



Oak Park Region 697
Fall 2021 (MY2021)

In Oak Park AYSO, our goal is to create an environment in which children can learn and grow within the sport they love and also grow as individuals. Through consistent emphasis of our core values and understanding, motivated role models and parents we believe AYSO Soccer is the perfect place to gain these skills and build self-confidence and self-awareness.

Executive Board Contacts

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AYSO Core Philosophies

1. Everyone Plays

Every player plays at least half the game. Also, barring injury, no player may play four quarters unless every player plays three quarters. Your line-up cards should be made in accordance with these guidelines.

2. Balanced Teams

We form new teams each season, as evenly balanced as possible, because it's more fun and a better learning experience when teams of similar ability play. Coaches are not allowed to make changes to rosters (i.e. trade players) or use players not on their rosters in a game.

3. Open Registration

Our program is open to all children between 6 and 19 years of age who want to register and play soccer. Interest and enthusiasm are the only criteria for playing. There are no elimination try-outs and nobody gets cut. We try to accommodate late registrations.

4. Positive Coaching

Encouragement of player effort provides for greater enjoyment for the players and leads to better-skilled and better-motivated players. A coach is one of the most influential people in a child's life, so AYSO requires them to create a positive experience for every boy and girl.

5. Good Sportsmanship

We strive to create a positive environment based on mutual respect rather than a win-at-all-costs attitude, and our program is designed to instill good sportsmanship in every facet of AYSO — to opponents, refs, coaches and teammates. No blowouts.

6. Player Development

We believe that all players should be able to develop their soccer skills and knowledge to the best of their abilities, both individually and as members of a team, in order to maximize their enjoyment of the game. We provide trainers to help coach the coaches.

Volunteer Registration & Certification

At this point you are most likely registered, but just in case you are not, here's how:

Registration

All volunteers **MUST** be registered in [Sports Connect](http://www.ayso697.org) (www.ayso697.org) as an adult volunteer. This is the same website where you register your child(ren). Even if you have volunteered in previous seasons, you still need to re-register each season!

- Please go to <https://www.ayso697.org> and click the “REGISTER NOW” button in the top right corner. This will direct you to the registration page. If you already have an account, click the “**Login here**” link at lower right, then sign into your account. From the account page, click the “VOLUNTEER” link in the left navigation. Follow the prompts to register as an adult volunteer.
- Please remember to e-sign at the end of the registration process! Upon completion, you will get an email from AYSO to complete a background check with Sterling Volunteers. This process is required for all adult volunteers.
- Please let your division coordinator know that you have completed the process.
- All NEW volunteers **MUST** show their ID to the Oak Park AYSO CVPA at: cvpa@oakparkayso.org

REMEMBER: ***Volunteer Registration is required each season.***

Safe Haven Training

- **All volunteers MUST complete this training!**
- Please go to <https://aysoU.org>. If you do not have an account, you will need to register first.
- Log in, and then click on the “Online Courses” tab.
- Open the “Safe Haven Courses” folder, and then click “Open” for the “AYSO’s Safe Haven” training. The training will take ~ 45-60 min.
- You only have to complete the Safe Haven training once!

AYSO / CDC Concussion Awareness training

- National AYSO, along with FIFA and US Soccer, was sued in a class action similar to the one filed against the NFL, alleging a risk of concussions from playing soccer, especially from heading the ball by young players. This is why AYSO changed the rule to outlaw heading below Division 4 (f.k.a. U14) and why they want all coaches to take the training below to recognize symptoms of a possible concussion!
- Please sign in to <https://aysoU.org>
- Then click on the “Online Courses” tab.
- Open the “Safe Haven Courses” folder, and then click “Open” for the “CDC HEADS UP Concussion Training”. The training will take ~ 20 min.
- You only have to complete the Concussion Awareness training once – but an annual refresher is recommended.

Coach Training

AYSO now *mandates* training for Division 1 (U8), Division 2 (U10) and Division 3 (U12) coaches. We **strongly** recommend that coaches take training classes at **all** levels. Oak Park AYSO typically runs training for all coaches before the Fall season. Oak Park coaches can also attend training in other regions. Training courses can be found online at <https://aysoU.org>.

Digital copies of Training Manuals can also be found online at the [OPAYSO web site](https://aysoU.org) or at <https://aysoU.org>.

The AYSOU site also has a number of helpful documents in their “Resources” section.

