Handbook and Guide for Coaching AYSA Recreational Soccer

Revised October 2012

I. GETTING THE SEASON STARTED – AYSA'S LOGISTICS

Team Assignments

Team assignments are governed by our team assignment policy, which, in a nutshell, encourages the development of balanced teams with an equal distribution of skill levels, sex, age, and race. To that end, we use the end of the season player evaluations to determine appropriate teams. The REC Administrator, REC Chairperson, and REC Committee help with team assignments.

The league will consider transportation needs (friend requests) and/or coaching pairs for team requests, but the primary emphasis is on creating balanced teams and that is the ultimate determining factor. Please accurately and honestly rate each player's level at the end of the season.

In most cases, assignments made in the **fall will remain intact through the spring season**. However, the league has the authority to correct imbalances that may have occurred and make any necessary changes. Team assignments are posted on aysa.net shortly before the season starts. Coaches and players will need to log back in to the registration system to find their team assignment.

Changes and Playing Up

All team assignments are subject to approval of the Board acting through the Director. Therefore, **coaches do NOT have the authority to make changes in their roster without approval.** If problems arise with a player assigned to your team, please immediately contact the AGC and REC Administrator. As a coach, you do NOT have the authority to remove or add a player to your roster. Player changes following team assignments are not routinely granted. The rosters are submitted to GYSA and the AYSA database.

A common request is made by parents that a player be permitted to play in an older age group. This is a request that is not lightly granted and should only be considered when that child is a dominating player who is not challenged at the proper age group. AYSA staff will make the ultimate decision with respect to a play up request.

Practice Session Assignment/Practice Issues

Upon your signing up to be a Head Coach/Assistant Coach, you were given the opportunity to make a request for practice nights. At or before the initial coach's meeting, you will receive your field and time assignment. Please understand that field space is tight. We do everything in our power to generate an option that works for you and your team. Typically, U5-U8 teams practice one night per week and U10 and up train 2 nights per week. *No team will be assigned more than two practices per week.* The following is a normal practice schedule for each age group:

U4	Coed	1*	30 minutes	Saturday Mornings	Two 10 minute halves
U5	Coed	1	60 minutes	Saturday Mornings	Four 8 minute quarters
U6	Coed	1	60 minutes	Saturday Mornings	Four 8 minute quarters
U7	Coed	1	60 minutes	Saturday	Four 12 minute quarters
U8	Coed	1	60 minutes	Saturday	Four 12 minute quarters
U10	Girls or Coed	2	90 minutes	Saturday	Two 30 minute halves
U12	Girls or Coed	2	90 minutes	Saturday/Sunday	Two 30 minute halves
U14	Girls or Coed	2	90 minutes	Saturday/Sunday	Two 35 minute halves
U16	Girls or Coed	2	90 minutes	Saturday/Sunday	Two 40 minute halves
U19	Girls or Coed	2	90 minutes	Saturday/Sunday	Two 45 minute halves
* U4 will play only once per week and have both a practice and a game at that time					

The REC Administrator will give final practice times and locations to each coach.

Practice Curriculum

Once a week, the Club distributes age-appropriate curriculum to the coaches to help them prepare for that week's practice. Additionally, practice drills are located on the AYSA website at www.aysa.net under the coach's page tab. Please use the resources provided to prepare drills for your age group.

Periodically throughout the season, club representatives including our Director of Coaching circulate from practice-to-practice to assist our REC coaches. These are great tools for our coaches to ensure all our players received consistent, quality instruction.

Field Cancellations/Inclement Weather

Please get in a habit of checking the website for field closings and/or signing up on aysa.net to receive texts or emails regarding the most up to date field status. AYSA attempts to make a decision about field closings by 3pm the day of practice and by 7:30 am the day of games. If the weather looks iffy for practice time, please check the website just before you plan to leave.
We do not practice in thunder and lightning. If thunder or lightning is in the area, please clear the fields immediately and seek shelter in a building or car. You must wait 30 minutes from the last bolt of lightning or thunder in order to resume activity.

Practice Gear

Each new coach is supplied with a bag of soccer balls for training, practice vests, and cones, if needed. All players should be encouraged to bring a soccer ball to practice, so please remind them!! For returning coaches, there may be an opportunity to replace certain missing items from the practice bag with current inventory, so please check with the AYSA Staff.

