

AYSO REGION 91

U8

COACH MANUAL SUPPLEMENT

2011 – 2012 Season

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1.0 DIVISION U8 GUIDELINES

1.1 Division U8 Philosophy

Division U-8 (Under 8) is an instructional, non-competitive division in AYSO soccer. Players in this division are ages 6 and 7 years old as of July 31st of the current year. For many of them, this is their first exposure to organized sports. This may be your first experience with coaching youth sports. Hopefully, the information included here will help you make this season both fun and educational for your team and for you too!!

As stated above, this is an INSTRUCTIONAL division. The intent of the division is to introduce the players to the sport of soccer and to have a fun time doing so. In this division we begin to spend time teaching the players good soccer skills and an understanding of the rules and flow of the game. You are also working at teaching principles of good sportsmanship and teamwork.

Division U-8 is non-competitive. Scores will be kept for monitoring and administrative purposes ONLY. The outcome of the game is not for public display by the players, coaches or parents. Standings will not be kept and there are no playoffs or All-Star teams. The Region takes the non-competitive nature of this division very seriously. AYSO stresses the importance of enjoying the competitive nature of the game without focusing on wins and losses. Because this level is not competitive, there is no reason not to play all your players in all of the positions even if they do not show a natural talent in that particular area. Let them give it a try if they want to. If you have a slow player that wants to play forward, let them try! If you have a little tiny player who wants to play as a defender, give them a shot. They may surprise you.

There is no reason to lose your cool with the kids, their parents, the other coaches, the referees or AYSO officials. If you and your team's parents present a good attitude and encourage your children that the object of playing is fun, they will reflect that positive attitude and enjoy the game all the more. If you're not concerned with the number of goals scored, they won't be either.

U8 teams usually have between 7 & 8 players per team and the games are played 5 vs 5 players. The smaller teams are great for coaching because there are fewer kids to work with so they all get more attention. They also get more playing time during games because fewer substitutions need to be made.

Please take full advantage of all coaching clinics offered by our Region (and other Regions too). Not only will you learn about coaching soccer, but you can earn sportsmanship points for your team as outlined in this supplement.

1.2 Division U8 Rules & Regulations

In addition to the Region 91 Rules & Regulations, the following are issues that pertain directly to U8 teams:

- Positive encouragement by coaches and parents is a must. Over-zealous coaches and parents will not be tolerated. At the discretion of the referee; coaches, parents and players may be taken off the field (after suitable warnings have been issued) for a cooling off period. If the situation warrants, they could be asked to leave the area for the duration of the game. Serious situations will be reviewed by the regions Administrative Board consisting of the Division Coordinator, Coach Administrator, Referee Administrator, Regional Commissioner, and the person responsible for the situation. Please do not let any situation escalate to this point. Contact your Division Coordinator or send someone to the AYSO tent as soon as you see a problem developing.
- Coaches and assistant coaches will be permitted to coach in a positive and instructional manner from their side of the field. The coach's area along the touch line and extends to 10 yards from each goal line.
- Each team will provide 1 (one) referee to officiate each match in which their team is listed as the home team. The referee will be a parent or relative of the player of that team. The referee will not be the coach of team. This will be effective Week 3 of play.
- All players will play at least 3/4 of every game. If there is any deviation from this, please contact your Division Coordinator. You may not limit playing time for disciplinary reasons without prior authorization from the Coach Administrator.

1.2.1 Field Size & Measurements

- Field size should be approximately 50 yards by 25 yards.
- Goal area size should be approximately 12 yards by 6 yards.
- A penalty area will be marked, although penalty kicks are not awarded in this division.
- Goals should be 6.5 feet by 18 feet.
- Center circles should be 18 feet in diameter.

1.2.2 Practices

Your practices should be both fun and educational. Most U-8 coaches organize their practices into 4 main activities:

- Warm-Up & Stretching (Dynamic & Static) – While kids at this age do not need much stretching, coaches do. It is helpful to build a habit of stretching before activities at an early age. You should spend 5-10 minutes warming up (dribbling, passing, skipping, hopping, etc.) and working on stretches.
- Skill Build Up – Whether the topic is kick-off plays or dribbling, the build up should consist of:
 - Instruction – Tell them what you want them to do and why.
 - Demonstration – Show them how to perform the skill.
 - Involve One Player – Have a player demonstrate. Take turns. Be sure to correct faults in a positive, non-embarrassing way.
 - Involve the team – Have the entire team attempt the skill, correcting faults in a positive, non-embarrassing way.