Coaches Code of Conduct

All Oak Park AYSO Coaches are required to sign the Coaches Code of Conduct. You completed it as part of your volunteer registration. Here it is again, for reference:

As a Coach or Assistant Coach in the Oak Park AYSO program, I agree to:

1. Become familiar with and follow the philosophies of AYSO.
2. Be familiar with the rules of soccer.
3. Be familiar with and follow all rules of Oak Park AYSO, including those relating to “equal play” during games.
4. Make sure playing time is also generally equalized over the season.
5. Complete AYSO Safe Haven certification.
6. Ensure a safe environment for my players.
7. Never step onto the Field of Play unless invited by the Referee.
8. Adhere to the decisions of the referee without argument and teach my players to do the same.
9. Make my best efforts to ensure that my team families do not interfere with or question referees in the performance of their duties.
10. Treat opposing coaches and teams with good sportsmanship; including best efforts to ensure no one trash talks other coaches, teams, kids or refs.
11. Remember that it’s all about the kids!

I understand that any failure by me, in words or action, to live up to the terms and spirit of this agreement, may result in loss of my privileges to coach Oak Park AYSO soccer.

Misconduct

OP AYSO takes misconduct very seriously. Report misconduct or behavioral problems involving any volunteer or spectator as soon as possible. This includes misconduct at games or practice sessions. Provide details about the incident, when and where it occurred, and who was involved, including the primary parties and witnesses, in writing, to your Division Coordinator and the Child and Volunteer Protection Advocate (CVPA) via email at cvpa@oakparkayso.org. You will be asked to complete an Incident Report which the CVPA will provide to you.

Disagreements—Coaches or Referees

A disagreement with another coach or a criticism of a coach's methods or actions, not involving misconduct, should be reported via email to your Division Coordinator. Contact info can be found at www.ayso697.org. If the problem is with the Division Coordinator, contact the Coaches Administrator, John Chapman-Rienstra, at coaches@oakparkayso.org.

A disagreement with a referee, or a criticism of his/her abilities or knowledge of the laws of the game, not involving misconduct, should be reported via email to our Regional Referee Administrator, Simon Tiffen, at refs@oakparkayso.org.

Team Information

If you need an up-to-date team roster or any other data about your team's players or parents, you can find it on the [OP AYSO website](#). By default the site itself only shows limited information online, but you can create a more detailed document under the "Print" option. You can also request team info from your respective Division Coordinator.

PRINT TEAM ROSTER

Choose which fields you would like to include in the printed roster below: Select All

Team Personnel Info	Player Info	Account Info
<input type="checkbox"/> Name	<input type="checkbox"/> Number	<input type="checkbox"/> Primary Account Name
<input type="checkbox"/> Role	<input type="checkbox"/> Player Name	<input type="checkbox"/> Primary Account Cell Phone
<input type="checkbox"/> Phone	<input type="checkbox"/> Player Email	<input type="checkbox"/> Address
<input type="checkbox"/> Cell Phone	<input type="checkbox"/> Player Cell	<input type="checkbox"/> Primary Account Email
<input type="checkbox"/> Address	<input type="checkbox"/> Date of Birth	<input type="checkbox"/> Additional User First Name
<input type="checkbox"/> Personnel Email	<input type="checkbox"/> Age	<input type="checkbox"/> Additional User Last Name
		<input type="checkbox"/> Additional User Cell
		<input type="checkbox"/> Additional Email

Generate Roster

Safety

Zack's Law on Goal Safety

Signed in 2011, Zack's law gets its name from Zachary Tran of Vernon Hills, IL, who was killed at the age of 6 when a 184-pound metal soccer goal fell and struck his head during practice. His death was the 27th resulting from a tipped soccer goal since 1979.

Under the law, soccer goals measuring between 6.5 to 8 feet high and 18 to 24 feet wide must conform to tip-resistant standards set by the American Society for Testing and Materials.

Check the goals before each game to make sure they are secured. Remind your players not to climb or hang on the goals at any time, regardless of size. If they aren't anchored, report this to the Park District of Oak Park off-hours maintenance number: **708-426-3667**. **DO NOT MOVE ANY GOALS** yourself!

Field Survey

At the start of each practice and game, it is the responsibility of the coach to walk the field to make sure it is safe. If you see a problem with the field, report the condition to the Park District's off-hours maintenance number: 708-426-3667.

Coaches should work with each other to determine if they should continue the game under the existing conditions, and *then* consult with the center ref on this decision. If you are **NOT SURE** if you can continue the game under the existing conditions, you can confer with an AYSO Board member (Division Coordinator or Executive). **DO NOT rely on the referees** to determine if a field is playable!

Injuries

During a game, if a player appears to get injured, the coach should attend to the injured player[s]. If the ref does not see the injury, let the ref know and give the ref a moment to stop play.