Games

The AYSA Game and Field Scheduler determine the schedule for all AYSA home games and all inner-club matches. Remember, REC U12 and up play in the GYSA inter-district league and will have both home and away matches against other Metro Atlanta Clubs. Our schedule can only be finalized when GYSA releases the pairings and so please alert your parents to expect Saturday games every weekend during the season for all age groups. REC teams U12 and up are also subject to Sunday games. Games schedules will be posted on aysa.net.

Uniforms

Uniforms are not included in the registration fee and should be purchased on aysa.net.

- U4 players will receive a t-shirt on the first practice/game day and DO NOT need uniforms.
- U5 – U10 players will buy a blue jersey and red jersey. Your schedule will indicate which color jersey to wear for each game.
- U12 and up players will buy a blue jersey and red jersey. Players should bring both to the games.

Player Cards for U12 and Up

Prior to the first game, you will receive card templates for your team's player cards pre-printed with the player's necessary information. As a coach, you can either assign responsibility to a parent volunteer or each family to affix the players' pictures to the cards and laminate them. These cards should go to each game with you. Many referees will insist they are presented before allowing the players to play.

II. THE REC COACH'S INITIAL TEAM CONTACT AND LOGISTICS FOR THE SEASON

Initial Contact

Upon conclusion of the initial coach's meeting and receiving your roster (usually you will receive an email letting your know that your roster has been published on our registration site), we urge you to contact the players and parents assigned to your team immediately with an email or phone call. The important issues to discuss and send out are:

1. Introduce you as the coach and ask about the child. Tell them about yourself, why you are coaching, what your experience may or may not be.

2. Advise parents that the game schedule is determined by the AYSA Scheduler and GYSA timelines, but they should expect games every Saturday during the season. U12 and up teams are scheduled against other Metro Atlanta Teams and should expect to have both home and away matches!

3. Obtain the any updated contact information not included on the roster.

4. Tell them the kids need shin guards worn under socks, athletic shoes (younger children don't need cleats, older children may want cleats), and remind them to bring a ball and water bottle. Make sure they have a uniform, or have ordered one.

5. Weather policy! On rainy days, check the website which is normally updated by 3 pm on inclement days. Always check online before leaving for practice if it looks iffy, but if nothing is cancelled, expect to train.

6. ASK FOR VOLUNTEERS! ASK FOR VOLUNTEERS! ASK FOR VOLUNTEERS! In the email or by phone, state that each team needs to assign a person to be:
   a. Team manager/parent: The team manager/parent is in charge of organizing the team and helps with communication, organization, and overall logistics for the season. You may want them to assign post-game snacks, or not. This is up to your team but if you do decide on snacks, please make sure any trash is picked up. You also may decide to hold a post-season party and/or award trophies. AYSA does not coordinate or pay for either of these, and the decision is left to the team.
   b. Additional coaching help: There are times when you may be late, sick, or on vacation. Not every team has two coaches. Don't be shy about asking for help.
   c. Picking up and returning pop-up goals for U4 to U6 teams: Unfortunately, AYSA is unable to put storage units at Iverson field since it is a City of Atlanta park. As a result, pop-up goals that can be used for practice and games need to be picked-up and returned from our Arizona Avenue shed. These can be picked up between 5:00 - 5:20 pm and returned immediately after practice. Additionally, they will need to be picked up on Saturday morning by 8:15. The good news is that they are small enough to fit in every vehicle. Please note that if the goals are not picked-up, there will not be any available for practice.

   The Rec Administrator will create a schedule to identify a team responsible for picking up

and returning the pop-up goals for each practice and weekend (this would also be a worthwhile task for a Team Parent). Feel free to trade-off dates with others, as your personal schedules require. Alternatively, if one person/team wants to volunteer for every practice, they are more than welcome to do so.

7. Use this manual as a guideline to let the parents know of AYSA policies and philosophies for REC soccer.

Parent Meeting

Prior to your first game, it is recommended that you hold a parent's meeting to discuss the upcoming season and other issues. At this meeting, the parents should know that the REC Program is about enjoyment of the game, balanced teams, and a positive playing environment.

1. Any specific practice policies.
2. General philosophy of the league
3. Logistical Issues- rain outs, phone tree, snack schedule, team volunteers
4. Ask for volunteers (see previous section, #6!)

Practice Structure

1. Organization is key. Please try to come to practice with a written outline of the activities for that practice- it will make life much easier. Also, plan to arrive early to get the activities set up so that you can begin on time. The responsibilities of supervision at practice lies with the coach and so NEVER hold a practice unless you are there or you have arranged for a responsible adult to conduct the session.

