



READY, SET, REF!

Workbook

Companion to the Ready, Set, Ref! Video/DVD

Developed by the American Youth Soccer Organization



American Youth Soccer Organization
12501 South Isis Avenue
Hawthorne, California 90250

Telephone: (800) USA-AYSO
Fax: (310) 643-5310
Email (Programs Department): education@ayso.org
Website: www.ayso.org

All rights reserved. © 2009 American Youth Soccer Organization

Reproduction in whole or in part is encouraged provided no changes are made to content and the "AYSO READY, SET, REF! Workbook 2009-2010 Manual" is referenced.

Revised October 2009.

Reorder Number RERSR-1



everyone plays[®]



Contents

| | |
|-----------------|----------|
| WELCOME! | 5 |
|-----------------|----------|

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| AYSO VISION & MISSION | 6 |
|----------------------------------|----------|

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------|
| THE NATIONAL REFEREE PROGRAM | 7 |
|-------------------------------------|----------|

| | |
|---|----------|
| CHAPTER 1: LEARNING ABOUT THE FIELD AND THE BALL | 8 |
|---|----------|

| | |
|------------------------|-----------|
| QUIZ: CHAPTER 1 | 11 |
|------------------------|-----------|

| | |
|---|-----------|
| CHAPTER 2: PLAYERS AND THEIR EQUIPMENT | 13 |
|---|-----------|

| | |
|------------------------|-----------|
| QUIZ: CHAPTER 2 | 18 |
|------------------------|-----------|

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| CHAPTER 3: THE OFFICIALS | 20 |
|---------------------------------|-----------|

| | |
|------------------------|-----------|
| QUIZ: CHAPTER 3 | 22 |
|------------------------|-----------|

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| CHAPTER 4: PLAYING THE GAME | 23 |
|------------------------------------|-----------|

| | |
|------------------------|-----------|
| QUIZ: CHAPTER 4 | 31 |
|------------------------|-----------|

| | |
|--|-----------|
| CHAPTER 5: FOULS AND OTHER MISCHIEF | 35 |
|--|-----------|

| | |
|--|----------|
| READY, SET, REF! Workbook – 2009-2010 Edition | 3 |
|--|----------|



| | |
|------------------------|-----------|
| QUIZ: CHAPTER 5 | 41 |
|------------------------|-----------|

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| CHAPTER 6: OFFSIDE | 43 |
|---------------------------|-----------|

| | |
|------------------------|-----------|
| QUIZ: CHAPTER 6 | 46 |
|------------------------|-----------|

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| CHAPTER 7: BEFORE YOU REFEREE! | 48 |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|

| | |
|------------------------|-----------|
| QUIZ: CHAPTER 7 | 51 |
|------------------------|-----------|

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS | 53 |
|---------------------------------|-----------|

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Quiz: Chapter 1 | 53 |
|-----------------|----|

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Quiz: Chapter 2 | 54 |
|-----------------|----|

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Quiz: Chapter 3 | 54 |
|-----------------|----|

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Quiz: Chapter 4 | 55 |
|-----------------|----|

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Quiz: Chapter 5 | 57 |
|-----------------|----|

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Quiz: Chapter 6 | 58 |
|-----------------|----|

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Quiz: Chapter 7 | 59 |
|-----------------|----|

| | |
|--------------|-----------|
| NOTES | 60 |
|--------------|-----------|



Welcome!

To the Volunteer

Thank you for volunteering to serve as a referee in the American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO). You are an important member of the AYSO Team. With your help, we can provide the highest-quality youth sports program available. By using this workbook in conjunction with your classroom training and our Ready, Set, Ref! video, you will be well on your way to a successful, rewarding experience. Good luck and happy refereeing!

The American Youth Soccer Organization

AYSO is a nonprofit organization that stresses youth development. In AYSO, the kids come first—before the volunteers, the parents or the game. We use soccer as a tool to enable the players to become better persons and to learn the value of a winning attitude and outlook on life.



AYSO Vision & Mission

The American Youth Soccer Organization, AYSO, was established in 1964 with nine teams and the dream to bring soccer to American children. Today, AYSO has more than 60,000 teams and 600,000 players in nearly 1,000 Regions. Thanks to the efforts of over 250,000 volunteers and the vision of the founding members, AYSO continues to be a leader in providing quality youth soccer programs.

AYSO Vision

To provide world class youth soccer programs that enrich children's lives.

