



ABYS COACHES GUIDE

Fall 2023

Our volunteers, especially our parent and high school volunteer coaches, are at the heart of what makes this program among the most successful youth soccer programs in the state.

Thank you for volunteering your time. This guide equips you with key information needed to coach for Acton Boxborough Youth Soccer.

Contents

Introduction.....	2
Leadership and Key Contacts	3
Coach Registration and Requirements.....	4
Age Group Summaries and Player Development Pathway	6
Micros and Kinders.....	6
1 st and 2 nd Grade.....	6
Options entering 3 rd grade – Travel and Intramural Town.....	6
3 rd and 4 th Grade Town.....	6
5 th and 6 th Grade Town	7
3 rd thru 12 th Travel/BAYS	7
Junior High Information.....	7
Summary.....	7
ABYS Player Development Pathway	8
Coach Development and Resources.....	9
Preparing for the Season	10
Coach Code of Conduct	12
Fields (Directory, Policies, Status and Scheduling).....	13
Referee Relations and Zero Tolerance	15
Safety.....	16
Travel Coaches.....	18
Sample Welcome Emails	20

Introduction

About us

ABYS provides over 1,500 boys and girls between the ages of 4 through 18 an opportunity to play organized soccer every spring and fall. We are the largest youth organization in Acton-Boxborough and among the largest youth soccer Associations in Massachusetts.

Our division directors, professional development coaches, and our parent and high school volunteer coaches are at the heart of what makes this program among the most successful youth soccer programs in the state.

One of the very best ways to have more impact on ABYS is to become more involved yourself as a volunteer. This goes for our coaches too! We are blessed with many volunteers who have played the game in their own youth, some at a very high level.

Mission

Our mission is to provide a quality recreational, youth soccer experience for all of our members where good sportsmanship and a desire to play, coach, or observe soccer, in a way that honors the game, are the cornerstones of that experience. In doing so, we aim to create a lifelong appreciation of the game by actively seeking to promote soccer through our program to the youth of Acton and Boxborough.

Philosophy

ABYS strives to provide each player the opportunity to play soccer in a supportive and rewarding environment that emphasizes fun, enjoyment and skill learning, at a level that fits the player's interest and ability. We also appreciate the benefit of participating in a team sport. We encourage a child's development of group skills by exposing them to relationship-building and problem-solving challenges in social situations.

Leadership and Key Contacts

Leadership and Directors

President - [Shaheen Ali](#)
Treasurer – [Mike Yantosca](#)
Executive Director - [Mike Onigman](#)
Field Scheduler - [Lucienne Schmidt](#)
BAYS Liaison – [Lucienne Schmidt](#)
Club Risk Manager – [Yana Gaber](#)

Vice President – [Laura Schmidt](#)
Secretary – [Jason Fitzgerald](#)
Field Manager – [Bronson Terry](#)
Equipment – [Ameet Pawar](#)
Referee Director – [Atish Kamble](#)

Age Group Directors

High School Girls - [Scott Sullivan](#)
8th Grade Girls – [Ashley Kolste](#)
7th Grade Girls - [Mike Krol](#)
6th Grade Girls – OPEN
5th Grade Girls - [Jason Fitzgerald](#)
4th Grade Girls - [Laura Schmidt](#)
3rd Grade Girls – [Brigid Brady](#)
2nd Grade Girls – [Gregg Chenail](#)
1st Grade Girls – OPEN

High School Boys - [Shaheen Ali](#)
8th Grade Boys – [Nishaanthan Nadarajah](#)
7th Grade Boys - [Ted Holt](#)
6th Grade Boys – [Billy McEvoy](#)
5th Grade Boys - [Andrew Dinu](#)
4th Grade Boys – [Jenna McKnight](#)
3rd Grade Boys - [Balvinder Vig](#)
2nd Grade Boys – OPEN
1st Grade Boys - [Stacy Walker](#)

Youth Divisions

Kinders (Under 6) Girls – [Matt Fratkan](#)
Kinders (Under 6) Boys – [Seth Cooper](#)
Micros (Under 5) Program Coordinator – OPEN

Staff

Director of Coaching – Reuben Paice

Registrar – [Holly Fitzgerald](#)

EMS Contact Information

Acton Police	To report an emergency only: 911 Routine business: (978) 264-9638
Acton Fire	To report fire only: 911 Routine business: (978) 264-9645
Boxborough Police	To report an emergency only: 911 Routine business: (978) 263-3000
Boxborough Fire	To report fire only: 911 Business Number: (978) 263-7546 Alternate Number: (978) 263-8299

Coach Registration and Requirements

[Applies to all coaches]

Steps to become a coach

Step 1: Register as a volunteer thru your Sports Connect account on abys.org (same system used for registering players)

Step by step instructions with screen shots can be found on abys.org: [here](#)

Step 2: - Visit Massachusetts Youth Soccer's [Adult Registration Process](#) page. There are separate instructions: one is for [New Users](#) and one is for [Returning](#) Users. Please consult the appropriate checklist and help guide.

These documents will guide you through creating an account on the U.S. Soccer Connect Adult Registration Portal and Registering yourself as an Adult volunteer. Once you have completed your Adult Registration, you can log back into your account and view all your information; you can also print your CORI Acknowledgement form and upload your Concussion and/or your Abuse Prevention Training Certificates.

Abuse Prevention Training should be completed via the U.S. Soccer Connect API feed. Once your Town/Club Registrar confirms your registration you will see the link to complete the Abuse Prevention Training in your Adult Registration account. Note: Initial training may take 2 hours, refresher course may take 30 minutes.