2. Attendance is expected by all players. Since there is a direct correlation between practice attendance and improvement, players should attend as many practices as possible. Illness, school, and religious activities or family emergencies are reasonable excuses for an absence.

3. Parent attendance: It is highly recommended that at U5 and U6, parents attend the practice with their child or ensure that another parent is responsible for their child if they can't be present. At U7 and above, this policy should be at the coach's discretion, but if there are problems with a child, you should insist on that parent being present during practice. DON'T BE SHY HERE! A disruptive child will ruin practice for everyone and will distract you, the coach, from helping the other children.

4. Schedule: Please stick with your practice schedule – starting early or ending late can interfere with other teams' time on the field. If you are having problems with children coming late or leaving early, speak to the parents about the problem its impact. Have a set procedure in place for those times when a parent is late picking up a child. *Never leave a child alone without an adult present to wait for a child's ride to arrive!!*

5. All players must wear shin guards at practice and games.

6. Field Conflicts/Problems: If you have any problems with NON-AYSA groups at your field, advise a member of the AYSA Staff of the problem. Do not get into any confrontational situation please! Many of field arrangements we have are the result of delicate negotiations and we don't want to jeopardize those or the AYSA name in the community. If you have other problems or concerns, contact the Age Group Coordinator, REC Administrator, or an AYSA Staff member.

7. Non-registered Players: Do not allow any child who is not registered with the league to join in your practices. *There can be NO exceptions.*

Games

1. Game schedules: The schedule for intra league games between AYSA teams U4-U10 is normally provided at least one week prior to the start of the season. U12 and up teams, which are inter-scheduled, are provided with a schedule as soon as they become available from GYSA. Teams U5-U10 typically have just Saturday games. U12 and up generally have Saturday games, but also may have a few Sunday games. All home games are scheduled through the AYSA Field/Game Scheduler.

2. Season: The season is generally 10 weekends and for the fall, games run from September-November, and for the spring, games generally run from March-May.

3. Game Cancellations: The policy regarding game cancellations is to follow the decision of the club. If the league states they are open for play, show up at your scheduled game time and be prepared to play. If the referee or an AYSA Staff member decides the field or conditions make the game unplayable, then the coaches shall be responsible for rescheduling the game, if desired, through the AYSA Game Scheduler. The Game Scheduler is the only person authorized to coordinate field availability and referees for makeup games. Games with other clubs where it is an away match, always call the club's weather line or check the website for field status.

4. Game Preparation should follow this pattern:
   a. Written plan for substitutions (we strive for equal playing time)
   b. Advance notice from parents of player absences
   c. Pumped up balls for warm-ups and games
   d. Player passes for U12 and up teams
   e. Ice and first aid kit present
   f. Be at the field at least 15 minutes prior to game time!

Game Conduct

1. Rules of Play: AYSA adheres to the rules of play established by GYSA and USSF. For the micro soccer at ages U5-U10, AYSA and its Board determine the modifications to the rules in the best interest of player development and the enjoyment of the game. (Please see section on rules for more detail).

2. Playing Time: All players should be afforded equal playing time in games. If that is not

possible due to the number of players on the team, or at the game, you must ensure equal playing time over the course of the season. Playing time is NOT determined by the skill or ability of the player. *The only factors that should reduce playing time are injury, misconduct, failure to attend practice/games, and reckless play.*

3. Coach's Conduct: During the course of the game, coaches are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the philosophy of AYSA by doing the following:

    a. Teaching and demonstrating good sportsmanship and fair play
    b. Respecting ALL of those people associated with the game
    c. Allowing the kids to play and not providing second by second instruction (let the game be a teacher as well)
    d. Encouraging and applauding the efforts of all players
    e. Place your primary emphasis on player development and fun, NOT winning
    f. Be organized so as to allow a consistent flow of play
    g. Be aware that we must adhere to a positive spectator environment
    h. The referee is in charge of the field, NOT you
    i. Hold yourself to the highest standard possible knowing that these kids are looking to you as a leader

4. Player and Parent Conduct: Coaches should take the lead in making sure that both parents and players are conducting themselves appropriately. Good sportsmanship should be encouraged by all. Parents should be encouraged to be positive and non-instructive in their comments. *Remember, you as the coach need to be responsible for the conduct of both players and parents.* Please report any situation where you need help to the REC Chairperson or an AYSA Staff Member.