AYSO Mission

To develop and deliver youth soccer programs in a fun, family environment based on the AYSO philosophies:

- **Everyone Plays:** Our goal is for kids to play soccer—so we mandate that every player on every team must play at least half of every game.
- **Balanced Teams:** Each year we form new teams as evenly balanced as possible—because it is fair and more fun when teams of equal ability play.
- **Open Registration:** Our program is open to all children between 4 and 19 years of age who want to register and play soccer. Interest and enthusiasm are the only criteria for playing.
- **Positive Coaching:** Encouragement of player effort provides for greater enjoyment by the players and ultimately leads to better-skilled and better-motivated players.
- **Good Sportsmanship:** We strive to create a safe, fair, fun and 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.
- **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.



The National Referee Program

The AYSO National Referee Program (NRP) is a comprehensive training program for volunteers. It is developmentally based. It trains volunteers based on their increasing experience and the abilities acquired through accumulated games and continuing education. Referees are trained for each level of play they will face as they advance through the program.

The initial referee training, which is provided at the regional level, prepares the new referee to officiate the younger players who are playing in the short-sided matches recommended by the AYSO Coaching Program. Experience in U-6 and U-8 is helpful before attempting U-10 and U-12 matches. As you gain additional experience, you will likewise need additional training to gain the necessary knowledge and confidence to do higher-level games. Contact your regional referee administrator for information on further training offered by your region, area and section referee staffs.

How to Use This Field Workbook

This workbook contains useful information that supports what you learn in the AYSO entry-level referee courses, and many things covered both in the courses and in this workbook are illustrated in the Ready, Set, Ref! video. A quick reference is at the front of the book. It helps you locate main topics quickly.

The workbook portion allows you to reinforce your knowledge of important ideas and to self-correct any bad information you may have gotten. The answers to all the quizzes are in the back of the book, and some extra hints and explanations can be found there, too.

All information is cross-indexed to FIFA's Laws of the Game, the international rule book for soccer. The current AYSO edition of Laws of the Game and the current AYSO National Rules and Regulations are the official texts for AYSO referees.

This workbook allows you to learn at your own pace and to repeat any section as often as you wish. Everything here is meant to give you what you must know to be a good beginning referee—there are no tricks, no double meanings, no deceptions to fool you. Make this Ready, Set, Ref! Workbook a part of your referee's kit.

Chapter 1: Learning About the Field and the Ball

Purpose of the Field

The main function of the field is to confine play to a reasonably sized and safe area. It is defined by lines and areas that help promote fairness in the game, and its size is related to the reasonable amount of space that supports fun.

Safety

The boundaries of the field should enclose a safe playing environment. Inspect the field to be certain that no dangers exist. Here are some things to look for.

- broken bottles
- golf balls, golf tees, baseballs, etc.
- sticks, metal, rocks, stones, other debris
- obstructions like pipes, sprinklers, concrete, etc.
- holes, trenches or gopher mounds
- broken or damaged corner flags, goals or nets—be sure goals are securely anchored.

Be certain to remedy all dangerous situations before play begins, even if the match is delayed a few minutes. A short delay is preferable to a needless injury.