Concussion Training (CDC) link will also show in your Adult Registration account once the League, Town or Club Registrar confirms your registration. If you have a current Certificate (does not expire during the current registration year), please upload it into your registration account.

Note: These requirements have changed since the 2018-2019 season. As background:

In 2018 Congress passed the Abuse Prevention Act and U.S. Soccer established requirements for all adults involved in youth soccer known as US Soccer's Safe Soccer Framework. In support, and collective efforts to provide the safest possible soccer environment for all players and participants, Massachusetts Youth Soccer created MA Safe Soccer.

What does this mean to you as an adult involved in your organization's soccer activities? The key elements are:

- Expansion of Background Checks, including State and National Sex Offender Searches
- Abuse Prevention Education and Training
- Concussion Training: CDC's Heads Up Coaches Course
- Use of New Membership Management System for Adult Registrations
- Adherence to new Mass Youth Soccer Player and Participant Safety Policy
- New MA Safe Soccer Platform

More information about MA Safe Soccer can be found [here](#)

Step 3: Complete US Soccer Introduction to Grassroots training. This is a free 20-minute online training session and is required for all ABYS Head Coaches and Assistant Coaches. This is an introduction to US Soccer's Coaching Education Philosophy, Play-Practice-Play Methodology, the Six Tasks of a Coach, and the characteristics of players in that specific game model (4v4, 7v7, 9v9, 11v11). The course can be accessed through the [U.S. Soccer Learning Center](#)

Step 4: (Travel Coaches only)

Coaches in the ABYS travel program must also complete the appropriate course for the age group they are coaching (7v7, 9v9, 11v11).

Course modules for Travel coaches do not have to be taken in any specific order. After completion, the cost of the course will be reimbursed by ABYS. **NOTE** even if you are not a Travel coach – but would like to continue with any of the course modules after the introductory course ABYS will reimburse you.

Once your course has been completed, please upload your receipt as well as your certificate using the [Coach Certification Reimbursement Form](#).

Age Group Summaries and Player Development Pathway

Micros and Kinders

ABYS is pleased to offer programs for pre-kindergarten (“Micros”) as well as kindergarten aged players (“Kinders”). Micros and Kinders soccer are developmentally appropriate soccer programs, designed by professional coaches and aimed at developing motor skills, movement, agility and soccer skills.

The Micros program consists of 60-minute sessions on seven Sundays. The Kinders Program consists of 75-minute sessions also on seven Sunday’s. Our Player Development Coaches (PDC's) will introduce young players and parents interested in coaching to the fundamentals and philosophies of soccer as embraced by ABYS. The program includes child-centered and age appropriate interactive games that maximize everyone’s "touches" on the ball, make learning soccer skills FUN, and introduce 3 vs. 3 scrimmages for Micros and 4v4 for Kinders.

Players will be assigned to teams led by parent coaches. Players receive a team t-shirt at their first session.

Coaching points of emphasis

Equal playing time for all players, de-emphasize score keeping, have fun!

1st and 2nd Grade

There are separate programs for 1st and 2nd grade players, but they are very similar. Girls and boys play on separate teams. At this level, the kids experience and play a “real game of soccer” for the first time. The objective of the program is to provide an opportunity to play and learn the game of soccer in a relaxed atmosphere without having to travel to other towns.

Teams have one weeknight practice and play a game on Saturday. Format continues to be 4 v 4 to maximize the amount of touches each player gets. As with Micros and Kinders, each player will receive a team t-shirt during their first session.

* Goalies can be used during the spring season for 2nd graders to start to prepare them for 3rd grade

Coaching points of emphasis

Equal playing time for all, de-emphasize score keeping, focus on technical skills, not tactics, have fun!

Options entering 3rd grade – Travel and Intramural Town

ABYS offers two levels of play, our intramural Town program and our more competitive Travel Team program. The Town program is available for all players looking for a lesser commitment and more recreational play from preschool (Micros) through sixth grade. The Travel Team program is available for players looking for a higher level of commitment and competition from third grade through high school.

Travel teams are formed based on tryouts which occur each Spring. More details on the tryout process as well as the differences between travel and intramural town soccer can be found in the Travel Soccer [FAQ](#).

3rd and 4th Grade Town

The town program is a single gender 7v7 program comprised of players from grades 3 and 4. The objective of the program is to provide an opportunity to play soccer without having to travel to other towns. Teams are comprised of players with varying skill levels on each team. The schedule consists of approximately 10 games per season starting in early September (fall season) or early April (spring season).

Goalkeepers and referees are introduced at this level and players wear an official ABYS uniform kit which can be purchased at Soccer Stuff in Acton

Teams typically have 1 weeknight practice and games on Saturday. Depending on interest and availability, some games may be played against Town teams from Concord-Carlisle or Westford.

5th and 6th Grade Town

This program is similar to the 3rd and 4th grade town program except the format is 9v9 and offside is introduced.

3rd thru 12th Travel/BAYS

ABYS travel teams play in the BAYS (Boston Area Youth Soccer) program. This league provides several levels of competition and is introduced to children entering the Third Grade division (playing 7v7) and continuing through the High School division (with the transition to 11v11 play occurring at Seventh Grade and above). Each age group is divided into four tiers, Division 1 (representing the highest level of competition for that age group), Division 2, Division 3, and Division 4. The normal team placement in a BAYS section will combine six teams from different towns, playing a 10-week schedule, such that each team will play a home-and-away set against each other team in the section. While BAYS will work with towns to try and form sections that are geographically close, it is not abnormal to have a range of 20-30 miles between Acton and the farthest town in a section.