- Drills – Reinforce skills learned through repetition.
- Games – Scrimmages, soccer related games, or just plain fun games are a good way for you to evaluate how well your kids are learning and they are fun for everyone!

Some suggestions for a successful practice:

- ✓ Plan your training sessions before you go to the field - Have one or two objectives for each training session and focus all of your activities around them.
- ✓ Make your training sessions fun! Kids learn through play, so play lots of games. Reward good play or effort with fun activities. The old kindergarten standards can easily be adapted to soccer: Duck, Duck, Goose; Red Light/Green Light; Simon Says; Red Rover; Follow the Leaderbe creative!!!
- ✓ Keep things moving – Kids at this age have a very short attention span, so keep your activities and speeches short and change them often.
- ✓ Guarantee Success – build skills slowly, in bite-sized chunks. Make activities easy at first and then slowly add challenges like motion, defensive pressure, etc.
- ✓ Involve the parents – Get as many parents out to help as you can. It is a lot more fun for your players to dribble around mom or dad than around an orange cone. This also helps to lure in future coaches, which we always need.
- ✓ Scrimmage often (but have a purpose for your scrimmage) – This is an excellent way to develop skills and an understanding of the game. Do not stand idly by as the kids scrimmage, but look for the kids that are playing well and look for skills that you may need to spend more time teaching.
- ✓ Observe and Evaluate – Are your practices effective? Are you meeting your objectives? DID YOUR KIDS HAVE FUN? If not, what do you need to change?

AYSO offers ideas on training games. Visit the website at <http://www.aysohelp.org/> select Training Games located under the Coach Info menu bar.

Practice gear – you can spend a small fortune on all kinds of really neat stuff to make your practices more fun. That is up to you. At a minimum, you should have the following: a whistle, a watch, some cones, and a size 5 ball for you to use when demonstrating skills, drills, and techniques. It would also be helpful to have an extra size 3 ball (or more) just in case the players forget theirs at home, an extra set of shin guards for the same reason, pinnies (scrimmage vests), and a pump with a needle. For the really extreme coach, a set of portable goals is a great addition to your practice equipment.

1.3 Game Specifics

- **Players** – Division U8 shall have a maximum of five (5) players on the field at a time. A team must field a minimum of 4 players for the game to take place.
- **Goalkeepers** - Use of Goalkeepers requires prior approval of the Coach Administrator and Regional Commissioner prior to season start. Prior to planning your lineup and training, verify with the Division Coordinator or Coach Administrator.
- **Referees** – Each Division U8 team will provide one (1) referee to officiate their game when their team is listed as the home team. This referee will not be the coach of that team.
- **Equipment** – Division U-8 shall use a size 3 ball. Shin guards are mandatory for ALL games and practices. Players may wear soccer cleats or running shoes. They must wear their uniform. They may not wear jewelry of any kind or hard objects in their hair.
- **Duration of the Game** – Each game shall consist of two equal periods of 20 minutes, unless this time is lessened by the referee due to late starting games. A five minute rest period will mark half time.
- **Running Time - Substitution** - The game is described as having three parts: a first half, a half time, and a second half. Approximately midway through the first half and the second half of the game there are substitutions allowed (most people refer to these as quarter substitutions). During these substitution periods, the clock DOES NOT STOP. This is called running time. The clock starts at the beginning of each half and does not stop for substitutions. The clock will restart at half time and again at the beginning of the second half. Therefore it is very important to have your game plan prepared in advance and circulate the players in/out of the field as quickly as possible.
- **Free Kicks / Penalty Kicks** – No free kicks will be awarded within the penalty area. Kicks are to be taken at the nearest point outside the penalty area. No penalty kicks (PK's) shall be given. All free kicks are a direct free kick, which means that a goal may be scored from the kick.
- **Throw-Ins** – Improper throw-ins will be re-taken one time. If the second throw-in is improper the ball will be awarded to the opposing team.
- **Offside** – There is no Offside in U8.
- **Goal Kicks & Drop Balls** – Normal AYSO rules apply. Players must stand at least 5 yards from the ball during a goal kick or drop ball. The goal kick should be taken from the line at the front of the goal area.
- **Ball In & Out of Play** – Normal AYSO rules apply. The ball must completely cross the plane of the touch-line entirely in order to be considered out-of-play.
- **Corner Kicks** - Normal AYSO rules apply.