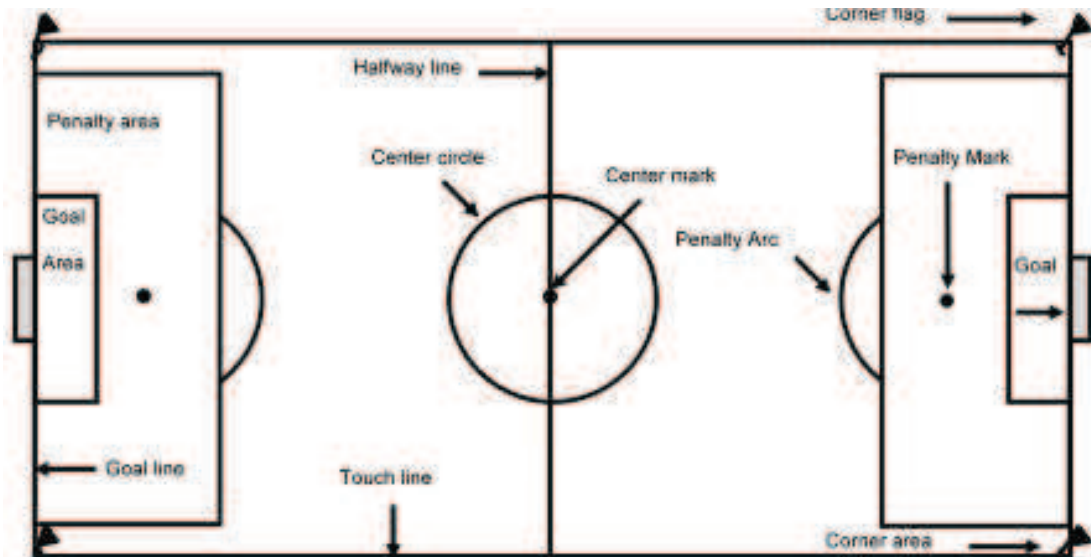
Size and Shape

The fields in AYSO come in all sizes but only one shape: rectangular. This is in accordance with FIFA's Laws of the Game, the international rule book for soccer. The FIFA Laws allow for different-sized fields in youth soccer games, but fields must always be longer than they are wide.

Field Areas and Markings

For new referees, the names of the parts of the field are very important, but knowing the exact measurements is something that you can work on later. Locate the following field features by using the diagram:

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| • goal | • penalty area |
| • center circle | • corner flag |
| • goal line | • penalty arc |
| • center mark | • touchline |
| • goal area | • halfway line flags |
| • corner area | |



IMPORTANT: The lines are part of the areas they describe. For example, the line that marks the boundary of the penalty area is considered part of the penalty area. So if the ball is on or above any part of that line, it is still in the penalty area. Likewise, the goal lines and touchlines are considered part of the field of play and not out of play.

To find out more about parts of the field and to learn the correct measurements, read “LAW 1—The Field of Play” in the AYSO edition of FIFA’s Laws of the Game.

You will encounter fields that are poorly or incorrectly marked. The general rule of thumb is if you cannot have it corrected but it’s safe, go ahead and play. Don’t use missing or incorrect lines as an excuse to cancel a game. Report the condition of the markings to the regional commissioner or director of fields.

Equipment

A field should have two goals and four corner flags to be minimally equipped. The goals need to be the same size and, if possible, should have nets. The nets must be secured tightly to the uprights and crossbar and be firmly staked into the ground. Be certain that portable or movable goals are securely anchored in the ground. If the goal itself is cracked or wobbly, or has splinters, nails, screws or burrs sticking out, don’t use it (unless you can fix it). It’s dangerous!

The corner flags should be located at the outside edges of each corner. They need to be at least 5 feet high and pose no great danger to the players. For example, metal pipes set in concrete must not be allowed.

Flags or cones may be placed at the halfway line as optional equipment, but they must be at least one yard off the field of play. Do not allow them to be placed on the touchline.



Picking the Ball

The ball must be spherical and of the proper size and weight. Look for a ball that says “FIFA Approved” on it, and you usually can be sure that the ball is the proper weight and materials for a given size. As referee, you decide which ball to use for each match, not the coaches.

To find out more about ball size and weight, read “LAW 2–The Ball” in the AYSO edition of FIFA’s Laws of the Game.

Correct Size

U-6 and U-8 players normally play with a size-3 ball. U-10 and U-12 players play with a size-4 ball, and older players use a size 5. This information is on the back of the official AYSO lineup card.

Safe Condition

A safe ball is smooth, with no panels flapping loose or panel edges broken off. The inflation hole is not sticking up, and the ball is not overinflated. Finally, the panels are not scratched or worn thin with biting edges, and they have not become brittle or stiff with age and exposure.

Proper Inflation

Regardless of size, a properly inflated ball is firm yet resilient. A good test is to hold the ball and press on one panel with both thumbs. The panel should deflect about 1/4 inch. If it doesn’t, the ball is too hard. If it compresses much more, the ball needs some air. Either condition is dangerous.



Quiz: Chapter 1

TRUE OR FALSE

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. The lines on the field are mainly to promote fairness in the game. | T | F |
| 2. Soccer may not be played without a properly marked field. | T | F |
| 3. Corner flags should be one yard off the field. | T | F |
| 4. The proper size ball for all youth games is size 5. | T | F |
| 5. A regulation soccer ball will say "FIFA Approved." | T | F |
| 6. A ball with loose panels is okay if it's soft. | T | F |
| 7. The penalty arc is a part of the penalty area. | T | F |