Travel teams typically have 2 weeknight practices per week and games on Saturdays.

Junior High Information

Players in Junior High have some scheduling differences from our younger divisions due to the onset of the school-based teams in the Fall season. Each year we receive many questions regarding our Fall boys and girls ABYS soccer teams for these ages, particularly the schedules and practice commitments. We have compiled a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to assist your family with your player's transition from the younger divisions to the Junior High School Group. Click [here](#) to see the FAQ

Summary

Age Group	Micros/Kinders	1st/2nd Grade	3rd/4th Grade	5th/6th Grade	7th/8th Grade
Format	3v3 or 4v4	4v4	7v7	9v9	11v11
Ball Size	3	3	4	4	5
Recommended Roster Size	6-8	8	11-13 (Travel) 12-14 (Town)	13-15 (Travel) 13-16 (Town)	14-16
Length of half	15 min	25 min	30 min	30 min	35 min
Goalies	No	No*	Yes	Yes	Yes
Referees	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Throw-Ins	No, Kick in from sideline	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Offsides	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Goal Kick Restrictions	Retreat to midfield	Retreat to midfield	Retreat to midfield	None	None
Heading?	No	No	No	No	Yes

* Goalies can be introduced in Spring of 2nd grade to prepare for transition to 3rd grade

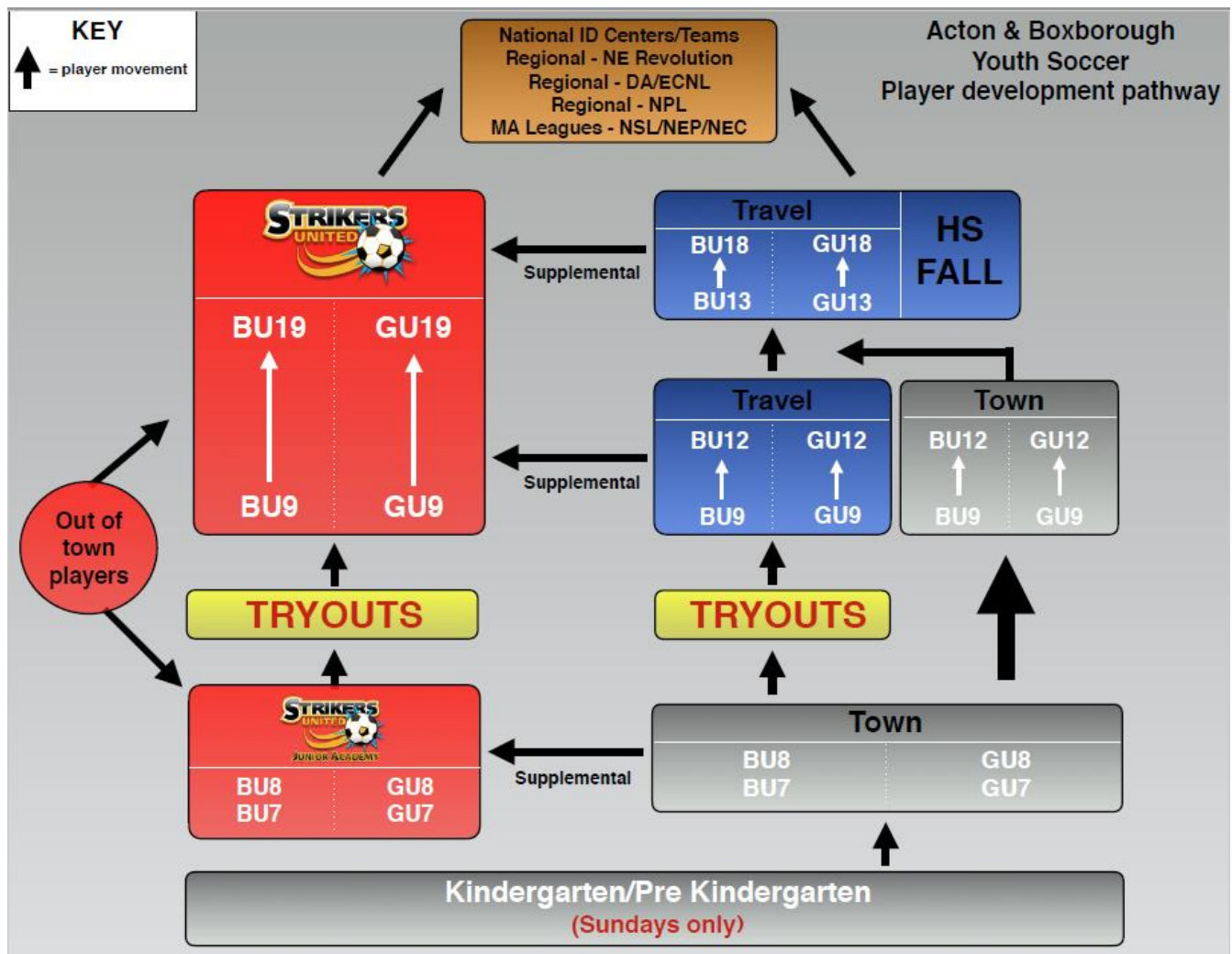
Typical game times can be found [here](#)

ABYS Player Development Pathway

Note: this pathway shows the available options for players to play within ABYS as well as optional, supplemental programs provided through Strikers United.

Strikers United is a premier soccer development program aimed at providing a professional and structured pathway for committed players who are passionate about working at developing their skills, enhancing their techniques, learning game strategies and improving their fitness levels, by training and playing competitive soccer at the highest level achievable, under the guidance of professional coaches. Strikers United is a program presented by Acton Boxborough Youth Soccer but is open to all players regardless of where they live.