PLEASE NOTE: Parents (and trainers) should *not* come onto the field *until invited by the referee!*

Incident Reports

An incident report should be completed by any volunteer witnessing any serious incident involving an injury. A report should also be filed for any of the following incidents:

- Threats of bodily harm
- Fighting (whether or not an injury occurs)
- Property damage
- Hospitalization of a participant
- Law enforcement summoned
- Service / notification of a pending lawsuit

Contact cvpa@oakparkayso.org for a copy of the Incident Report form.

Concussions

The AYSO National Board of Directors (NBOD) launched a Concussion Task Force to develop [recommendations for AYSO Regions and families](#).

We encourage ALL coaches to take the Concussion Awareness Training at <https://aysoU.org>.

If you suspect a concussion, the player should be pulled from the game **immediately** and kept off the field. Parents should be notified and the player should be evaluated by a medical professional and not be allowed to return or practice until the player has been cleared by a medical professional.

Signs & Symptoms

A concussion can happen even on seemingly innocuous plays. Know the signs and symptoms of one! Athletes who experience one or more of the signs or symptoms listed below after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body may have a concussion.

Signs observed by coaching staff

1. Appears dazed or stunned
2. Is confused about assignment or position
3. Forgets an instruction
4. Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
5. Moves clumsily
6. Answers questions slowly
7. Loses consciousness (even briefly)
8. Can't recall events prior to hit or fall
9. Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes
10. Can't recall events after hit or fall

Symptoms reported by athlete

1. Headache or "pressure" in the head
2. Nausea or vomiting
3. Balance problems or dizziness
4. Double or blurry vision
5. Sensitivity to light and/or noise
6. Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
7. Concentration or memory problems
8. Confusion
9. Just not "feeling right" or "feeling down"

Action Plan

If you suspect that an athlete has a concussion, you should take the following four steps:

1. TAKE NO CHANCES! Remove the athlete from play.
2. Ensure that the athlete is evaluated for a concussion by a healthcare professional. Do NOT try to judge the seriousness of the injury yourself (even if you are an MD - get an impartial evaluation)!
3. Inform the athlete's parents or guardians about the possible concussion and give them the [CDC fact sheet for parents on concussion](#).
4. Keep the athlete out of play the day of the injury
5. The athlete should NOT return to play until a healthcare professional, experienced in evaluating for concussion, says the athlete is symptom-free and is cleared to return.

It's better to miss one game than the whole season.

Masks

OPAYSO continues to follow the health guidelines from the Oak Park Dep't of Public Health, which is working closely with the [Illinois Department of Public Health \(IDPH\)](#) and [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#). Given the recent increase in COVID-19 cases in our area, we are once again **requiring ALL players, coaches and referees to wear masks on and off the field** this season. We also STRONGLY encourage spectators to wear masks on the sidelines, even if socially distanced, until such time as the Dep't of Public Health no longer requires them. Coaches are not expected to police this, but please notify the AYSO Board if you notice chronic non-compliers.

Practices

Practice Time

Your Division Coordinator has provided you with a list of fields for which AYSO has permits and we ask that you honor other organizations' (e.g. OPYBS) permits by staying off their fields. Make space for other AYSO teams that are practicing on the field on which you intend to practice. Our scheduled practices are listed at <http://schema2.com/opayso/>. If you're not sure whether OP AYSO has a permit for a given field, the Park District of Oak Park posts permits at the fields and on [their DropBox site](#).

Practices & Team Roster

In the Fall, we encourage Division 1 teams to hold at least **1** practice per week and all other Divisions (2-5) teams to hold **2** practices per week (to allow flexibility in attendance). Encourage your players to attend at least one practice each week, but let them know it's OK if they don't attend both. (Some players practice with travel teams, as well.)

We hold two separate sign-ups for practice time slots in the week leading up to practices. Once all teams have selected practices and we know where everyone is planning to be, we can sometimes make adjustments to spread folks out more or allow for longer practices. If you need help adjusting your practices or do not have practices scheduled yet, contact your Division Coordinator!

Coaches should always have a copy of their team's roster on hand at all practices. (If you need a copy of your team roster, please contact your respective Division Coordinator or an AYSO Board member.)

Recommended equipment for your practices

Equipment bag	Soccer balls	First aid kit + ice packs
Whistle	Extra water bottle[s]	Player registration forms

Player Equipment

All players should have the following at every practice session:

- Soccer ball
- Pinny
- Shin guards - **NO EXCEPTIONS!**
- Proper cleats (no metal baseball cleats) or gym shoes
- Water bottle -- with their name on it!
- Mask

ALL players **MUST** wear shin guards for all practices and scrimmages / games. **NO EXCEPTIONS!** Also, players should not wear any jewelry or hard hair bands. Players should wear a mask at all times when they are at practice (and games), even on the sideline, and maintain social distancing -- a minimum 3 feet between themselves and another player -- when not playing.

