because of safety or field conditions.
- If a city-wide cancellation occurs, the missed game(s) will be played the Saturday(s) following the last regularly scheduled game.
- If not a city-wide cancellation, but your game is canceled, contact your Division Commissioner to reschedule.

REFEREE GAME CANCELLATIONS

The assigned or responsible referee has absolute authority to cancel games due to dangerous conditions. If the referee cancels the game, your team should leave the field. If you are the home team—take the nets and equipment. The team that has the field equipment (nets, flags, cones, etc.) keeps the equipment and contacts their DC during the week to arrange to get it to the field the next Saturday.

When games are cancelled, do not play an informal game, practice, or scrimmage at the field.

MAKE UP GAMES

Contact your DC about make up games. AYSO, in coordination with Albuquerque Parks and Rec, not individual coaches, must approve and schedule make up games.

CONDUCT AT GAMES

- **All spectators are required to stand at least three yards from the touchline (sideline) and between the penalty areas. No spectator or Coach may stand in or behind the goal during any game. Coaches and referees are asked to enforce this policy.**
- *Coaches and Assistant Coaches are to remain inside their coaches' areas (technical areas).*
- Coaches are responsible for the conduct of all spectators on their side of the field.
- Home team coaches and spectators will be on the North/East touchline. Visiting team spectators will be on the South/West touchline.
- Spectator conduct should be positive and encouraging (cheering). Criticism or negative comments to or about any player (on either side) or the referee crew will not be tolerated. Spectator yelled instructions to players are to be discouraged.
- The Referee may **caution or send off any coach for misconduct** or for **failure to control** the conduct of any spectator.
- The Referee has the authority to request any misbehaving spectator to leave the field area.
- The Referee may suspend or terminate any match due to the conduct of a coach, player, or spectator.
- AYSO will not tolerate improper conduct at games, by any adult. If you have a parent you cannot control, notify the Division Commissioner prior to the game and inform the referee before the game begins. The referee is there to help you.
- Consumption of alcoholic beverages in the vicinity of the practice and playing fields (sidelines or field proper) is not permitted by city ordinance. In addition, such activity will be cause for immediate suspension of the offender for the remainder of the season.
- Smoking by coaches, parents, or spectators is not permitted at practice or game fields.

COACH CONDUCT DURING GAMES

Your role is, by AYSO policy, to be positive, and to limit coaching to brief tactical instructions during games. Never coach the player “on-the-ball.” Only the coach and one (1) assistant may coach players. You must remain within the technical area—do not run up and down the touchline.

*Practice belongs to the coach.
The game belongs to the players.*

RED CARDS

If a player or coach receives a send off (red card), or are ejected from the playing field; that player or coach must leave the park immediately and will not be allowed to participate in the next game. **Coaches who receive a red card or are sent off the field will also be required to appear before an A&D Committee to review the incident.**

GAMES

The game schedules and assigned game fields for each half of the season (fall and spring) are published at <http://www.aysol04.org>.

PRE-GAME PREPARATION

U7 and above, have your players at the field 35 minutes before game time to warm up and practice. **Do not permit players to practice or warm up behind the goal of a game in progress.** Have your game plan with your player's game positions and substitutions figured out before you get to the field. Put your game plan in writing! You must have an AYSO lineup card, completely filled out, with players full names listed, in jersey-number order, ready to give the referee before the game. At the end of the game, the referee rates behavior of both team's coaches, players, and spectators on the lineup cards. This practice is part of the monitoring required by the Volunteer Protection Act. All lineup cards are signed by the referee and turned in to the division's commissioner or referee scheduler as directed by the Regional Commissioner.

As coach you should:

- Have lineup cards and game plan prepared before arriving at the field.

- Have your team ready to start on time.
- Remind your certified AR or trained club linesman to report to the referee for instruction as soon as the referee arrives.

PRACTICE

For practice parks you will need to go to www.ayso104.org/park and create a coach login. From there you can select a park to practice at. Make sure to follow the instructions. Call your DC if you have any questions or concerns. **YOU MUST** only use the park and time you signed up for!