Coaches can refer players and parents with questions to [Travel program FAQs](#), [Strikers United website](#) or the relevant Division Director.



Coach Development and Resources

[Applies to all coaches]

Over the years, ABYS has offered several avenues for coach education, including in person and online courses, session plans and coaching documents uploaded to the ABYS website and the PDC program (Professional Development Coaching) which ABYS will continue to invest in. This section summarizes the development resources available to ABYS Coaches.

Grassroots Soccer

In 2017, U.S. Soccer (the governing body for all soccer in the U.S.) announced eight new grassroots level coaching courses. These courses are focused on empowering coaches through experiential learning and a player-centered approach. The course options will relate directly to small-sided games and the respective age-groups outlined in the Player Development Initiatives.

The a-la-carte approach is meant to empower grassroots coaches to access education – relevant to their needs and specific coaching environment.

ABYS will reimburse any coach who successfully completes any US Soccer Grassroots coaching courses. Online courses can be accessed through the [U.S. Soccer Learning Center](#)

Mitch's Corner

[Mitch's Corner](#) is a dedicated space on abys.org where you'll find links to all the programs, events and coaching information provided by ABYS Director of Coaching, Mitch Doherty. Some of the topics contained there include the Take 2 Initiative, Session plans, Learning by Numbers and Player Nutrition.

Professional Development Coaches (PDC)

The PDC entity is the core player development program for ABYS. Covering all the age divisions, it is totally integrated into registration fees, this program offers direct access to professional coaching, divisional and team training opportunities under the guidance of the PDC's, access to online and hard copy sessions plans, which is all underpinned by a staged age appropriate development curriculum.

Free weekly age-group sessions as well as separate Goalkeeper sessions are offered by the PDC (consult abys.org for latest schedules). Coaches are asked to ensure their players are aware of the PDC sessions. Coaches may also request (by contacting Mitch Doherty, Director of Coaching) team training sessions with a PDC or match analysis.

Session Plans

For the Micros and Kinders programs, practice session plans will be facilitated each week by the PDC's. For grades 1 and older, coaches decide the weekly practice session plans.

To assist in this process, there are session plans available at Mitch's Corner on abys.org (contact Mitch for passwords). Additional session plans can be found:

1. From Mass Youth Soccer [here](#)
2. Age-group specific session plans which follow the Play-Practice-Play methodology are available from US Soccer in the [U.S. Soccer Learning Center](#) once you complete any Grassroots coach course.
3. The free [MOJO app](#) contains free session plans from US Youth Soccer and Mass Youth Soccer.

Preparing for the Season

[Applies to all coaches]

Communication with families

Maintaining open communication with parents is key to a successful season. Coaches should send an email to their teams as soon as they receive their roster to welcome families to the team and give them information about the upcoming season. Coaches are strongly encouraged to have a face-to-face meeting with parents. We suggest that you hold a meeting at the first practice of the season. Below is a sample agenda for a parent meeting. Sample welcome emails are included at the end of this packet.

Team meeting sample agenda

- 1) Logistics
 - a. Days/Times/Location for practices and games
 - b. Arrive on time, attendance is important for individual and team development
 - c. What to bring (soccer ball, water, uniform)
- 2) Game Expectations
 - a. Focus is individual and team development – not winning
 - b. Kids will play a variety of positions throughout the game
 - c. All players will play an equal amount of time
- 3) Player Expectations
 - a. Attend as many practices as possible
 - b. Be prepared for every practice – correct uniform, ball, water, shin guards
 - c. Be supportive/encouraging of teammates
- 4) Parent Expectations
 - a. Help child attend as many practices as possible
 - b. Communicate any absences/lateness in advance
 - c. Supportive and encouraging at all times
 - d. Zero tolerance at games regarding officials
 - e. No coaching on the sidelines!
- 5) Coach Expectations
 - a. Present and on-time for all practices/games
 - b. Communicate any changes in schedule in timely manner
 - c. Focus on development - not results
 - d. Provide relentless encouragement
 - e. Always stay positive

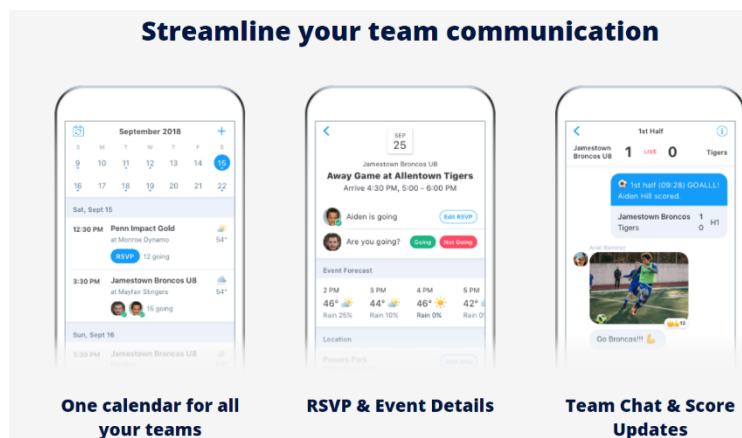
Equipment and Uniforms

All coaches are provided with a game ball and a first aid kit at the coaches meeting each season. Cones and pinnies are also available to assist with practices. Coaches should contact their age group Division Director to request cones and pinnies.

Information for players/families regarding uniforms can be found at abys.org

Team Apps

The free Team Manager app by GameChanger integrates with our team management platform and is a useful tool to communicate with your team during the season. The app can be used to keep track of your team calendar, manage player RSVPs to games/practices, includes a text-message like chat function to allow team families and to communicate. The app can be downloaded from the [Apple App Store](#) and [Google Play](#). Instructions on setup are included in the app. Some teams choose to use other apps, such as TeamSnap or MOJO, though there may be costs to use.