What should you teach your players?

If you need some ideas for drills and activities, the AYSO coaching manuals are a great resource for practice planning and guidance for teaching kids at every level, as are the training courses available on the OP AYSO and AYSOU websites.

PDFs of the manuals are available at the links below:

U08 Coach (Division 1)	U10 Coach (Division 2)	Intermediate Coach	Advanced Coach
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A sample practice outline for a 60 minute practice might look like this: Warm-up—10 minutes, Skill-Based Activity—30 minutes, Short-Sided Play—20 minutes.

Other useful resources for practice plans (drills and short-sided play):

- <https://www.coachfinder.soccer/curriculum/>
- <http://www.soccerxpert.com>

Basics

<p>Division 1 Techniques -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dribbling • Instep Kick • Throw In • Inside of the Foot Pass • Inside of the Foot Control 	<p>Division 1 Principles -</p> <p>Width —Attacking by spreading players out stretches the defense and creates space for players to advance. “Don’t bunch up!”</p>
<p>Division 2 Techniques - All of U8 and . . .</p> <p>Tackling</p> <p>Goalkeeping</p>	<p>Division 2 Principles -</p> <p>Depth—Supporting teammates by creating safe options for player with the ball (O) or supporting the players challenging the ball in case they are beat (D)</p> <p>Defending/Concentration— Compressing or restricting the space the attacking team has by “shepherding” them into a confined area makes it easier to defend and regain possession of the ball</p> <p>Off-sides and Offside Strategy</p>
<p>Division 3 Techniques - All of the above and . . .</p> <p>Top of the Thigh Control</p> <p>Sole of the Foot Control</p> <p>Juggling</p>	<p>Division 3 Principles - All of the above and . . .</p> <p>Mobility—Players changing positions (filling in for one another when necessary) and moving off the ball creates numerical advantages and thereby at-tacking/scoring opportunities.</p> <p>Balance—Reading the attack and providing an equal or greater number of defenders than attackers at the point of attack, while simultaneously covering the vital area near the goal.</p>
<p>Division 4 + 5 Techniques - All of the above and . . .</p> <p>Laws of the Game</p>	<p>Division 4 + 5 Principles - All of the above and . . .</p> <p>Creativity: Creating opportunities for advancement, possession and scoring by utilizing individual skills such as feints and fakes while dribbling.</p> <p>Composure: Staying calm and collected</p>

