

Operating Procedures

Advanced Competition Team (ACT) Program

AYSO Region 104

Updated August 2011

These Operating Procedures (guidelines) are issued under the authority of the AYSO Region 104 Board of Directors. These guidelines are not meant to be all-inclusive and may be updated annually or more often. If there is any conflict between these guidelines and National or Sectional Guidelines, the National or Sectional Guidelines will control.

The ACT program is the next level up from regular season soccer. It provides an outlet for players who want the opportunity to participate at a more competitive level of soccer. ACT teams are non-regular season competitive teams. ACT teams are composed of players selected through open tryouts who want to play at a more advanced, competitive level. Players selected play tournaments with their ACT team, and remain on their regular season teams for the Fall and Spring seasons. The program will also help to raise the general level of skills and competition of regular season teams when players return to their regular season teams and pass their additional training and experience to the other players on their regular season teams. A significantly higher commitment is required to participate in the ACT program. This program will require team fund raising, and may require team travel, which may be part of the team selection criteria.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the ACT Program is to:

- Provide an opportunity for players who wish to play at a more competitive level and participate in tournaments.
- Retain and regain players, volunteers, and families.
- Provide an opportunity for valuable, skilled volunteers to continue contributing to the Region's programs.
- Expand the existing program through additional opportunities to play as well as access to different levels of play.
- Provide programs that enhance regular season play.

This purpose will be accomplished by adhering to the philosophy of AYSO:

Everyone plays - Every player in the program play at the minimum half of every league or tournament game, and support the standard that all players will play three quarters of a game before any player plays four quarters.

Positive coaching - The coaching program will be enhanced as a result of the needs and skills of the ACT coaches. As representatives of AYSO and Region

104, ACT coaches are required to meet the same high standards of positive coaching and good sportsmanship as regular season coaches.

Good sportsmanship - ACT Coaches, Players, Volunteers and Parents represent AYSO and Region 104 in a competitive venue, and are expected and required to maintain a high standard of conduct and sportsmanship.

Open Registration - All eligible players will be given proper notice and opportunity to try out for an ACT team.

Balanced teams - Teams will be picked by a selection team including Advanced certified coaches. The selection process is geared to keep teams in a single age group competitively balanced.

PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

All players must be registered with the Region 104 program and have **played at least 60% of the games at the time of tryout** to be eligible to tryout. (There may be an exception for high school players who cannot participate due to conflict in their high school sport or band. High school players selected for an ACT team will be assigned to a regular season team). Players must continue to play on their regular season team, and must have played 60% of all regular season games to retain eligibility.

Age classifications for ACT teams shall be the same as for regular season. All players and coaches will adhere to the age guidelines and age playing rules outlined in the Region 104 Regional Guidelines. A player with an August birthday may try out for either age group for which he or she is eligible to play regular season. A player may “play up” (try out for a team one year older than that player’s regular season age group) only if there is no ACT team in that player’s regular season age group. No player may play up on a U9 ACT team.

COACHES

SELECTION

- The opportunity for coaching within the ACT program will be announced each year. Coaches seeking positions must submit to the ACT commissioner an application in writing (e-mail is the preferred form) and two letters of recommendation from (non-board) parents of players the applicant has coached in the past or current season. Applications and letters of recommendations must be received at least three business days before the September Board meeting.

- All Coaches for U9 and U10 ACT Teams must be currently certified AYSO Intermediate Coaches. ACT Coaches for U11 and above must meet the requirements for coaches in the Select Program (Advanced Certified).
- Coaches must be currently certified in Child and Volunteer Protection – coaches must re-certify and submit volunteer forms annually.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All ACT coaches (head and assistant) **are required** to “Give Back” to the core program by complying with the requirements of Appendix A. Any coach who fails to “Give Back” will NOT be allowed to coach the following year.

ACT Coaches will hold Good Sportsmanship in high regard. Unsportsmanlike behavior (and anything other than Positive Coaching) will not be tolerated. Coaches shall report all cards received by their teams or themselves to the ACT Commissioner, Chief Coach, and the Chief Referee within 24 hours. Reports of misconduct will be handled in accordance with Region disciplinary policies. Any coach sent off the field by a game official will be automatically suspended pending an A&D Hearing.