5. Sideline Setup and Players Bench: At all games, the coaches should select half the field for their team as a designated team area. All coaches for U5-U8 should stay by that area and ask for help with collecting balls to be put back in play. At all ages, players and coaches should be on the opposite side from spectators.

6. Substitutions: Player substitutions are made at the direction of the referee. For U5-U8, substitutions are made at the mid-point of each quarter and at the end of each quarter. At U10 and U12, substitutions are made at the end of each quarter. At U14 and up, substitutions are unlimited and are made with the permission of the referee.

7. Scoring: *Whenever a team is more than 3 goals ahead or whenever the referee shall request it, the team which is leading shall take such steps as necessary to reduce his/hers team's scoring.* This idea can be accomplished by moving players around, requiring a certain number of passes before a shot, playing with fewer numbers on the field, switching multiple players at half time with the other team.

8. Balanced Teams: AYSA does its best to create balanced teams and we ask that the coaches help with this rule.

9. At the younger age groups, avoid keeping score and reinforce the concept of did you work

hard, have fun, work as a team, etc…

10. Referee: When there is a referee (for U10 and up, there is always a referee, for U6 and below, the coach is in charge, and for U7 and U8, you will occasionally have referees), the referee is in charge of the field. He/she is solely responsible for calling the game. Many of our referees are club refs- young, learning, but certified in refereeing for their particular level. The referee is in charge of the field and coaches should not enter onto the field unless invited by the referee. *Parents are not to be allowed onto the field during games.* If you have comments or feedback (positive and negative) about a referee, please contact the referee coordinator for AYSA.

    If a referee does not appear for the game, each coach will be responsible for acting as the referee for one half of the game. If both coaches can agree on one individual to referee the entire game, then that is acceptable.

11. Game Day Guidelines

These guidelines are intended promote a positive and consistent game day experience for our young players. We encourage all our coaches to discuss these guidelines before each game, to ensure that both teams understand and agree to the developmental goals of the competition.

1) Introduce yourself to the coach of the opposing team at the beginning of each game. We're all our there for the same purpose, which is developing players.

2) Create an environment of balanced play. Balanced play means that one team is not out-scoring their opponent by a large margin. If this begins to happen, coaches are encouraged to activate measures to curb the scoring of the dominant team. Suggestions are (but not limited to):
    - ask players to complete a certain amount of passes before shooting
    - ask players to only shoot with their left foot
    - trade players to balance the teams

3) Manage the Game. In each game we want players to see as much fair, safe, active playing time as possible.
    - For U8 and younger, coaches should identify, call, and discuss fouls with their players. Referees are not responsible for calling fouls until the U10 age group.
    - Use the "new ball" rule, and not throw-ins to restart play quickly.
    - Coach and respect the age appropriate rules of the game (posted on www.aysa.net)

4) If you have a referee assigned to the game, introduce yourself and find out what level of training they have, and what level of game management they are certified to provide.

5) Have fun, and make sure your players are having fun too. That's what it's all about.

<u>Tournaments</u>

There are many tournaments in both the fall and spring for Recreational teams. Many of these

are held in the metro area. Most tournaments have a registration deadline about a month prior to the tournament date. Information about tournaments can be found through the GYSA website. AYSA does not organize tournaments for teams.

Trophies and Awards

At the end of each season, teams will often have a picnic or party to celebrate the season. Let your team parent work to organize this event. We encourage such activities so long as there is an attempt to include all the players and their parents, but we do not organize such an event for each team. Awards such as trophies, medals, patches, or other memorabilia may be given to all players in recognition of their participation. The awards should be identical in nature and individual accolades such as MVP shall not be given.

IV. PROGRAM GOALS FOR U4 – U7

The main goal of the U4- U8 training curriculum is simply to introduce the concept that soccer is fun - lots of fun. If the players have smiles when they get to a training session and smiles when they leave the training session, then we have done our job. Perfecting the technical aspects of soccer is something we can leave to the older age groups.

Of course, it is a soccer training session, so we do need some minimal soccer goals:

- Ball mastery
- Striking the ball
- Mobility skills

That's it. What may be more noteworthy is what is missing from these simple goals:

- No emphasis on passing
- No emphasis on goalkeeping.
- No emphasis on team play.
- No emphasis on tactics

The reasoning as to what is a goal and what is not at the U4 – U8 level is very simple. At this tender age, soccer players are me-centric. The game is about me and the ball. The game is not about being properly positioned to execute that perfect wall pass with Super Annie. The game is about me and me only. Me, me, ME! For a U4-U8, sharing is something that is done sparingly. For the most part, a U4/U5 wants the ball and wants it for him/herself only. So, all of our goals are focused on individualistic activities that many times only involve a player and a ball or just the player him/herself. Many times a player's body or just the ball is enough of an obstacle. Additional obstacles such as defenders, goalies and teammates are unnecessary until the basic obstacles of me and my ball have been overcome.