Suggested checklist of items to do prior to the start of the season

- ☐ Complete all steps from Coach Registration and Requirements section of this guide
- ☐ Attend Coaches meeting
- ☐ Contact your team: Welcome email and Team meeting
- ☐ Schedule and confirm your practice night(s), times and location (work with Division Director)
- ☐ Request any needed equipment from Division Director
- ☐ Hold parent meeting (recommended)
- ☐ Ensure parents are aware of the Zero Tolerance policy
- ☐ Remind Parents of [Parent Code of Conduct](#) (recommended)
- ☐ Inform players and families of the PDC sessions (dates/times/locations)
- ☐ Setup Game Changer App (recommended)
- ☐ Ensure you are subscribed to field status email updates

Post Season Evaluations

Coaches are asked to complete a team evaluation at the end of each season. Evaluation data is used to ensure balanced teams in subsequent seasons as well as an input to the formation of travel teams. Division Directors will provide coaches with an evaluation template.

Fall 2023 Season dates

Micros and Kinders:	7 Weeks September 17 thru November 5 (no games Columbus day weekend).
1st - 8th Grade (Town):	10 Weeks September 9 thru November 11.
3rd- 8th Grade (Travel):	10 Weeks September 9 thru November 11.
High School:	7 Weeks September 24 thru November 12 (no games Columbus day weekend.)

Coach Code of Conduct

[Applies to all coaches]

This code is designed:

- ⊕ To emphasize the elements of enjoyment and satisfaction to junior players and coaches involved in soccer.
- ⊕ To make adults including parents and coaches aware that young players play soccer to satisfy themselves and not necessarily to satisfy adults or members of their own peer group.
- ⊕ To improve the overall health and fitness of ABYS players by encouraging participation in soccer and making it attractive, safe and enjoyable for all to play.
- ⊕ To remind administrators, coaches, referees and parents that soccer must be administered, taught and provided for the good of those young people who wish to play soccer, as ultimately “It is their game”.

Coaches Code of Conduct

- ⊕ I will respect the rights, dignity and worth of all players and ensure that everyone is treated equally.
- ⊕ I will ensure that the players are involved in a positive environment, and that the game and training is a positive and enjoyable experience.
- ⊕ I will respect all player’s individuality and help them reach their own full potential.
- ⊕ I will be fair, considerate and honest with all players.
- ⊕ I will be professional and accept responsibility for my actions and encourage players to demonstrate the same qualities.
- ⊕ I will make a commitment to my team, and myself that I will continue to improve my own knowledge of the game through coach education and various training programs.
- ⊕ I will coach my players to play within the rules and in the spirit of the game of soccer.
- ⊕ I will refrain from any form of personal abuse towards my players. Also be aware to any forms of abuse directed towards my players from other sources whilst they are in my care.
- ⊕ I will refrain from any form of harassment towards my players.
- ⊕ I will provide a safe environment for training and competition, by ensuring the equipment and facilities meet safety standards.
- ⊕ I will show concern and caution towards sick and injured players and allow for further participation in training and competition only when appropriate.
- ⊕ I will not engage in the use of crude, foul or abusive language that may be determined offensive or engage in any conduct detrimental to the image of the game when on or off the field.
- ⊕ I will treat participants, officials and spectators with courtesy and respect.
- ⊕ I will always encourage my team to play within the laws of the game.
- ⊕ I will not allow or consent to the use of any banned substance or drugs of dependence by my players.
- ⊕ I will demonstrate myself and encourage others to adhere to zero tolerance towards referees, home and away during games.

Fields (Directory, Policies, Status and Scheduling)

List of fields, click links for Field Maps

FIELD NAME	ADDRESS	FIELD SIZE	TYPICAL AGE GROUPS
Flerra Meadows	340 Stow Road, Boxborough	7v7	3 rd and 4 th
Lower Fields	66 Hayward Road, Acton	9v9, 11v11	5 th , 6 th , and 7 th /8 th
Liberty Field	1100 Liberty Square Rd, Boxborough	9v9, 7v7	3 rd – 6 th
NARA Park	71 Quarry Road, Acton	4v4	Not used in Fall 22
Fifer's Field	1200 Beaver Brook Rd, Boxborough	4v4, 11v11	PreK – 2 nd
Concord road	104 Concord Road, Acton	11v11	7 th – 12 th
Leary Field	22 Charter Road, Acton	11v11	7 th – 12 th

Field use policies

Rain Policy for Acton-Boxborough playing fields: If the ground is saturated or there is standing water on the field, then it is not open. Saturation is when you step on the field and water seeps up into your footprint, like a sponge. If this is the case, please stay off the field. Please notify the field coordinator if you feel the field is unplayable and hasn't been closed.

We make a best effort to announce field closures two hours before game or practice time (see Field Status). Regardless of the posted field closure message, the referee may call the game if he/she feels the field is not in a playable condition. The referee's decision is final.

Where there is more than one field at a location, the fields are marked by letters. Consult the hyperlinked field maps to view the layouts including letters:

Special Rules for Using Leary & Lower Fields at ABRHS

- No chewing gum, sunflower seeds, shelled nuts or tobacco products allowed
- No food, or drink other than water
- No glass containers of any kind
- The use of roller blades, skateboards, bicycles or mopeds is strictly prohibited
- No metal cleats or spikes, or plastic cleats longer than 1/2" allowed
- No tents, tarps, structures or objects which will or may foreseeably cause the penetration of the synthetic surface

Rescheduling

See the instructions [here](#) for details on rescheduling games.