- Practice time is valuable. Be on time. It is best to arrive a few minutes early to set up, collect your thoughts, arrange the practice area, look for hazards, etc.
- Prepare before you get there. Write a Practice Plan. (Sample Practice Plans may be found in the Sample Forms Section.) Use games to bring insight into team and team player training opportunities.
 - a. Start with a free play exercise for warm ups. Keep it soccer related
 - b. Perform proper stretches
 - c. Use static drills without opposition
 - d. Add in opposition
 - e. Create a game realistic drill such as a 4 v 4 game
 - f. End with a cool down
- Use Assistant Coaches. Divide players into smaller groups. Rotate activities.
- Use one-on-one and small group skills.
- **Ball Touches, Ball Touches, Ball Touches.**
- Remember, players cannot hope to execute tactical skills until they first have basic ball control skills.
- Demonstrate! Observe! Correct! Keep the players working with the ball. Don't lecture. Don't have players waiting in long lines. Have more stations to keep things moving.
- Limit scrimmages. Use "conditioned games." Full team scrimmages do not provide sufficient ball touches for all players to improve their skills. Let the players have fun with small-sided contests.
- End on time. Be punctual.
- Be flexible. Sometimes demonstrations, games, or drills just don't work. Be prepared to substitute or move on.
- Model what you expect. If you play with the players, wear shin guards. Be *cautious* about playing with players. A child is no match for an adult. Never play at 100%. Playing too hard or playing out of control puts your players and you at risk of injury.
- Be Positive! Have Fun! Practices should be work but must also be fun—for the players *and* you.

PRACTICE FIELD REGULATIONS

- *Do not use the goal or practice in the goal area on any practice field with soccer goals.*
- *Pick up trash after every practice and game. TAKE TRASH HOME.* Do not use receptacles at parks.
- Practice on city parks is restricted to your assigned field. You may not move your team from the assigned practice field without the permission of the Field Scheduler and your Park Monitor.
- Assigned practice fields will be as close as possible to players' neighborhood dependent on the number of players in the area.
- All fields have a maximum number of teams that may practice on it on any one day. If in doubt, check with your park monitor.
- All coaches assigned to a practice park must coordinate, through their park monitor, the days of the week each will practice.
- Fields are to be shared equitably.
- Field assignments may change from fall to spring to accommodate other sports such as softball or baseball.

Practice in front of the goal mouth is PROHIBITED!

The majority of the damage to the field occurs in this area. If this continues, the city may take away park use privileges--a decision that may result in our limiting or decreasing the number of participants in AYSO. The seriousness of this situation cannot be over-stressed. To give the grass a chance to recover, coaches should use cones or flags to identify goals in different areas of the field for each practice.

On several fields, teams from other organizations will be practicing at the same time as AYSO teams. We must cooperate with these teams. If conflicts arise, please bring them to the attention of the Park Monitor, your Division Commissioner, and the Field Scheduler. **REMEMBER** -- be courteous to those who live in the vicinity of our city parks and schools. Arrange your practices so that balls will not be kicked onto their property. Bring your own water. Do not use water on private property. Do not ask to use their bathrooms. Make bathroom stops before arriving at the field. Never block driveways. Park where it is legal and not in front of any home if the park allows for it. The coach is responsible for informing the parents of these rules.

Adherence to the preceding guidance will minimize the loss of parks due to excessive wear and neighborhood complaints.

PRACTICE TIME

Practice is limited to two days per week with a maximum of 60 minutes for divisions U7 through U10, and 90 minutes for divisions U11 through U19. U5 and U6 will practice for 35 minutes prior to each Saturday game. This practice period is fun, designed to introduce new skills and is essential to the development of young players.

REFEREES

Our referees, like our coaches, are volunteers. Some are more experienced than others. Like you, they will make mistakes. A referee will make good calls and, being human, will sometimes make calls that you will want to question. ***In any event, the decision of the referee is final in all cases.*** Protests will not be permitted. A positive attitude on the part of the fans and the coach will encourage a positive attitude in the children. The referee is in full charge of the playing surface, and the players and coaches on that surface. Coaches will follow referee's instructions.

See the Youth Referee Abuse Policy located on the Region 104 web site (Referee menu | Youth Referee Program | Youth Referee Abuse). **BOTTOM LINE:** Don't yell, criticize, or approach in a threatening manner any youth. Every Youth Volunteer Referee must be accompanied by the parent at every game they referee.

Your team must provide at least one AYSO certified referee. Two or more is even better.

Individuals who are not certified as an AYSO referee or coach, may not referee AYSO games. They are not trained. Specifically, they have not taken the required Safe Haven or Referee training. They are not registered volunteers covered by AYSO insurance. This even includes individuals who are certified as referees with other soccer organizations (USSF, High School, etc.) but not AYSO certified.

U-9 AND YOUNGER

Games for players U9 and younger will be refereed by a certified referee affiliated with the home team. If the home team does not provide a certified referee, the visiting team's certified referee would officiate. If no certified referee is available, each coach will referee one-half (1/2) of the game.

U-9 referees must be at least Regional Referee trained and certified to officiate games in that age group. U5/U6 or U7/U8 Referee training will suffice for the younger divisions.

U-10 AND OLDER

Where necessary, the division's referee scheduler will attempt to assign unaffiliated (neutral) referees for these games. Referee Scheduler do weekly game recruitment, and where necessary, assignments.