For U8s: A special note about passing is probably necessary. At the end of a player's U8 training, what we would like to see is an agile and consummate dribbler who can strike a ball well. Provided we have such a player, training him/her to be a consummate passer as well will be easy to do in the older age groups. What we don't want to train at the U8 level is pass, pass, pass. This leads to players who want to get rid of the ball more than they want to possess it. While passing is a great skill, we do not want to focus on it at the U8 level. If it happens, that's tremendous. Nevertheless, all of our players in this age group should think dribble first and pass second. This will be difficult because parents will be screaming "Pass!" from the sideline during games. In fact, you may find yourself biting your tongue a few times when Super Annie is wide open for a pass and an easy goal. You may even lose a game or two because of overzealous dribblers. However, stress the dribbling moves now, and we'll start passing at a later age. By the time our U8s are U14s, they will be unstoppable.

III. RULES OF THE GAME

U4 RULES OF THE GAME

Equipment Ball size: 3 for U4.

Pre-game: Coaches should introduce themselves. Coaches need to make sure no one is wearing jewelry of any type—including pierced earrings (if someone has pierced ears, they can either remove them for the game or cover them with athletic tape). One exception- **MEDICAL ALERT** jewelry may be worn, but it must be covered with athletic tape or secured. Players are checked to make sure they are wearing shin guards and are wearing socks OVER the shin guards. Players' cleats are checked for metal studs. The coaches can determine which team kicks off and the other team selects which goal it will defend.

Playing time: 2 ten-minute halves. Halftime is 5 minutes. Please make sure you keep track of time and tell the coaches to get their players back on the field. Each game that starts later or lasts longer than the allotted time makes the next game start even later.

 # Of Players 3v3 and **NO GOAL KEEPER**. This includes a player who is standing in goal acting like a goalie. All players should be encouraged to move around the field.

Substitutions: Free substitutions.

Offsides: Offsides is not penalized. However cherry picking should not be encouraged—in other words, a forward player should not hang out in front of the goal waiting for the ball. If a coach notices this behavior he should remind the players to play the whole field.

Throw Ins: There are no throw ins, corner kicks or goal kicks. When the ball goes out of bounds, the coaches (or parents) are responsible for putting the ball back into play, by **ROLLING** the ball into the area where the ball left the field. The ball should not be thrown into the air or toward either goal.

Slide Tackling: Players should be encouraged to remain on their feet. We do not encourage slide tackling. A slide tackle is not an automatic foul or penalty. For definition purposes, a slide tackle is a player going to the ground in an attempt to take the ball from an opposing player.

Free Kicks: No free kicks.

Penalty Kicks: No penalty kicks.

Post-game: Players line up to shake hands. Coaches should watch the players to make sure they actually do shake hands and encourage good sportsmanship.

U5 & U6 RULES OF THE GAME

Equipment Ball size: 3 for U5 and U6.

Pre-game: Coaches should introduce themselves. Coaches need to make sure no one is wearing jewelry of any type—including pierced earrings (if someone has pierced ears, they can either remove them for the game or cover them with athletic tape). One exception- **MEDICAL ALERT** jewelry may be worn, but it must be covered with athletic tape or secured. Players are checked to make sure they are wearing shin guards and are wearing socks OVER the shin guards. Players' cleats are checked for metal studs. The coaches can determine which team kicks off and the other team selects which goal it will defend.

Playing time: Four 8-minute quarters. The players get a 1-minute water/substitution break after the first 4 minutes of each quarter. Halftime is 5 minutes. Please make sure you keep track of time and tell the coaches to get their players back on the field. Each game that starts later or lasts longer than the allotted time makes the next game start even later.

 # Of Players 3v3 and **NO GOAL KEEPER**. This includes a player who is standing in goal acting like a goalie. All players should be encouraged to move around the field. If both teams are larger, coaches can agree to 4 v. 4.

Substitutions: Substitutions policies should be agreed by the coaching before starting play. Substitutions can always be made if there is an injury on the field. Otherwise, the coaches should choose between one time per quarter, during the water break OR free subs.