There is an online [form](#) that must be filled out for all (town and travel) re-scheduling

To postpone or pre-pone a scheduled BAYS travel team game, refer to the [BAYS Rule Book](#) for any special considerations and deadlines.

Upon submission of the rescheduling form, e-mail is sent to the Field and Referee Schedulers. The Referee Scheduler will cancel the referee for the original game. The Field Scheduler will allocate a field slot and inform the submitter and the Referee Scheduler the details of time, place, and level for the rescheduled game, and a referee or referees will be assigned. The Field Coordinator will do all he/she can to accommodate the exact time and location request for your rescheduled game, however, it is not guaranteed that he/she will be able to meet

your exact request. If the Field Coordinator cannot accommodate the exact request, they will try to give you options that are available. Once you give them your choice, the Field Coordinator will then schedule your game.

Note: this is not an instantaneous process! Consider providing **several days' notice at minimum -- a week or more is better**. More lead time is a good thing.

New for Fall 2022: Late cancellations of BAYS games will result in a fine to the club/team responsible for the late cancellation. The fines range from \$30-\$115 depending on the age group and number of referees. The deadline to notify referee assignors of cancelled BAYS games are: 1) 7:00 PM on Thursday for Saturday/Sunday games 2) Noon the day before any weekday game. If the reason for the cancellation is **field, weather or COVID related, these fines do not apply**.

Field Status Notifications

Coaches are advised to join the ABYS-List Google Group for e-mail notifications of field status in Acton and Boxborough by following these instructions:

- Open your browser to <http://googlegroups.com>
- Type "abys-list" in the search field. Click the Search button. Click on "ABYS List" group name. If you are not logged in to a Google account, you will be asked to do so. If you do not have a Google account, you may create one here.
- Click on the 'Join group' link. The Join group dialog box appears.
- Fill in the options on the Join Group dialog box. YOU MUST CHECK "Send me an email for every new message (less than 1 per day)" TO RECEIVE TIMELY MESSAGES ABOUT ABYS FIELD STATUS!
- Click 'Join this group' button. Your request will be submitted to the administrator for approval.

If field is showing worn or dirt/mud patches, please let the field coordinator know so use can be minimized until the field is repaired or rested. The field coordinator does not play on all the fields so is not aware of the playing conditions of all the fields all the time.

Notifying Opposing Teams of cancellations

If a game must be cancelled due to a field closure, it is the responsibility of the home town coach to inform the visiting coach of the cancellation. Per BAYS guidelines, the home team coach shall notify the away team by 7:00 am on the day of the game (for morning games), or by 10:00 am (for afternoon games).

Scheduling Practice time

Coaches should always work with their Age Group Division Director to schedule practice time. Division Directors have access to online field scheduling and can work with the ABYS Field Coordinator. Please be prepared to start your practice on time and end your practice 5 minutes before the end of your time slot to allow the next coach time to set up for their practice. Please do not book more than one practice on a field on any one day for one team. If the field seems available (either before or after), please contact to Field Coordinator to schedule the time, but double practice slots need to be approved by the Field Coordinator.

For daylight savings time, the Field Coordinator will adjust practice times to allow later practices to have enough time for a practice as the amount of daylight diminishes. The dates of the switches will be announced at the coaches meeting and via ABYS list postings.

Referee Relations and Zero Tolerance

[Applies to coaches of 3rd grade to 12th grade – Town and Travel]

Acton Boxborough Youth Soccer had adopted the Zero Tolerance Policy endorsed by Boston Area Youth Soccer (BAYS). Adherence to this policy is expected of all Coaches, Players, Parents and Spectators.

The majority of our referees are 14 – 19 year old boys and girls from our very own community. It is advised that you do not address them and ask that you consider this question: Would I be okay if some adult that I did not know spoke to MY child this way?

Zero Tolerance Policy

All individuals responsible for a team and all spectators shall support the referee. Failure to do so will undermine the referee's authority and has the potential of creating a hostile environment for the players, the referee, and all the other participants and spectators.

Consequently, BAYS and ABYS has adopted and modified the following rules:

1. No one, except the players, is to speak to the referee during or after the game. Exceptions: Coaches may ask questions before the game, call for substitutions and point out emergencies during the game, or respond to the referee if addressed.
2. Absolutely no disputing calls, during or after the game, no remarks to the referee to watch certain players or attend to rough play. NO YELLING at the referee, EVER, and no criticism, sarcasm, harassment, intimidation, or feedback of any kind during or after the game.
3. Violators may be ejected and are subject to disciplinary action by the ABYS and/or BAYS Sportsmanship Review Committees.
4. If coaches or spectators have questions regarding particular calls, rules, or a referee, or wish to give feedback regarding a referee, please go to the [Referee Feedback Form](#).

BAYS Zero Tolerance Guidelines for Game reports

ZT policy level	Severity	Conduct Involved
Level 0	No issues	Everyone well behaved and positive.
Level 1	Minor	Some Comments. Did not disrupt enjoyment of game by players or distract the referee(s).
Level 2	Major	Significant Comments. Did disrupt game. Cautions issued or should have been issued.
Level 3	Severe	Major distractions for the referee(s). Ejections for ZT occurred or should have. May or may have not considered terminating the game.