Basic Soccer Strategies

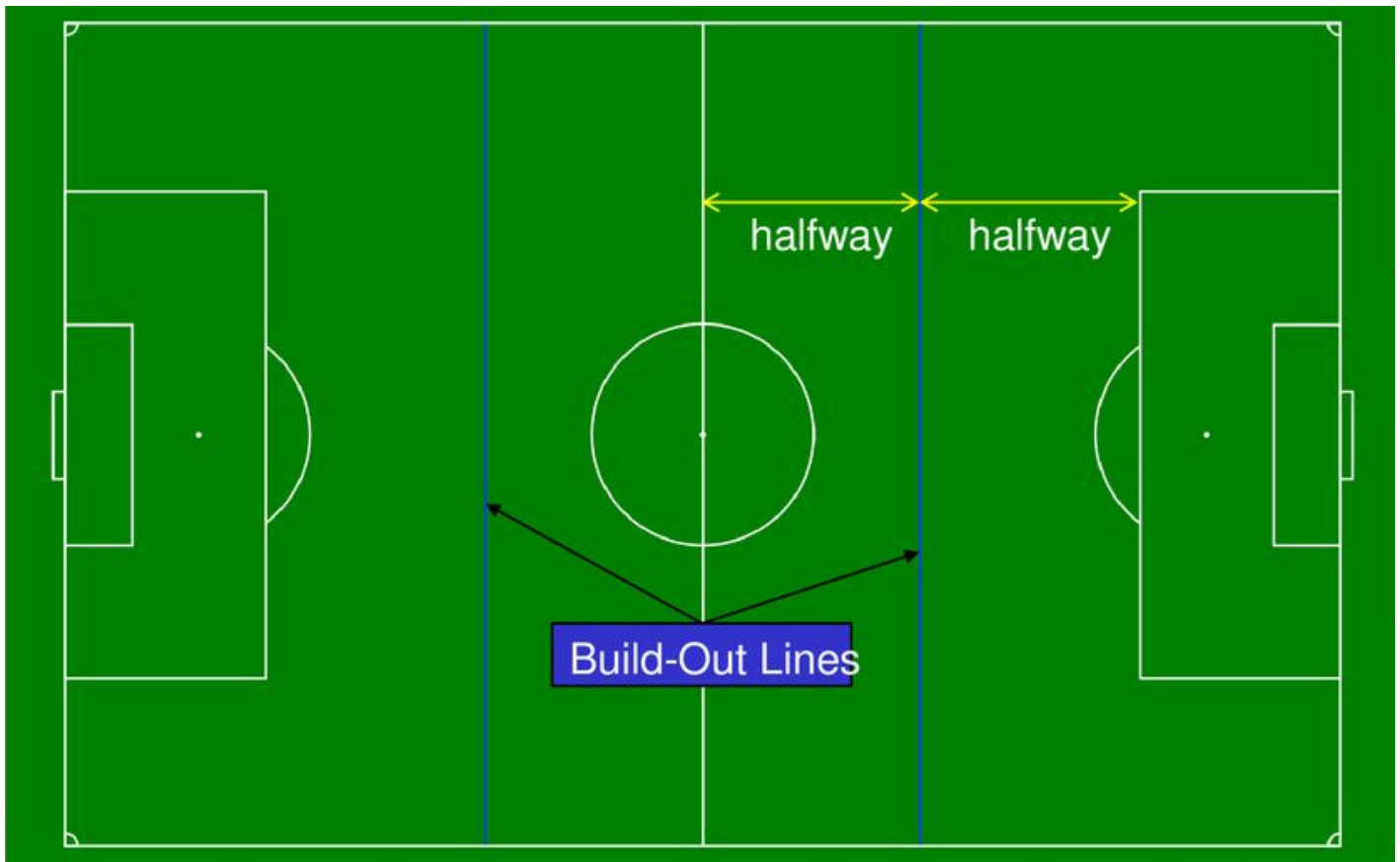
1. **Conserve energy.** Your players will wear themselves out running up and down the field unless you teach them to save their energy. Let them know that they don't have to be involved in every single play of the game. If the ball is far away and two of your players are already there, teach the others to stay in position.
2. **Go to the open spot.** Kids want to run to where the ball is right now. The problem is that by the time they get there, the ball is gone. Teach them to run to where the ball "is going to be". This is related to the next tip, which is:
3. **Run away from the ball.** Younger players all want to run to the ball. That's great when they're playing defense or when the ball is rolling along by itself, but the rest of the time? Notsomuch. When one of your players has the ball, teach the rest of your players to run away from that person or run alongside that person at a short distance.
4. **Practice the goalie position.** Goalie is an important position in youth soccer and yet very few coaches have players practice that position. Most goals scored in youth soccer are not the result of great shots. Instead, it's because the goalie doesn't know what to do or is out of position.
5. **Reward assists as much as (or more than) goals.** When someone passes the ball to another player who then scores, that pass is called an assist. Very few goals would be scored without assists. When you praise your players after your team scores, praise the player who got the assist even louder than the one who scored the goal. Caution: Many parents will reward their children for scoring a goal. As you can imagine, this pretty much discourages these kids from passing the ball. At your first practice, tell your parents that if they want to praise their children, it will help you greatly if they offer the same praise for an assist or a save as for a goal.
6. **Reward your defenders and goalies.** Goals and assists are great, but you still need to stop the other team. Make sure you (and parents) praise the players who stop the other team.
7. **Practice throw-in strategy.** Most coaches teach players the proper rules regarding throw-ins. However, very few coaches teach throw-in strategy. The thrower should face the other team's goal and throw the ball down the sideline towards that goal (even if no one is there to receive it.) After they throw, they should jump onto the field and get into the play. Young players should never throw the ball towards their own goal or the middle of the field because it creates momentum for the other team. It's equally important to teach your players how to defend against throw-ins. Most young players want to guard the other team "man to man". They run around trying to follow a player and get in front of him/her. Teach players to stand "goal side" and guard the area between the thrower and your goalie, regardless of where the other team's players are. Your players should stand far enough away so that the thrower can never throw over their head.
8. **Take corner kicks, indirect kicks and throw-ins as fast as possible.** Most kids stand around waiting for the referee to tell them it's OK to start. They don't need this permission. Teach them to kick or throw the ball as fast as they can so the other team doesn't have lots of time to get ready.
9. **Kick and chase.** Young players don't kick the ball very far. They have a tendency to kick it three or four feet and then stand there watching it. Teach them to kick it and chase it and kick it again.
10. **Follow your shots.** Teach your players to run after their shots, even when it looks like the goalie will

stop the ball. If the goalie misses, your player will be there for another shot. BUT, your players should NOT kick at the ball if the goalie has (or is close to having) possession of it.