Offsides: Offsides is not penalized. However cherry picking should not be encouraged—in other words, a forward player should not hang out in front of the goal waiting for the ball. If a coach notices this behavior he should remind the players to play the whole field.

Throw Ins: There are no throw ins, corner kicks or goal kicks. When the ball goes out of bounds, the coaches (or parents) are responsible for putting the ball back into play, by **ROLLING** the ball into the area where the ball left the field. The ball should not be thrown into the air or toward either goal.

Slide Tackling: NO SLIDE TACKLING. Players should be encouraged to remain on their feet. A slide tackle is not an automatic foul or penalty. For definition purposes, a slide tackle is a player going to the ground in an attempt to take the ball from an opposing player. If the tackle is careless, reckless or uses excessive force, or the tackler first contacts the ball handler instead of the ball, a foul should be called. If the tackle is from behind the tackle should be considered reckless and a foul should be awarded.

Free Kicks: All kicks are indirect (i.e., a goal cannot be scored from a free kick—the ball must be touched by another player from the same team before going into the goal). If a handball occurs, a player from the other team gets a free kick.

Penalty Kicks: No penalty kicks.

Post-game: Players line up to shake hands. Coaches should watch the players to make sure they actually do shake hands and encourage good sportsmanship.

U7 ADDITIONAL RULES OF THE GAME

Equipment Ball size: 3 for U7 and 4 for U7/8 and U8. Refs should bring a stopwatch, whistle and coin for the toss. Don't be shy about using the whistle! Wear an approved referee shirt (either the yellow club referee t-shirt or, if you are state licensed, a striped referee shirt), black shorts and black socks.

Pre-game: Refs and coaches should introduce themselves. Players line up and the ref checks to make sure no one is wearing jewelry of any type—including pierced earrings. One exception- **MEDICAL ALERT** jewelry may be worn, but it must be covered with tape or secured. Players are checked to make sure they are wearing shin guards and are wearing socks OVER the guards. Players' cleats are checked for metal studs. Players should thank the ref for being at the game. The ref calls for team captains and a coin is tossed to determine which team kicks off, the other team selects which goal it will defend.

Playing time: Four 12-minute quarters. The players get a 1-minute water/substitution break after the first 6 minutes of each quarter. Halftime is 5 minutes. Please make sure you keep track of time and tell the coaches to get their players back on the field. Each game that starts later or lasts longer than the allotted time makes the next game start even later.

Number Of Players: 4v4 and no goalkeeper. If teams are larger, coaches may agree to 5 v. 5. If a team plays with a sweeper, that player should be encouraged to move around, not stand in front of the goal like a keeper. NO CHERRY PICKING! Coaches MAY NOT be on the field during game time.

Substitutions: Substitutions policies should be agreed by the coaching before starting play. Substitutions can always be made if there is an injury on the field. Otherwise, the coaches should choose between one time per quarter, during the water break OR free subs.

Offsides: Offsides is not penalized. However cherry picking should not be encouraged—in other words, a forward player should not hang out in front of the goal waiting for the ball. If a coach notices this behavior he should remind the players to play the whole field. A referee may remind a player or a coach about this guideline.

Throw Ins: There are no throw ins, corner kicks or goal kicks. When the ball goes out of bounds, the coaches are responsible for putting the ball back into play, by rolling or gently tossing the ball into the area where the ball left the field.

Slide Tackling: NO SLIDE TACKLING. Players should be encouraged to remain on their feet. A slide tackle is not an automatic foul or penalty. For definition purposes, a slide tackle is a player going to the ground in an attempt to take the ball from an opposing player. If the tackle is careless, reckless or uses excessive force, or the tackler first contacts the ball handler instead of the ball, a foul should be called. If the tackle is from behind the tackle should be considered reckless and a foul should be awarded.

Penalty Kicks: No penalty kicks. If a handball occurs, a player from the other team gets a free kick. A goal cannot be scored from a free kick—the ball must be touched by another player from the same team before going into the goal.

Post-game: Players line up to shake hands. Coaches should watch the players to make sure they actually do shake hands and encourage good sportsmanship.

U7/8 All-Girls and U8 ADDITIONAL RULES OF THE GAME

Equipment Ball size 4. Refs should bring a stopwatch, whistle and coin for the toss. Don't be shy about using the whistle! Wear an approved referee shirt (either the yellow club referee t-shirt or, if you are state licensed, a striped referee shirt), black shorts and black socks.