LAW 12: Fouls and Misconduct/Goalkeeper Timewasting/Multiple Ejections

Effective with the Spring 2020 Season, BAYS Law 12 now states: **“Coaches or other persons responsible for a team may be cautioned (and optionally shown a yellow card) or dismissed (optional red card) by the referee. Such dismissed person must leave the bench area, and is not allowed to take part in the remainder of the game.”**

Safety

[Applies to all coaches]

Concussions

ABYS requires all volunteers to complete CDC Concussion training. Training is valid for 3 years after completion. The CDC provides a [clipboard information sheet](#) – it is recommended that all coaches carry it. The CDC also has an app which provides information about signs & symptoms of concussions. The app can be downloaded from the [Apple App Store](#) or [Google Play](#).



SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

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

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to hit or fall
- Can't recall events after hit or fall

› SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETE

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Just not "feeling right" or is "feeling down"

ACTION PLAN

As a coach, if you think an athlete may have a concussion, you should:

1. **Remove the athlete** from play.
2. **Keep an athlete with a possible concussion out of play on the same day of the injury and until cleared by a health care provider.** Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Only a health care provider should assess an athlete for a possible concussion.
3. **Record and share information about the injury**, such as how it happened and the athlete's symptoms, to help a health care provider assess the athlete.
4. **Inform the athlete's parent(s) or guardian(s)** about the possible concussion and refer them to CDC's website for concussion information.
5. **Ask for written instructions from the athlete's health care provider** about the steps you should take to help the athlete safely return to play. Before returning to play an athlete should:
 - › Be back to doing their regular school activities.
 - › Not have any symptoms from the injury when doing normal activities.
 - › Have the green-light from their health care provider to begin the return to play process.

For more information and to order additional materials **free-of-charge**, visit: www.cdc.gov/HEADSUP.

The information provided in this document or through linkages to other sites is not a substitute for medical or professional care. Questions about diagnosis and treatment for concussion should be directed to a physician or other health care provider.

IT'S BETTER TO MISS ONE GAME THAN THE WHOLE SEASON.

Jewelry policy

All jewelry must be removed prior to the start of a game. All players will be checked for jewelry, watches, and barrettes. In the event that a medical alert bracelet must be worn, the coach may use athletic tape to secure the bracelet securely against the player's wrist. Bandages over starter earrings are not an acceptable alternative to removing the earrings, as the earrings may still be accidentally ripped out by another player. We apologize for the inconvenience, but please know that this policy is in place to protect the safety of all players on the field.

Casts

Per BAYS Law 4, Players with plaster casts or hard splints, even if padded, **cannot play** -- even with the permission of a parent, or medical approval. Players with orthopedic braces that have exposed, or uncapped metal parts are also not allowed to play.

Inclement Weather/Lightning

Regardless of the weather, a practice or a game should not commence or continue on a field if:

- The field has standing water on it;
- The field is saturated with water;
- By playing on the field, the players are or would be damaging the field beyond normal wear and tear (i.e. tearing up the turf, creating muddy areas, etc.).
- Once a game begins, the referee or umpire is responsible for the decision to suspend a game due to the above or other conditions.
- Lightning – minimum of 30 minutes with no re-occurrence before re-entering field

ABYS Player Safety Policy

The ABYS Player Safety Policy includes the following clarifications to the ABYS By-laws:

- The ABYS Board of Directors shall appoint a member of the ABYS membership to be the ABYS Club Risk Manager. The ABYS Club Risk Manager is responsible for receiving reports from ABYS coaches, volunteers, parents and staff on suspected incidents of child abuse, as defined and in accordance with the “Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017”.
- There shall be no retaliation to a parent, player, or coach for reporting an incident of child abuse, in accordance with the “Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017”.
- Coaches shall not, except in emergency situations, be alone (i.e., outside of observable and interruptible distance from another adult) with a player who is not their own child for all practices, games, and ABYS sanctioned activities. Emergency situations include medical emergencies, weather-related emergencies or natural disasters.
- In conformance with BAYS heading policy, heading the ball is prohibited in all travel and recreational divisions below and including grade 6.
- Slide tackling shall be prohibited in all recreational divisions below and including grade 6. Slide tackling may be permitted but is strongly discouraged in travel divisions at grades 3 and above, or as defined by the Boston Area Youth Soccer (BAYS).

Travel Coaches

[Applies to Travel Coaches]

BAYS provides a comprehensive resource of Coach responsibilities. It should be read, and contains more detail on the topics below

Overall Season Management:

Playing Rules

Coaches should review the [Current Rulebook](#) which includes Laws of the Game and BAYS Match Rules.

Playing the Schedule

All games are to be played as scheduled per [BAYS Match Rule 8](#)

Rescheduling Games

Get the games in. Being short a few players is NO REASON to cancel. There is a summary chart [here](#) listing how many players a particular grade group requires to start/continue a game. EVERY effort should be made to play the games as scheduled.

Field closures due to weather/field conditions: If you are the HOME coach and a match on your HOME field is closed due to field/weather conditions, please notify the AWAY coach via email AND text/call as soon as possible to avoid them traveling unnecessarily. **Notification timing is listed in MR8: [Click HERE](#) for details.**

Midseason Swaps

BAYS Division Directors consider teams that are overmatched or underchallenged for midseason swaps. If you find that after the first three weeks or so your team could benefit from a swap to a different section, contact your assigned Division Director or your own Travel Director/Registrar. Not all team swaps can be made.

Click [here](#) for more information about team swaps.

Standings

Click [here](#) for more details about how team records are reflected in section standings.

Before Every Game:

Contact Your Opponents to exchange your direct contact information and confirm game specifics!

Reach out to your opposing coach by at least the Wednesday prior to your weekend game regardless of whether you are the home or away team and confirm the game date, time, location, and jersey colors. If there is a color conflict, the home team must change jerseys or wear pinnies.