11. **Never turn your back and run away from the other team's goalie** after that goalie picks up the ball. Instead, run backwards and watch the goalie until he/she gets rid of the ball.
12. **Defenders should stay close to midfielders** -- i.e., don't let your defense stay back by the goal box when you are on offense (especially on the opponent's side of the field). Young defenders often feel they have to "guard" the goal or stay by the penalty box at all times. No. When your team goes on offense and moves up the field, the defense should move with them, otherwise you are giving your opponent a LOT of open space on your side of the field for an onside counter-attack.
13. **Practice corner kick strategy.** The strategy will vary based on the age of your players. If they can't kick the ball to the middle of the net, have them practice kicking to someone standing closer to them. If your kicker can get the ball all the way in front of the net, have one or two players stand in the middle of the net and one or two players stand on the side of the net away from the kicker.

Build Out Line

AYSO implemented a new rule in Fall 2019 that applies only on GOAL KICKS in Divisions 1 and 2. We are using a build-out line. This line will be drawn on each half of the field from sideline to sideline, halfway between the center line and the penalty area. The purpose is to encourage teams to learn to "build out" their attack from their defensive end by being able to easily and successfully pass goal kicks directly to teammates to begin the attack without opposing players nearby.



On goal kicks, the opposing (non-kicking) team’s players must now move behind the build-out line and cannot come forward across the line until the goal kick has been taken and the ball has left the penalty box area.

A violation will result in a free kick on the build-out line at the spot of the encroachment. (If a goal kick is played by any player before it leaves the penalty area, the usual rule that it must be retaken still applies.)

The kicking team has the option to take the kick before all of the other team’s players have moved beyond the build-out line, in which case there would be no encroachment violation. Refs will be encouraged to use common sense discretion to enforce this new rule in the spirit in which it is intended.

Games

Game Times & Roster Sizes

Division	# of Players	Game length
Division 1 (U8)	6 v 6 (incl. GK) - minimum 4	20-minute halves
Division 2 (U10)	8 v 8 - minimum 5	25-minute halves
Division 3 (U12)	9 v 9 - minimum 6	30 minute halves
Division 4 (U14)	11 v 11 - minimum 8	35 minute halves
Division 5 (U19)	11 v 11 - minimum 8	45 minute halves

Halftime = 5 minutes

Game clock is *running* time, which means the clock does *not* stop at substitution breaks!

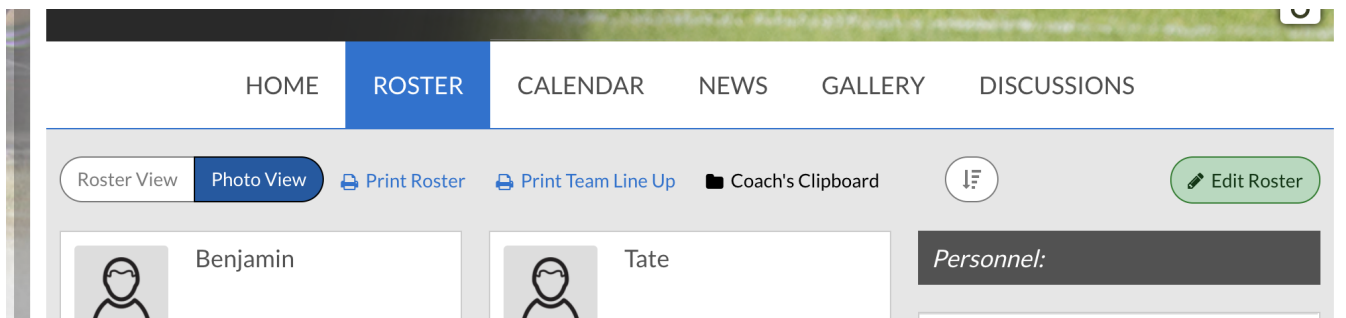
If your opponent is short players, you are **not** required to play with fewer players in response — however, we strive to avoid blowouts, so keep that in mind. Always ADD players in this scenario.

Please remember that heading the ball is only allowed in Divisions 4 and 5!

Game Cards (Lineups)

Coaches are REQUIRED to fill out game lineup cards that demonstrate compliance with the "equal play" substitution rules and exchange them with the opposing coach before each game.

AYSO’s official lineup card is printable right from your team site. Click the “Print Team Line Up” button.



PRINT TEAM LINE UP

Back

Export to the selected format Export

Team Line Up Report

Region 697

U08 Boys (1st and 2nd Grade)

Team Name Team 01 - Antonacci

Team Colors

Team Coach Antonacci, Penny

Ass. Coach Flannery, Jessica

JERSEY#	PLAYER NAME*	GOALS	Qtrs. Played			
			1	2	3	4
Antonacci, Benjamin						

Team Line Up Report

Region 697

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Team Name Team 01 - Antonacci

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Team Coach Antonacci, Penny

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JERSEY#	PLAYER NAME*	GOALS	Qtrs. Played			
			1	2	3	4
Antonacci, Benjamin						

Your Division Coordinator can also send you a Google Sheet you can use for setting up and tracking your game lineups throughout the season.