Pre-game: Refs and coaches should introduce themselves. Players line up and the ref checks to make sure no one is wearing jewelry of any type—including pierced earrings. One exception- **MEDICAL ALERT** jewelry may be worn, but it must be covered with tape or secured. Players are checked to make sure they are wearing shin guards and are wearing socks OVER the guards. Players' cleats are checked for metal studs. Players should thank the ref for being at the game. The ref calls for team captains and a coin is tossed to determine which team kicks off, the other team selects which goal it will defend.

Playing time: Four 12-minute quarters. The players get a 1-minute water/substitution break after the first 6 minutes of each quarter. Halftime is 5 minutes. Please make sure you keep track of time and tell the coaches to get their players back on the field. Each game that starts later or lasts longer than the allotted time makes the next game start even later.

Number Of Players: 4v4 and no goalkeeper. If teams are larger, coaches may agree to 5 v. 5. If a team plays with a sweeper, that player should be encouraged to move around, not stand in front of the goal like a keeper. NO CHERRY PICKING! Coaches MAY NOT be on the field during game time.

Substitutions: Substitutions policies should be agreed by the coaching before starting play. Substitutions can always be made if there is an injury on the field. Otherwise, the coaches should choose between one time per quarter, during the water break OR free subs.

Offsides: Offsides is not penalized. However cherry picking should not be encouraged—in other words, a forward player should not hang out in front of the goal waiting for the ball. If a coach notices this behavior he should remind the players to play the whole field. A referee may remind a player or a coach about this guideline.

Throw Ins/Corner Kicks/Goal Kicks: Throw Ins: If the ball goes out on a blue player, a red player takes the throw in. If the throw in is performed incorrectly, the red player will be given one opportunity to try again.

Corner Kicks: If the ball goes over the blue goal line off of a blue player, the red team is awarded a corner kick.

Goal Kicks: If the ball goes over the blue goal line off of a red player, the blue team is awarded a goal kick.

Slide Tackling: NO SLIDE TACKLING. A slide tackle is not an automatic foul or penalty. For definition purposes, a slide tackle is a player going to the ground in an attempt to take the ball from an opposing player. If the tackle is careless, reckless or uses excessive force, or the tackler first contacts the ball handler instead of the ball, a foul should be called. If the tackle is from behind the tackle should be considered reckless and a foul should be awarded.

Penalty Kicks: No penalty kicks. If a handball occurs, a player from the other team gets a free kick. A goal cannot be scored from a free kick—the ball must be touched by another player from the same team before going into the goal.

Post-game: Players line up to shake hands. Coaches should watch the players to make sure they actually do shake hands and encourage good sportsmanship.

U10 ADDITIONAL RULES OF THE GAME

Equipment

Ball size: 4. Refs should bring a stopwatch, whistle and coin for the toss. Don't be shy about using the whistle!

Pre-game:

Refs and coaches should introduce themselves and discuss substitutions and number of players on the field (see below). Players line up and the ref checks to make sure no one is wearing jewelry of any type—including pierced earrings. One exception- **MEDICAL ALERT** jewelry may be worn, but it must be covered with tape or secured. Players are checked to make sure they are wearing shin guards and are wearing socks OVER the guards. Players' cleats are checked for metal studs. Players should thank the ref for being at the game. The ref calls for team captains and a coin is tossed to determine which team kicks off, the other team selects which goal it will defend.

Playing time:

Two 30-minute halves—see info on substitutions—but coaches may agree to make quarter breaks or break at half time only. 5 to 10 minute break for halftime.

Number Of Players:

Micro rules are 6v6 including a goalkeeper. Because our teams are so full—coaches may agree prior to the game to play 7v7 including the keeper. Please make sure you let the referee know BEFORE the game begins how many players should be on the field. Our fields are not large enough to play 8v8.

Substitutions:

Before the game begins, coaches should decide and agree to either free substitutions or quarter subs—then let the referee know. If you agree to free subs please follow this process: first ask the ref for permission to substitute, players must come off the field before the substitutes enter the field. Substitutions may be made:

- By either team after a goal is scored
- By either team before there is a goal kick
- By the team with possession of the ball, before a throw in
- If there is an injury on the field

Offsides:

Offsides is not penalized. However cherry picking should not be encouraged—in other words, a forward player should not hang out in front of the goal waiting for the ball. If a coach notices this behavior he should remind the players to play the whole field. A referee may remind a player or a coach about this guideline.