MULTIPLE CHOICE

8. The area directly in front of the goal is called the
- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| a. goalkeeper area | c. goal area |
| b. goal box | d. offside box |
9. The line that divides the field in half is the
- | | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| a. midfield line | c. fifty-yard line |
| b. halfway line | d. center line |
10. The penalty box is
- a. the larger rectangle in front of the goal
 - b. the smaller rectangle in front of the goal
 - c. a punishment area off the field
 - d. located at a hockey rink, never on a soccer field
11. The lines marking the long sides of the field are called
- | | |
|---------------|----------------------|
| a. Touchlines | c. throw lines |
| b. Sidelines | d. out-of-play lines |
12. To have a safe playing environment, you must
- a. have proper lines
 - b. have properly installed nets
 - c. inform the players of dangers and start on time
 - d. inspect the field and remedy all dangers, even if it means a short delay



13. In AYSO, the ball used is

- a. size 5 in upper-age groups
- b. size 3 in U-6 and U-8
- c. size 4 in U-10 and U-12
- d. all of the above
- e. none of the above

14. If you find a field that has improper or missing markings,

- a. delay the game until all markings are correct
- b. play the game if the field is safe, then report the conditions to the regional commissioner
- c. cancel the game and report the conditions to the regional commissioner
- d. delay the game until a better field becomes available

15. As a ball begins to show the effects of aging, it

- a. becomes lighter and easier to control
- b. gets softer and develops more "feel"
- c. can become brittle and stiff with exposure
- d. develops a "broken-in" feeling that all players enjoy

16. A proper soccer ball

- a. is firm yet resilient
- b. has no loose or missing panels
- c. has an inflation hole that does not protrude
- d. all of the above

FILL IN THE BLANKS

17. Corner flags must be a minimum of _____ feet high.

18. If a coach and a referee disagree about which ball to use in a match, the _____ will decide which ball will be used.

19. To determine the inflation of a ball, hold the ball and press both thumbs into the same panel. A properly inflated ball will deflect _____ inch(es).

20. If nets are used, they must be firmly attached to the goals and securely _____ to the ground.

LISTING Name six items to look for during field inspection.

- 21. _____
- 22. _____
- 23. _____
- 24. _____
- 25. _____
- 26. _____

Chapter 2: Players and Their Equipment

Players and Substitutes

In soccer, a team usually consists of 14–18 members, 11 of whom are on the field at a time. These 11 are called “players,” while the others are considered “substitutes.” One of the 11 players must be designated as the goalkeeper, and this player must be easily distinguished from the other players and the referee by wearing a jersey of a different color. When a substitute replaces a player, that substitute becomes a player as soon as the substitution procedure has been completed.

Substitution Procedure

Because of the AYSO requirement that everyone plays at least one half of the game, substitutions will occur once during the first half and once during the second half, thus dividing each game into four quarters. The referee manages this by stopping play midway into each half and calling for substitutes.

To avoid interrupting play at inappropriate times, substitutions should occur at a normal stoppage such as a throw-in, goal kick, corner kick, etc. These stoppages seldom occur at exactly the midpoint of the half, so the referee should begin looking for a suitable stoppage during the period from one minute before to one minute after the midpoint of the half. If no such stoppage occurs during this two-minute period, the referee may stop play for substitutions and then restart with a dropped ball at the location of the ball when play was stopped. In this case, try to stop play when the ball is near midfield.

These substitution stoppages are intended only to be a time for the quick substitution of a few players and are not intended as minihalf-time periods. The only players entitled to leave the field are those being substituted for, and the only individuals entitled to enter the field are the new players. This entire process should take only about a minute. Some latitude should be afforded the very young players and their coaches as they attempt this process.

The substitutes are supposed to enter the field at the halfway line when the referee or assistant referee has acknowledged they may do so. Upon entering the field, the substitute now becomes a player and the exiting player becomes a substitute. During these substitution breaks and at half-time, be sure to have the substitutes report to you. Substitutes are not to come on the field without your permission. Younger players often don’t know this, so be flexible in working with them.

AYSO Modifications

AYSO allows modifications for both the number of players and the substitution procedure. The number of players in U-6, U-8, U-10 and U-12 should be reduced to allow short-sided or small-sided games. Teams should play with three per side in U-6, five per side in U-8, seven per side in U-10 and nine per side in U-12 with a correspondingly lower number of substitutes.

Injuries

Whenever a young player appears to be injured—whether you think it's serious or not—stop play to check it out. If the injury warrants, ask that the player be taken off the field. Credit the playing time for that 'quarter' to the injured player only. The coach now has two choices available. The injured player may be substituted, in which case the injured player may not return during that 'quarter,' or the injured player may leave the field to recover and the team will play short until the injured player has recovered well enough to return to play with the referee's permission.