Uniforms

Full uniforms are required, including shin guards with socks OVER them. All extra clothes go UNDER the uniform. If kids are sensitive to shin guards, add a 2nd pair of socks under the shin guards so uniform socks can be worn over the shin guards. Other permitted / unpermitted clothing and accessories:

- Cleats are optional, but recommended. **Rubber** baseball cleats are OK.
- *No jewelry.* Taping over earrings is NOT acceptable! No hard hair fasteners; cloth ones ONLY.
- Prescription glasses are allowed as long as they are securely affixed with a head strap.
- *No casts or splints, nor can the player remove casts or splints to play.* This is per the policy of National AYSO, through which we get our insurance, so **this is non-negotiable.**

Where to sit or stand

Teams and registered coaches should be on the opposite side of the field from the parents. **Do not allow parents to sit adjacent to the players' sideline,** either.

Coaches are encouraged to stay to the middle third of the field on their own side, which means you should NOT be running up and down the sidelines giving direction nor should you be encroaching on the side of the opposing team.

No one is allowed to sit or stand directly behind the goals! This commonly happens on cool days at fields that are in the shade in the morning, e.g. Irving School. If you see parents congregating by the goals, ask them to move! You can also ask an AYSO Board member to assist you in moving parents.

Substitutions

Divisions 1 to 4: Substitutions at each quarter. 1 minute max, clock running, just time enough for a new lineup, *not* for coaching.

Division 5 (U19) ONLY: You may substitute freely, but try to sub at game stoppages (fouls, throw-ins, corner kicks, goal kicks, etc.) as much as possible.

Player Rotation

IMPORTANT: For Divisions 1-4, no player can play 4 quarters unless every player plays 3 quarters.

Coaches are encouraged to switch players into different positions during games and over the season, especially at the younger divisions. Goalies in Divisions 1 + 2 should not play more than one half of each game in goal, especially if they are ever on the bench as a substitute.

If there is more than one player on the sideline, they should maintain social distancing as much as possible, and all players should continue to wear their masks when not on the field!

Diversity & Inclusion

When players feel seen, safe, valued, and an important part of the whole, they will be able to perform at the best of their ability. They will be more likely to; take appropriate risks in soccer, trust the process, work hard, respect themselves and others, reach new athletic and personal goals.

Coaches carry tremendous responsibility in making sure our AYSO soccer program is an example of tolerance and appreciation of diversity, with a focus on inclusion and equity for all players.

1. In advance of your first meeting with your team, take a personal inventory. What are my own biases? Do I favor a certain type of soccer player? Do I call on the same kids repeatedly? When I demonstrate or teach something, do I favor my own learning style (visual, auditory, reading/writing, kinesthetic)? Being aware of our own biases helps us address them.
2. You set the tone for the team. If at the beginning of each practice/game, you remind your players that they are a team, they include everyone, they support others with words of encouragement and when they play on the field as players, etc., you will find your players doing those positive things for each other.
3. Listen and display empathy to all the players.
4. Respect any assistive devices players might have/need and ask before removing those items. (If you are worried whether or not they are safe, ask.)
5. Not all disabilities are visible or obvious. Dyslexia and ADHD are not always noticeable. Please be sure to read any notes about players prior to the first practice and brainstorm strategies that might help that player be more successful on the field.
6. Some players might need accommodations or extra time; be generous with this.
7. If you have questions about why a player is exhibiting a certain behavior, a discussion with parents can be helpful.
8. Address respectfully and promptly all degrading or belittling exchanges between players.
9. Model inclusive and respectful behavior towards parents, referees and every player, always. Kids pick up on tension or disdain quite readily.
10. If you need support with any players, please reach out to your division coordinator or our Diversity & Inclusion Administrator, Veronica Ramirez.

Blowouts

Avoid blowouts. Talk to the 'difference makers' to inform them what you might ask them to do if your team is in a lopsided game and what they'll be working on. If your team is up by 3 and clearly dominating, you need to begin implementing strategy(ies) for lopsided games. Some suggestions are:

Challenge your 'difference makers' to focus on assists. Let them know who you want them passing to in order to get an assist. Pick out kids who haven't scored yet this season and put them up at forward. You'll help work on everyone's game.

Put strong players in goal. A good alternative, as there are kids who are good on the field but not so strong in the goal. These players could often use some experience in goal.