The head coach is responsible for all activities of the team and is directly accountable to the ACT Commissioner and the Region Board of Directors. All official communication from the Region or Commissioner will go through the head coach. The responsibilities of the head coach include:

- Tryouts and team selection
- Practices, including times, place and scrimmages.
- Timely communication with all team parents.
- Team expenditures and fund raising (trophy sales & picture \$ counting). Fund raising and fund handling will be coordinated through the ACT Team program treasurer
- Tournament play, transportation, and housing.
- Disciplinary action, as needed.
- Uniforms, equipment, and paperwork.
- Appointment of Assistant Coach, Team Manager, and other team volunteers.
- Approval of team sponsors that are in line with AYSO National Guidelines
- Maintenance of a record of all players’ playing time, which will be subject to periodic review by the ACT commissioner. The duty of recording playing time may be delegated to a team parent; however, the coach shall retain the record. All Coaches shall adhere to the AYSO requirement that each player plays one-half of each game and support the Region 104 standard that all players play three quarters of a game before anyone plays all four quarters.
- Notification to ACT commissioner of practice parks and time, and any scrimmages or team events (for liability purposes).
- Encourage participation in AYSO summer camps (they help fund this program).

TRYOUTS

- Tryouts will be held during the fall, usually in October, as soon as possible after coaches are approved by the Board. Exceptions may be approved by the Board or the ACT Commissioner.
- Coaches shall publish (through the region web site) and publicize (by posting signs at the fields where regular season games are played at least two Saturdays before tryouts) all tryouts. Coaches shall also clear the time and place with the field scheduler and/or Commissioner.
- A coach may make verbal invitations or announcement to entire teams. A coach may make individual verbal invitations to individual players, but such invitations may not be expressed in the team setting.
- Evaluation forms should be used so that performance can be recorded and evaluated.
- Evaluators should be neutral, and not parents of players trying out. Advanced certified coaches must help with evaluations and a member of the board shall be present at any tryout.
- Coaches may hold supplemental tryouts with proper notice and publication.
- Coaches may hold private tryouts or evaluations for interested players who are not able to attend the regular or supplemental tryout. In such case all coaches from that age group must be present, and such players will be subject to the regular selection process.
- In age groups with 2 teams or more, all teams will hold a common, joint tryout, including any supplemental or private tryouts. In addition, the sign up sheets for tryouts shall allow a player to state a preference for one team or another.
- All players must participate in at least one (1) tryout.
- Coaches should include the following in their evaluations, if possible: speed, agility, soccer skill and knowledge, potential, coachability, and commitment.
- A copy of all tryout materials shall be provided to the Commissioner at least 48 hours before tryouts, and tryout records/evaluations shall be given to the Commissioner.
- All participants should be contacted within 1 week with their results.

PLAYER SELECTION

ACT team rosters are limited to a maximum of:

- 10 players for U9 -U10
- 12 players for U11-U12
- 15 players for U13-U14
- 15 players for U15-U19

Teams may have up to two (2) alternate players and a two (2) member coaching staff. Additional assistant coaches may be added to the coaching staff at the discretion of the head coach. Rosters may have fewer players than allowed to accommodate short-sided game rules. Roster size should take into consideration the ability to achieve the $\frac{3}{4}$ play per game standard.

The following procedures apply to player selection:

- ACT Teams shall be chosen by tryouts.
- Players may only be selected from candidates who attended tryouts. The Board or ACT Commissioner must approve any exceptions.
- Once selected and position accepted, a player may not drop off one team and be picked up by another team during that season.
- Players must tryout annually for a position on an ACT team. All players to be selected for an ACT team must meet the selection performance criteria. Having played ACT or Challenge before does not automatically guarantee a player a spot on a team. A Coaches child must meet the same requirements as others trying out.
- For age groups with two or more teams:
 - All players will participate in at least one (1) tryout.
 - Players from the coach's prior ACT team and from the coach's current regular season team may be protected by that coach.
 - A player may state in writing at tryouts a preference for a team or coach, and may be protected by that coach.
 - If a protected player has a preference to play for another coach, the player's preference will take precedence, and that player will be on the protected list of the team or coach chosen by that player.
 - The selection process will be as follows:
 1. Each coach will pick all the desired players from his or her protected list.
 2. If both teams' rosters have not been filled out, ALL players that have not been picked will be put into a pool of open players to pick.
 3. Each coach will then have a first open pick – the selection order will be: (1) the coach with the fewest players; (2) the coach with the least number of years in ACT (coaching at this age level); (3) by a flip of the coin.
 4. After each coach has made the first open pick, the coach with the fewest players will pick from the open pool until each team has an equal number of players.
 5. At that point, the picks will alternate between the teams until the rosters are filled out – based on the selection order defined above.
- Replacement Players: If a team wants to add a player after tryouts have been completed and rosters set, the following will apply:
 - Replacement players must have participated in an open tryout.
 - The Coach should first offer the position to the team alternates, and then review the original tryout list for potential replacements.
 - If these avenues do not result in a satisfactory replacement, the Coach may then schedule supplementary open tryout. This tryout, must be published, publicized, and conducted under the same requirements as the original tryout.
 - Any disputes will be decided by the Commissioner or the Board.