Region 91 has a no-slaughter rule for all games in all divisions. If you find that your team has a 4-5 point lead over the opposing team at any point in the game, it is your responsibility to find a way to pull your team back. This is to be done in such a way that the other team is not demoralized or humiliated. There are many ways to do this – you can have your team pass 3 times before taking a shot on goal; you can move players forward that are not very aggressive; have them pass with their left foot; etc. What you don't want to do is yell, "Hey team, we're really wiping out that other team. Let's let them score some goals." Work through this scenario during practice and speak with your players' parents about this so that it doesn't come as a big surprise to them during a game. If you come up with a game that ends in your favor by too many goals, expect your Division Coordinator to give you a call to find out why and to offer helpful hints on avoiding that outcome in the future.

1.4 Referees

Always remember: Referees are volunteers too. New volunteers are needed each year so that our Region can continue to train and develop skilled referees and thereby increase the overall quality of our program. As a coach choosing Team Referees, you should select reliable people who have some interest in soccer. Knowledge of the game is not a requirement, as training and supervision are provided. Regional Referee Courses will be conducted before and after the start of the season. The courses are presented by the Referee Administrator. These courses provide instruction about the Laws of the Game, guidelines for their interpretation and enforcement, and instruction on the different methods of refereeing. New and experienced referees as well as coaches are welcome. It is important for a coach to understand the role of the referee.

Based on the age and intent of Division U8 players, referees will be provided as follows:

1.4.1 Team Responsibility

It is the Team Responsibility for Providing Volunteer Referees

Each Division U8 team will provide a minimum of one (1) referee to officiate their U8 game when their team is listed as the home team during the course of the season.

This referee will not be the coach of that team. This will enable the coach to focus on the players while providing a non-competitive training environment for referees that will have players moving up to the competitive levels of play in the coming years.

1.4.2 The Coach-Referee Team

Verbal abuse from adults on the sidelines unquestionably erodes players' confidence and the view of the importance of the AYSO philosophy. Without referees there is no AYSO, and sideline abuse is the number one problem associated with recruiting and retaining referees. The program depends upon recruiting and retaining the larger number of volunteers needed as qualified referees to handle matches held during the regular season. Referees must be able to depend upon their greatest ally in this area, the coaches. The vast majorities of AYSO coaches successfully balance their interest in winning with their desire to foster physical and social development of their players and appreciate the fact AYSO referees are unpaid volunteers like themselves, and often inexperienced in the game of soccer. These coaches understand the importance of the AYSO Team and know that Team members must cooperate and support each other. Most parents embrace these concepts, even if they have never been involved with AYSO.

Every season, a very small number of coaches and parents ignore the AYSO philosophy by elevating winning the match above all else. These individuals verbally abuse referees with insults and inappropriate comments. Sometimes they act purposefully, with the mistaken belief that such abuse will result in more favorable calls from the referee for the child's team. More often, it seems, such conduct is a reflection on the adult's character. Even though they are mostly loving and caring parents, these adults do not consider the extremely negative impact of their outbursts on the kids or the AYSO program. **This behavior will not be tolerated.**

1.4.3 Region 91's Policy on Abuse of Referees

Sadly, abuse of referees by a very few people can create disruption that reaches out to more current and potential volunteers than one would imagine. AYSO and Region 91 in particular, take primarily an educational approach to this problem. These educational efforts are, however, backed up by official policies and appropriate disciplinary measures against offenders, including expulsion from the program.