Adding players to the trailing team. Scoring with players' weaker foot. (Make sure that is something the player actually needs to work on.) Prohibit scoring by really strong players. Coaches just need to know their team and the situation at hand.

Rain and Storm Policy

We play in the rain unless the fields are closed. The OP AYSO website (www.ayso697.org) will have the latest game day information regarding field closures and game cancellations on game days. These notifications will also be sent via the Team Manager app. We encourage trainers to sign up for the field status email list at <http://www.pdop.org/parks/facility-schedules-conditions/>. You can also call the number below to check field status at other times.

- Oak Park: 708-725-2720, follow the prompt for "affiliated youth soccer programs"

Thunderstorms

If lightning is spotted or thunder is heard, games and practices must stop IMMEDIATELY so that everyone can seek shelter. Games may not resume until 30 minutes after no lightning is spotted and no thunder is heard. Make sure any trainers and/or refs also have shelter.

For Division 1 games, there is no resumption of games; the game is declared over. Make sure that everyone, including the ref, is off the field safely.

For all other divisions, if the entire first half has been played before the storm delay, the game will be considered complete and scores will be reported as normal. If the game is still in the first half when the delay occurs and it is not possible to complete the game within 30 minutes of the scheduled end time for your game, **you must leave the field in favor of the subsequent games.**

For any game suspended without at least half the game being played, the Division Coordinator will make the determination as to whether your game will be continued at a later date.

Field Playability

IMPORTANT: Neither the Park District of Oak Park nor the AYSO Division Coordinators or other Board members can be present all day Saturday at every field. Therefore, even if the Park District has declared a field "open" at the start of the day, we are relying on COACHES as AYSO volunteers and stewards of our soccer program and fields to use good judgment and make proper decisions on whether fields are playable at game time (as well as during the games if conditions deteriorate).

We know the players all get dressed to play and you want to get the games in, and you can disagree with a decision to close the fields, but if a field is deemed not playable, please do not play on it and rip it up. (This holds true for practices also.)

The Big 4 Rules

The following are not allowed at AYSO games or practices — NO EXCEPTIONS:

1. NO Dogs (Seriously, not even puppies.)
2. NO Smoking
3. NO Alcohol
4. NO Mistreating Referees

Re: #1. No dogs: This is a **Park District policy**, not just AYSO! Regrettably, in past seasons we have had multiple run-ins with parents or grandparents who bring a dog to the field and then get howling mad when we tell them the dog must leave. If you see someone with a dog at the field, contact the Division Coordinator or OP AYSO Board member and let them know ASAP. No exceptions!

Treatment of Referees

As we return to a 'normal' season, OP AYSO will have referees at our games. We expect all parents and coaches to treat our referees with deference and respect. This means:

Dissent with a ref's call is forbidden. Period. At all levels of the game, the ref has no responsibility to explain the rules of the game or to answer questions regarding their ruling.

The responsibility for avoiding referee abuse rests with the coaches. Always maintain a controlled and undemonstrative attitude toward refs — no game circumstance warrants departure from this attitude. Players notice the way parents and coaches treat referees. Coaches should set the example for their players to respect others and communicate without arguing or yelling. Parents are equally responsible, and there is a non-zero chance that at some point this season, parents will complain about the referees. Please do your part to help us monitor parents' behavior and dissuade them from making untoward comments about the refs. If any parent gets too unruly or obnoxious, report them to your Division Coordinator or AYSO Board member. We have ZERO tolerance for such behavior.

Why? Developing referees is as critical to the game as developing players. We rely on current or former AYSO players because we cannot recruit enough adult referees. Many of these referees are children of coaches and board members. Referees who are learning (and even those who are experienced) are going to make mistakes, for which they deserve our polite support and tolerance, not derision or dissent. The supportive behavior of trainers and parents will encourage our kids to continue refing. They have been instructed to take control of the matches with which they are involved.

What to do you if you have a complaint

DO NOT complain during the game. After the game, you may respectfully ask the ref to explain a call. Remember: if it is a rule you have a question about, you and the novice ref can look it up. However, if it's a call that you didn't agree with, that call is up to the referee's discretion, so there is no legitimate reason to discuss a ref's judgment call, EVER.

If you feel that a ref's call (or lack thereof) possibly endangered a player, you may bring it to the ref's attention but, again, do **not confront** the referees. If you feel you need to escalate your ref situation, please contact our Ref Administrator, Simon Tiffen, at refs@oakparkayso.org.

The coach is responsible not only for his own actions, but for those of players and parents / spectators associated with the team. Being on the opposite sideline from parents / spectators, we understand it is difficult to monitor what they say. So, please have this conversation about not dissing refs with your parents and players before your first game and throughout the season.