TEAM OPERATIONS

Practice:

- The ACT Season is from October 1st to July 31st. ACT activities may not interfere with a player's AYSO regular season practices or games.
- Practices may be scheduled twice a week when regular season teams are not practicing, and on Sunday when regular season teams are practicing. Practice duration will be in accordance with AYSO and Region guidelines for that age group.
- No practices or other ACT activities are allowed during December.
- Practices can start as soon as teams are selected.
- Scrimmages are recommended and encouraged. Scrimmages do not count as practice.
- Player participation in PowerSkills is recommended and encouraged – however, it is NOT mandatory. PowerSkills time does not count as practice time
- The ACT coach shall confirm practice site and times w/the AYSO park scheduler and the ACT Commissioner.

Tournaments:

- Check requests (if a team has sufficient funds – see “Funding” below) must go to the ACT Treasurer, who will prepare the check, get it co-signed by the ACT Commissioner, and get the check into regular mail to the coach. **That means coaches must plan in advance.**
- Guest players are allowed; however, coaches are encouraged to use their alternates as guest players, if appropriate. The ACT Coach must have the player ID and paperwork from the coach of the guest player's regular team. This includes any guest players from Duke City Metro League club teams (guest players from Duke City MUST register with AYSO and pay the National registration fee of \$12.00 in order to be covered under the AYSO insurance).
- Guest players must be identified on your roster for that tournament only.
- Guest playing for other teams is allowed, with the coach's permission.
- ACT teams must play in the AYSO Duke City Shootout Tournament (in May) and the Meltdown tournament (in February).
- Travel:
 - Some tournaments for older teams may include traveling. There are tournaments all over New Mexico, and in Colorado and Arizona. Tournaments are available in states farther from New Mexico, such as California. Some teams have even attended tournaments as far away as Hawaii. While travel is an excellent opportunity and can be a good experience for the players, it is not mandatory. Coaches and players' families should work together to plan any travel that takes place such that it is a boost for the players but not a drain on their families.
 - U9 and U10 teams may not travel to out of state tournaments, or to tournaments requiring overnight stay, without written approval of the Board or Commissioner.

Required Paperwork:

- Players/parents shall fill out (1) Medical Release Form and (2) Birth Certificate Verification Form. Both forms must be notarized and with the team at all times.
- The ACT Team Roster form shall be completed by the coach and submitted to the Commissioner. Official signed roster will be provided to coach by Commissioner.
- Travel Forms are required for any overnight stay. If traveling out of state, these forms must include the Application for Travel form, signed by the Regional Commissioner. For over night stay, each player and their parent must complete and sign the Permission to Travel form. All Permission to Travel forms must be completed prior to submitting the Application for Travel form to the Regional Commissioner.
- All players and coaches shall have AYSO ID cards.

Uniforms:

- If a common uniform is chosen by the ACT Commissioner, all coaches will provide to the Commissioner the information for the uniform order for his team (the number of uniforms, numbers, and sizes). The ACT Commissioner will order the uniforms.
- If there is no common uniform, coaches may choose to go to any other uniform vendor directly, but must have the money in that team's account prior to purchasing uniforms. A coach must get approval from the ACT Treasurer to confirm sufficient funds before ordering anything. All uniforms must have the AYSO logo silk screened on them.
- The uniforms **MAY NOT** have the player name on them.