Lineup Cards

Coaches should supply you with completed lineup cards before each game. These cards will indicate who the goalkeepers are, the names of the captains and the names of the substitutes. Each player's jersey number is also listed on the card, along with other information. (See the sample below.)

| No. | PRINT PLAYER'S NAME | Goals Scored | | 'Qtrs' Not Played | | | |
|-----|------------------------------|--------------|--|-------------------|---|---|---|
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 1 | Penny Stuart - GK | | | | X | | |
| 2 | Jennifer Blake | | | | | X | |
| 3 | Alicia Stevens | | | X | | | X |
| 4 | Amanda Blake | | | | X | | |
| 5 | Nicole Richardson - Captain | | | | | X | |
| 6 | Angela Perez | | | X | | | |
| 7 | Fontan Dimas – Asst. Captain | | | | X | | X |
| 8 | Nikki Klopas | | | | | X | |
| 9 | Antonette Leflor - ABS/FLU | | | - | - | - | - |
| 10 | Dorette Concini | | | X | | | |
| 11 | Lori Fisher | | | | | X | |
| 12 | Andi Stone | | | | X | | X |
| 13 | Jan Bock - ABS/VACATION | | | - | - | - | - |
| 14 | Laura Smith – Asst. Captain | | | X | | | |
| 15 | Tamara Wong | | | | X | | X |

Prior to each quarter, mark those players who are not playing; that way you have only a few Xs to make. If any player already has two Xs, before the next quarter starts, bring this to the attention of the coach. It is the coach's decision to play or not play the player; simply make note in your game report if the player does not play at least two 'quarters' and the reason the coach gives. It is the responsibility of the region to review the game reports and to determine appropriate action when necessary.

Goalkeepers

In younger divisions, any player on the field may change places with the goalkeeper, provided the referee is informed before the change is made and the change takes place during a stoppage in play. When a substitute comes on the field, that player may also change places with the goalkeeper, but the referee must be informed first.

Younger players may need a little time to exchange the goalkeeper shirt. Do not restart play while the new keeper is putting the shirt on.

Possible Infringements

1. If a player changes places with the goalkeeper without notifying you, you are supposed to caution both players next time the ball goes out of play. For younger players, a reminder and a warning are sufficient. The restart is not affected.
2. If a substitute comes on the field illegally, stop play. You are supposed to caution the substitute, require him or her to leave the field and restart play with an indirect free kick at the place where the ball was when play was stopped (see "Indirect Free Kick" later in this workbook). For younger players, especially if they seem confused, an explanation of the offense and a warning are sufficient.
3. In the case of too many players on the field, you are supposed to caution the player(s) concerned and, if play was stopped to administer the caution, restart by awarding an indirect free kick at the place where the ball was when play was stopped. For younger players, an explanation and a warning are usually sufficient. At this level of play, confusion on the part of the coach is the normal cause for these infringements. Do not caution a coach in these cases.

Mandatory Equipment

Players must wear a jersey or shirt, shorts, stockings, shin guards and footwear. All the players on a team should have jerseys or shirts of the same color, except for the goalkeeper, who shall wear colors that distinguish him or her from the other players and from the referee.

Stockings refer specifically to long soccer socks, which can be pulled completely over the shin guards. Footwear refers to shoes or boots specifically designed for athletic activity. Studs or cleats are allowed but should be inspected to ensure there are no sharp edges; flat-soled athletic shoes are fine.

Safety

Player safety is a primary issue where equipment is concerned. Players may not wear anything that, in the opinion of the referee, is dangerous to themselves or to another player.

Allowed Equipment

Players generally are allowed to wear glasses as long as they stay in place. Glasses that continually fall off during play need to be restrained with a retainer.

Goalkeeper gloves are permitted.

Sweatpants and shirts are often allowed in colder climates during frigid weather, but the players' jerseys must be on the outside and visible at all times. Players who exploit the protection offered by these additional layers of clothing must be prevented from playing violently or dangerously out of a sense of false security. Additionally, players must be prohibited from employing skills and tactics that take advantage of this extra barrier. Players who abuse this cold-weather protection shall be required to play without it or leave the field of play as circumstances warrant. Generally, younger players are permitted to protect themselves from the cold with greater flexibility than older players, although in no case should players be allowed to wear hats with hard bills or crowns.