As a coach in these divisions, you will need to submit the name(s) or your affiliated referee, along with their phone number and e-mail address, to your DC and the Referee Scheduler as soon as possible. If your team does not contribute a

certified referee, your team will have last priority if and when referees are assigned, and you will likely have to take on the added responsibility of refereeing the match in conjunction with the other coach.

Check the web site or with your DC for dates and times of referee training.

SOLVING PROBLEMS

The AYSO staff is available to help solve problems and get you information when you need it. As a volunteer organization, it's not perfect and it may take a day or two to get a response, but help is available.

PLAYER PROBLEMS

Children are all different. Some have good and bad days, some have behavior disorders, and some are reacting to family or personal problems unrelated to your soccer practice. Growing preteens and teens are going through emotional and hormonal changes that neither you nor they can predict or control. Players will test your authority. Be patient. Be calm. Try time-outs, separating the player to do individual skills, one-on-ones with an assistant coach. Talk to the parents in a positive, resolution oriented way. Invite solutions from the parents. You and your team have the right to keep a disruptive player from dominating practices with misconduct. If necessary, ask the parents to attend practice to control the player. If you cannot control the problem or if the parents will not cooperate, contact your Division Commissioner for help.

Remember, a player does not have to come to practices in order to play. Also, a coach may not exclude a player from practice or game. Coaches may not remove a player from a team—get help from the AYSO staff.

PARENT PROBLEMS

Set the rules and expectations for practice. Establish a drop off and pick up policy. Remind parents of required conduct at games. Try talking with the parent in a non-threatening, solution oriented way. Involve the Division Commissioner or Regional Staff. Don't argue, don't threaten, stay calm. If you are unable to resolve the problem, get help.

TEACH PLAYERS THE RULES

- **TEACH FAIR PLAY.** Soccer originated as a “gentlemen’s game.” Each of the 17 Laws of the Game originated to promote safety and fair play among athletes. We are teaching sportsmanship, not just winning games. There is a definite need for coaches to teach new players the very basic rules of the game. Other rules will soon be picked up in the game situations because the referee will explain what is happening as the game proceeds.
- There are a few strategies that relate to the rules that referees cannot legitimately explain during a game, either because there isn't the time or because it would unfairly benefit one team. Read the laws of the game.
- Goalkeepers may take as many steps as they wish while bouncing the ball as long as they distribute the ball within 6 seconds after gaining control. Goalkeepers may NOT be harassed while putting the ball into play. Opposing players should be instructed to move away from the goalkeeper and not interfere when he/she is in the process of clearing the ball.
- As a coach, you cannot teach what you don't know. You cannot explain what you don't understand. Learn the Laws (Rules) of Soccer. Your players need to understand the Laws not only for fair play but to also to have a tactical advantage, especially during restarts.

PLAYOFFS & SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Playoffs may be held at the end of the fall and/or spring season for Divisions U-11 and above. Playoffs are tournament-style friendly games within the Division.

VIP means Very Important Players who are soccer players (including aspiring soccer players) ages 5 to adult with physical, mental or developmental limitations. Buddies are encouraged to assist players on the field. There are elementary school, middle school, high school and adult teams. All the games are played on Sundays. This program has received excellent support from community, educational, government and commercial sponsors.

E.S.S. is a pilot core “regular season” program offered to U9/10 and older ASYO players in Area 12C. This program is designed to provide a more competitive level of play to those players who possess the appropriate skills, commitment, and abilities. ESS players must tryout in the spring and be selected for the teams.

ACT means Advanced Competition Team. ACT players must try out and be selected for the team. Players selected for an ACT team play on their regular season AYSO team and the ACT team for tournaments. ACT teams play in tournaments in the Fall after the regular season ends, sometimes in February between seasons, and in the Spring after the regular season ends. There are a few ACT team practices in addition to regular team practice, so there is a bigger time commitment with the player on 2 teams. ACT practices and activities may not conflict with regular season activities. ACT tryouts are held in late September and early October each year.

CHALLENGE teams play in the Duke City Metro League. Players must tryout to play on a Select team. The Select team plays together all season long and may also play in tournaments in the Fall and Spring. Players must be 10 or older to enter this program. There are additional expenses for players on these teams that parents must pay, usually by conducting team fund raising activities. Select team tryouts are held in May each year.

CONCLUSION

While the objective of every competition is to win, the goal should always be to HAVE FUN! Always strive to meet the goal. This game is the kids’ game. The kids will watch us and emulate us as role models. Remember this when you are dealing with referees, other coaches, other volunteers. Show them how to respect each other, themselves and this game. We have all made the choice to go along for the ride with the players. Enjoy it, have fun, you might even find yourself having some fun. This game is a beautiful thing, whether played at U5 or U19, and all of the divisions in between.