There is a substantial **Late Cancel Fine** in effect for failure to cancel/notify within a specified timeframe.

See [MR16](#) and [Late Cancel Fine Policy](#)

At EVERY Game:

Rosters and Credentials

- **Coaches must have two signed, official, approved paper rosters at every game;**
- **A valid, Current Mass Youth Coach Credential lanyard is required to be WORN by ALL coaches on the team sideline and be visible to the referee.**
 - Referees have been instructed to not allow any coach on the team's sideline unless they are wearing their valid credential.
 - No more than **THREE** team officials are allowed on the sideline during the game.

Equipment

Make sure you understand the [rules regarding equipment](#). No Casts (even if padded) and jewelry adornments (including earrings of any kind even if taped) are allowed.

BAYS Zero Tolerance Policy

The [Zero Tolerance](#) policy is critical. **Coaches and spectators are required to follow the policy.** Coaches are

responsible for the zero tolerance violations by their team's spectators. Please remind all of your team parents of the zero tolerance rule, which prohibits addressing refs during and after the games.

Lopsided Game Management

BAYS would like to see goal differentials of no more than 5 goals. **Beyond that, it is considered poor sportsmanship and lack of respect for your opponent. It is the coaches' responsibility to manage the scoring and take the necessary steps to keep within the suggested goal differential.**

- Managing these situations is completely within the control of coaches. **The trick is to start early.**
- Review the attached presentation that describes useful strategies to manage lopsided game situations <https://bays.org/content/lopsided-game-management>.
- Recognize the potential for a lopsided game early (e.g. if 2-0 after <10 minutes) and manage it immediately. Do not wait until it's 5-0.
- Please note: BAYS automatically sends the team coaches an email with copies to the Division Director and your Club President whenever there is a lopsided game score recorded in BAYS. You will be asked to provide some details on the proactive steps you took to manage the situation. BAYS will determine if whether any further action should be taken.
- BAYS has a declining point value for a win in a game with an excessive goal differential to discourage teams from running up the score. See <https://bays.org/content/standings-explained>

Sportsmanship

At all times, you should set a positive example for your players and parents. Encourage and insist on good sportsmanship from your players toward referees, opponents, and teammates.

Please be proactive in stopping:

- Dissent and disrespect directed at refs or opponents, Taunting, Racially-charged, degrading, sexist, biased, or hurtful language/action of any kind, Poor sportsmanship shown towards opponents, Violent or reckless play of any kind, and Any violation of the rules, laws, and spirit of the game.

After the Game:

Reporting Scores

Scores are to be reported to your Section Captain within 48 hours of the game being played. **Both home and away teams should report.**

Game Feedback Reports

Feedback can be a Compliment or a Concern. When issues happen in a game, instead of reporting them via email, Coaches should be directed to file sportsmanship, referee, or both sportsmanship and referee game feedback reports online at the BAYS website. To file a report (only one coach per team should report): Login and go to MY BAYS—>COACH/MANAGER—>GAME FEEDBACK.

Sample Welcome Emails

Welcome to the ABYS Fall 20XX soccer season! Coach X and I will be your coaches for the AB Colonials team.

Our practices will be held on Monday nights from 6:00 - 7:20pm at the Lower Fields turf (66 Hayward Road, Acton), starting this coming Monday. Please arrive at 5:50 pm so that we can organize and get started on time. The players should wear shin guards and bring a ball and water to each practice and game. We will have games each Saturday during the season at 1:15pm also at the Lower field. The first game will be on September X and the final one on November X.

Since we are playing on the turf, we generally will have practices and games even if there is rain, unless there is lightning, or it is raining very hard. I will send out an email a couple hours before the start time to let you know if I am cancelling practice.

The players can wear any comfortable athletic clothes for practices, and the ABYS uniform kit should be worn for the games. If you do not already have the uniform, you can purchase them at Soccer Stuff in Acton. See the abys.org web page for details.

Let me know if you have any other email addresses you would like me to add to the team email list, or if you have any other questions about the season.

Below is the roster for our team:

Player 1, etc.

Hi Team,

On behalf of myself and Coach X, I'm excited to announce the start of Spring 2018 Soccer season. Some of you are returning to the team from the fall - Welcome back! Some of you have not been on my team before - Welcome! A little about me: My daughter is on the team. I have coached both teams for the past several years. I have only one goal for the season - to ensure that each of the girls HAS FUN! We will learn some soccer along the way.

Here is our team roster:

Player 1, etc.

We will have a weeknight practice and games on Saturday this year. Practices and games will all take place at NARA Park in Acton (25 Ledgerock Way). Games will be Saturdays at 10:30 and our practices will be Wednesdays at 6:15 PM and run for 60-75 minutes. The season will run from Wednesday April 4th to Saturday June 9th.

T-shirts for games will be provided (I don't know our team color yet) and distributed by me at our first game. The girls must wear shin guards and should wear cleats and bring a size 3 soccer ball and plenty of water to practices and games.

Expectations: I expect that you, the parents, will be supportive of your girls and abide by the parental conduct guidelines from ABYS. I ask that you let me know in advance if your daughter will miss practice or a game. I make game lineups in advance to ensure equal playing time and it is helpful to know who will be there. You are more than welcome to stay and watch practice. You are also welcome to drop your daughter off as long as you let me know and that you ensure you are there on time for pickup. At the end of practice, please walk down to the field to get your daughter so I can be sure that each girl is leaving with a parent. It also would be great if someone could volunteer to coordinate a post-game snack schedule for the team.

Looking forward to seeing you all soon