Coaches and Assistant coaches who demonstrate poor conduct, lack of self control or poor sportsmanship will be cautioned or be ejected, followed by a formal letter of reprimand. If a coach is ejected from the game, the coach must leave the vicinity of the field (out of sight, out of sound) immediately as directed by the referee. Additionally the coaches are responsible for the conduct of their spectators and parents. Coaches may be cautioned or sent off for inappropriate behavior by spectators or parents. If the behavior continues the referee is required to suspend or terminate the game. The games outcome will be determined by the administrative board.

In the event a coach is sent-off by a referee, he/she will be suspended from next match and may receive a one point deduction from the team's sportsmanship standings.

Any player, coach, parent or official that continues disruptive behavior or lack of self control, may be required to appear before the Regional Executive Board for possible removal from the program, suspension or other discipline.

Please remember that all of the referees are volunteers, most of them parents or siblings of the players. They are not professionals (as you are not professional coaches) and usually have had minimal soccer experience. They will make mistakes. Players, coaches, and spectators **must accept the referee's ruling**, although they may disagree. Coaches and parents must provide an example of good sportsmanship and tolerance for their players and children. It is never appropriate to suggest that the referee determined the outcome of a game.

1.5 Fouls and Misconduct

Based on the age and intent of Division U8 players, fouls committed in game play may be grouped as follows:

- ❖ **Tripping** or attempting to trip another player either intentionally or as a result of careless play
- ❖ **Handling** the ball by using the hands, arms, shoulders to attempt to control or play the ball. Note that instinctively deflecting the ball with hands, arms or shoulders in an attempt to protect, not to control, and unintentional contact with the ball are not fouls.
- ❖ **Dangerous Play** - playing or attempting to play the ball in a way that presents undue risk of injury to the player or the opponent. Some examples are high kicks, heading a low ball, and slide tackling.
- ❖ **Violent Play** – striking or attempting to strike, hitting, kicking, pushing, abusive language, fighting, spitting at an opponent or any other malicious act against a player, coach, referee, or spectator.
- ❖ **Unsportsmanlike Conduct** – any act that, in the opinion of the referee, is not in the spirit of the game or good sportsmanship.

Most Common Fouls observed in this Division is Tripping and Handling.

Punishment – Since penalty kicks are not awarded in U-8, all fouls are punished by the award of a direct free kick to the opposing team at the spot where the foul was committed (and outside of the goal area). ALL foul calls in Division U-8 should be explained to the players involved. In EXTREME cases of violent play or unsportsmanlike play a player may be sent off the field of play by his or her coach for a two minute 'cooling off' period. A substitute will be allowed to replace a player that is sent off.

1.6 Skills and Knowledge of the Game

By the end of the season, your U-8 players should be able to do the following:

- Have a really fun time playing soccer
- Have a beginning knowledge of the following:
 - How to run in the right direction
 - How to listen to their coach
 - How to follow simple directions
 - How to dribble a ball and do a throw-in with some success

That is as much as you can expect of a child at this age !

There is a great deal of help and support available to you. So if you find yourself overwhelmed and frustrated please be sure to ASK FOR HELP.

Please remember, *these are children playing a child's game* and the primary objective of any game is to HAVE FUN.

If you and your players know more about the game at the end of the season then you did at the start and you've had fun playing and learning together, you've had a very successful season!!

ATTACHMENTS

Sample Cards

GAME DATE: _____

1st Quarter	
_____	_____
_____	_____

out:	_____

2nd Quarter	
_____	_____
_____	_____

out:	_____

3rd Quarter	
_____	_____
_____	_____

out:	_____

4th Quarter	
_____	_____
_____	_____

out:	_____

Captain: _____

Asst Captain: _____

Notes: _____

DIVISIONS U5, U6 AND U8

SPORTSMANSHIP PROGRAM

In an effort to help everyone keep the importance of GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP in mind, AYSO Region 91 has instituted a sportsmanship program. During the season, a team of evaluators will watch your team during at least 3 practices or games to evaluate the Sportsmanship exhibited by you, your parents and your players. You will not know who it is or when it will happen. At the end of the season the team with the best sportsmanship score per division will receive recognition and a special prize. Extra points will be awarded during the pre-season and the regular season for attendance at certain meetings, training sessions and for completing certain tasks required by the Region. At any time you see the symbol below you will know that you have an opportunity to score Sportsmanship points for your team. The numeric value of the item is noted in the starburst.