Tom Cuyler
Regional Coach Administrator
AYSO Region 104
chief.coach@ayso104.org

AYSO At A Glance

Division	U-5	U-6	U-7	U-8	U-9	U-10	U-11	U-12	U-14	U-19
Game Length (See Note 1)	20 min.	30 min.	40 min.	40 min.	50 min.	50 min.	60 min.	60 min.	70 min.	90 min.
Players on Field	3	3	5	5	7	7	9	9	11	11
Minimum Number of Players	2	2	3	3	5	5	6	6	7	7
Roster Limit (See Note 5)	5	5	7	7	10	10	12	12	15	21
Ball Size	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	5	5
Referee Certification (see Note 6)	U5/U6	U5/U6	U7/U8	U7/U8	Reg	Reg (N)	Inter (N)	Inter (N)	Adv (N)	Nat (N)
Practices Allowed (See Note 2)	35 min. before each game (See Note 3)	35 min. before each game (See Note 3)	1x per Week 1 hr. Optional 2 nd on Friday	1x per Week 1 hr. Optional 2 nd on Friday	2x per Week 1 hr.	2x per Week 1 hr.	2x per Week 1.5 hr.	2x per Week 1.5 hr.	2x per Week 1.5 hr.	2x per Week 1.5 hr.
Goalkeepers	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Indirect Kicks Penalty Kicks Offside	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Division	U-5	U-6	U-7	U-8	U-9	U-10	U-11	U-12	U-14	U-19

Note 1: All fields for U5 – U12 are sized age-appropriately. For U5 and U6, see also Note 3 below.

Note 2: Regular season teams may only practice Monday through Friday; no weekend practices are allowed.

Note 3: 35 minutes before each game is a regular practice time. Coaches have prepared activities in skill development. Do not skip this practice time.

Note 4: Children age 5 or older with August birthdays may play in the next older division to be with classmates. Playing down a level is never permitted.

Note 5: Coaches may request more players than the Roster Limit under special circumstances; however, every player must get a minimum of ½ and preferably ¾ of the game.

Note 6: (N) = neutral. For U-11 and higher, certification levels (Intermediate, Advanced, etc.) are desired, but by no means mandatory. Any referee certified at the Regional level or higher may do matches at any division that they are comfortable with, including U-14 and U-19.

Coach Instruction Courses Information

U5/6, U7/8, U9/U10 Courses Now Online

- Online Training - What's My ID?
 - Must have your EAYSO ID: www.eayso.org
 - Login to Eayso – Click View Certification
 - [Print](#) form
 - [View](#) certification
 - [View](#) referee schedule
 - Then Click Certification
 - ID – Top Right:

The screenshot shows a table with the following data:

	Certification	Schedule	Team
	Click Here	Click Here	Click Here
	Click Here	Click Here	Click Here
	Click Here	Click Here	Click Here
	Click Here	Click Here	Click Here

Below the table is a 'Back' button. Further down, the 'Volunteer Certification' section shows 'AYSO ID 55040' and a table with columns: '#', 'Certification Desc', 'Certification Date', and 'Updated By'. The first row in this table is 'U-10 Coach', '08/16/08', and an empty cell.

- Online Training – Signing Up For Courses
 - Go to www.AYSOTRAINING.org
 - Click “I have my AYSO ID number”

The screenshot shows the AYSO online training website. The main heading is 'Welcome to AYSO online Training for Volunteers'. Below this, it states: 'AYSO is pleased to make online training available to all AYSO registered volunteers. You will need your AYSO ID number to access the courses / manuals and your region must have registered you in current membership year or the previous membership year.' At the bottom, there are two buttons: 'I have my AYSO ID number' (Take me to the course list.) and 'I have my AYSO ID number' (Take me to the Manuals listing.)

- Online Training – Signing Up - Cont.

- Pick a Course:



online
certification &
training



Online Certification & Training Courses

[Course R001 - Safe Haven for Referees](#) (approx. 20-30 min course)

[Course C001 - Safe Haven for Coaches](#) (approx 35-45 min course)

[Course M001 - BASIC Management](#) (approx 20-30 min course)

[Course MT01 - Treasurer 1](#) (approx 20-30 min course)

[Course C002 - U-6 Coach](#) (approx 30-40 min course)


[Course C003 - U-8 Coach](#) (approx 20-30 min course)

- Online Training – Signing Up - Cont.

- Login with your EAYSO ID and Last Name

AYSO Online Training - U-6 Coaches Training

Step 1. Login Step 2. Update Info Step 3. Begin Course

 Please login below with your eAYSO ID number and your last name to enter AYSO Online Training

eAYSO ID Number

Last Name