Funding the Team:

- Each team may receive a startup fund each year, to go towards uniform purchases and tournament entries. The amount depends on the number of teams and the amount earned from summer camps and/or tournaments. In the alternative, the Commission may determine to purchase ACT uniforms and/or pay certain tournament entry fees from the general ACT account in lieu of the startup fund.
- Teams may earn additional funds by participating in AYSO Fundraisers:
 - Picture money Counting - (Fall and Spring). Each week after pictures are taken, picture money is counted. 25% of the proceeds are retained by AYSO, and each team represented earns a share of the proceeds.
 - Trophy Sales - (Spring). Each team will be assigned one or more fields for trophy sales at a meeting (or by email) in January/February. Trophy Sales start 1st game. All profit (40%) earned by the team selling the trophies is retained by that team.
- All other fundraisers must be approved in writing by the Commissioner or Board.
- Donations are allowed from a player's family, individuals, or businesses. A coach may not **require** families to make a donation (there is **NO** additional fee charged to play ACT).
- The ACT Treasurer will keep all ACT and team funds, and keep a record of each team's account. No team or coach may set up a separate account or retain funds in any other way. All funds from any fundraising or other source must be promptly turned over to the ACT Treasurer.

- Coaches will not be allowed to go into a negative balance on their accounts, except for uniform costs which may come from seed money if seed money has not yet been received. If a team does not have enough money in its account to cover any team and/or tournament expense, that expense must be paid by the coach and can be reimbursed when the team account has sufficient funds.

Team Discipline:

- It is expected that players in the program will hold Good Sportsmanship in high regard. Unsportsmanlike behavior will not be tolerated in an ACT player. Reports of misconduct will be handled in accordance with Region disciplinary policies. Because of the high visibility of the ACT program, any player sent off the field by a game official will automatically serve a one game suspension. A second send off will result in a suspension that will not be lifted until an A&D hearing determines that the player may return to the ACT program.
- A player may be suspended from a game or tournament OR removed from an ACT Team if:
 - The player's behavior presents a significant problem or is disruptive to the team.
 - The player fails to show a good faith effort to attend scheduled team practices, games, or otherwise participate in soccer related activities.

Suspension or Removal

The Head Coach shall submit in writing to the ACT Commissioner and the Chief Coach the rationale for taking disciplinary action, documenting how the player's behavior is presenting a significant problem. In the case of missing team practices, suspension or removal may be appropriate if the player has missed more than one half schedule practices (3 weeks of normally scheduled practices should have passed before disciplinary action is appropriate). Suspension should usually be the first level of discipline, followed by removal if the problem is not resolved. The Commissioner and Chief Coach must approve any suspension or removal. The parents of a player may appeal a suspension or removal to the Board of Directors by sending a written request to the Chief Coach and ACT Commissioner.

- The action of any player's parent who attempts to undermine the discipline of the team and/or the coach's control of the team is also an appropriate reason for that player to be removed from the team. Coaches are responsible for notifying all team parents of the disciplinary policy in writing as part of the acceptance process.
- The Region Board of Directors may remove any coach from any ACT Team.

General Operations:

- There must be two CVP trained adults, including at least one coach, assistant coach or team chaperone of the same gender as the players, at all team activities.
- Safe Haven/CVP guidelines apply to ACT teams at all times. All rules and policies governing AYSO Region 104 and also described in the Parent/Player edition of the Goalmouth apply to ACT teams.

Appendix A

Giving Back to the Core Program

Head Coaches and Assistant Coaches – besides being AYSO Intermediate Certified (Advanced for U11 and above) and having completed the AYSO CVP training – MUST give back to the Core Program (Regular Season AYSO). A Coach that does not Give Back will NOT be allowed to coach in the ACT (or Select) Program the next year.

Giving Back MUST include at least TWO of the Following:

- Be an ACTIVE member of the AYSO Board
- Be an ACTIVE member of the AYSO Staff
- Be an ACTIVE Division Commissioner or Division Registrar
- Be an ACTIVE Regular Season Coach
- Be an ACTIVE AYSO Referee
Must referee at least 4 games in the Fall Season and
4 Games in the Spring Season
- Be an ACTIVE coach in PowerSkills
Must be attend and coach 2 sessions in the Fall Season and 2 sessions in the
Spring Season

I certify that I will Give Back during the _____ season by the following:

1. _____

2. _____

And I do hereby promise to participate in the above Activities.

Signature of ACT Coach

Date _____

Print Name _____