Throw Ins:

If the ball goes out on a blue player, a red player takes the throw in. If the throw in is performed incorrectly, the red player will be given one opportunity to try again. If the red player is unsuccessful after the second attempt, the ball goes to a blue player for a throw in. After the first several weeks, the coaches should discuss whether a player should be given a second chance, then left the referee know.

Slide Tackling:

NO SLIDE TACKLING. A slide tackle is not an automatic foul or penalty. For definition purposes, a slide tackle is a player going to the ground in an attempt to take the ball from an opposing player. If the tackle is careless, reckless or uses excessive force, or the tackler first contacts the ball handler instead of the ball, a foul should be called. If the tackle is from behind the tackle should be considered reckless and a foul should be awarded.

Penalty Kicks:

No direct penalty kicks—in other words—no free kicks from the penalty mark in front of the goal. The ball must pass from the player taking the penalty kick to another player before going into the goal. Free kicks are awarded basically when there is a hand ball, inappropriate contact with another player (i.e. pushing from behind) or when any misconduct is observed by the ref.

Post-game:

Players lines up to shake hands. Coaches should watch the players to make sure they actually do shake hands and encourage good sportsmanship.

U12 Age Group

- No coaches allowed on the field
- Referees officiate games
- 7 players plus a goalie on the field (total of 8)
- Size 4 ball used
- There are four 15-minute quarters
- Offside rule per FIFA
- Throw-ins, corner kicks, goal kicks all are in effect
- Each player must play half the game

IV. STAFF

REC Administrator

Responsible for all administrative work for the recreational program, including rostering, responding to rec inquiries, and coach and family communication.

REC Committee

Group of individuals and Board Members that meet to discuss the program, make necessary changes, and hear the issues first hand of the program.

AGC, Age Group Coordinator

The AGC serves as the liaison between the recreation program coaches in that age group and the following: various AYSA committees, the Director of Coaching (DOC), the Rec Administrator and the REC Chairperson.

REC Coaches-

AYSA has adopted the policy of performing background checks on all coaches for all its programs. AYSA's policy requires a background check report on all coaches, including assistant coaches.

It is the responsibility of the head coach assigned to each team to keep the Rec Administrator informed of the identities of assistant coaches. If there is a question whether an individual has a current background check, or whether a background check is needed, the head coach must contact the Rec Administrator.

V. AYSA History

The Atlanta Youth Soccer Association (AYSA) was organized to play and advance the game of soccer within the City of Atlanta. Since its inception in 1988, AYSA has depended on countless volunteer coaches to bring the joy of soccer to thousands of children. As we have grown, so has our need to properly train and prepare our coaches for what they may encounter along the way. This handbook is designed to enlighten you about the philosophy of AYSA

while providing you necessary information about our procedures.

Philosophy

We believe that all children have the right to play soccer in a safe and rewarding environment, in a manner that is free from criticism and ridicule, that every team member will have qualified and compassionate leadership and coaching that prepares them for full participation in soccer, at a level commensurate with their maturity and ability; that all children will be treated with dignity, and have an equal opportunity to strive for success. *Above all, we believe that every child should have fun playing soccer!*

Affiliations

AYSA is a member of the Georgia State Soccer Association and Georgia Youth Soccer Association. We are also members of the United States Soccer Federation (USSF). Our bylaws specifically adopt the rules and regulations of these organizations and the rules of play encountered will be those of GYSA and USSF. *All modifications of these rules that are put in play for U5-U8 AYSA soccer must be adopted and approved by the AYSA Board.*

Organization

Its Board of Directors governs AYSA. There are 13 members of the Board and 4-5 of those members is assigned to represent the Recreation Division. There is a Recreation Committee in place that focuses on the needs of the program. Among other issues, this committee organizes the activities of the program including team assignments, player evaluations, clinics, etc. It can also make recommendations to the Board with respect to matters that are important to the program.

Licensing

While prior coaching experience or licenses are valuable, they are not necessary. Each season kicks off with a coaching clinic. Additionally, at least once a year, Georgia State Soccer Association conducts a coaching clinic for our REC coaches.

We encourage all coaches to attend the licensing clinics offered by GYSA. Please log onto to: www.gasoccer.org for more information about course offerings and locations. Suggested coaches licenses:

1. U5- U8 - G License which takes about 4 hours of instruction
2. U10-U12 - F License that takes about 9 hours to complete
3. U14-U19 - E License that takes about 18 hours to complete