Medical Alert Bracelets

Children may participate in games and practices while wearing medical alert bracelets. The bracelet must be covered with a cloth wristband or something equivalent that does not involve taping the bracelet directly to the child's skin, as this can be very painful to the child when it is removed.

Knee Braces

In AYSO, knee braces are allowed. The referee's duty is to be certain that the brace does not pose a danger to other players. Sharp edges, protruding bolts or screws and other dangerous conditions must be covered and padded. If a player attempts to use a brace in a dangerous manner, the player should be cautioned and shown a yellow card.

Do not allow a player to remove the brace in order to play and thus avoid the requirement to wrap or pad the brace as instructed by the referee.

Unsafe Equipment

Any type of cast and splint is not permitted, even if they are small, soft and well padded.

Hats or caps with brims are not allowed. Soft hats or caps without brims are permitted in inclement weather provided they are approved by the referee in advance.

Any dangerous items such as jewelry, watches, earrings, friendship bracelets, etc., must be removed before a player may participate. Any player who refuses to do so shall not be allowed to play.



Possible Infringements

Any player on the field who infringes these requirements shall be asked to leave the field to correct any equipment faults. This player may not return to the field without the referee's permission and must satisfy the referee that all equipment is in order. The player shall re-enter the game only at a stoppage in play.

Likewise, a substitute who infringes these rules shall not be allowed to participate until all deficiencies have been remedied.

See "LAW 3–The Number of Players" and "LAW 4–The Players' Equipment" in the AYSO edition of FIFA's Laws of the Game for more information.

Quiz: Chapter 2

TRUE OR FALSE

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. In AYSO, substitution may take place only at specified times. | T | F |
| 2. In AYSO, playing with fewer than 11 players is not allowed. | T | F |
| 3. In 11-a-side soccer, one player must be designated as goalkeeper. | T | F |
| 4. A substitute may replace an injured player or the team can play short. | T | F |
| 5. In younger divisions, coaches have 30 seconds to make substitutions. | T | F |
| 6. An injured player must play out the 'quarter' before substituting. | T | F |
| 7. Players on the field may not ever change places with the goalkeeper. | T | F |
| 8. Short socks are okay if the front of the shinguards is soft. | T | F |
| 9. Soccer shoes with cleats or studs without sharp edges are permitted. | T | F |

FILL IN THE BLANKS

10. Coaches should provide you with completed _____ before the game.
11. _____ is the primary issue where player equipment is concerned.
12. In AYSO, knee braces are _____.
13. On a 15-member roster, four of the members are classified as _____.
14. In substitution by 'quarters,' substitution takes place when _____.
15. Young substitutes (U-10) who mistakenly come on the field should be _____.
16. Older substitutes (U-16) who sneak onto the field should be _____.

MULTIPLE CHOICE

17. If a player is wearing a friendship bracelet and won't take it off, you should
- a. compliment her on her loyalty to her friend
 - b. pull out your knife and cut it off
 - c. tell her to be careful
 - d. not allow her to play until the situation is resolved



18. When a U-8 player changes with the goalkeeper at the coach's instruction but
- doesn't inform you, you should
 - immediately caution the player
 - caution the player when the ball is next out of play
 - remind the player to tell you and give a warning
 - caution the coach
19. If a coach of a U-8 team forgets to count and puts too many players on the field, you should
- caution the players for not counting too
 - send off the last player onto the field
 - award a penalty kick to the other team
 - tell the coach of the problem and have him remove one of the players (preferably after an explanation to the player of what's happening)
 - caution the coach and send off one of the players
 - award a goal to the other team
20. A player is wearing a knee brace. As the referee, your responsibility is to
- Not allow the player to play.
 - Have the player remove the knee brace.
 - Inspect the brace to insure sharp edges, protruding bolts or screws and other dangerous conditions are covered and padded.
21. A coach supplies you with a completed lineup card that has several changes on it. Some names are crossed out and marked absent. Some jersey numbers have been changed. He explains that three players ruined their shirts and they are using the absent players' uniforms. This is U-8. You
- smile and start the game
 - hold up the game for a new, cleanly filled-in lineup card
 - cancel the game and award the win to the other team
 - warn the coach that this type of behavior is unacceptable and threaten to report him
22. A player is allowed to wear
- | | |
|------------|-------------------|
| a. jewelry | c. glasses |
| b. a watch | d. a baseball cap |

Chapter 3: The Officials

The Referee

Historically, the referee is the sole authority for the game. The traditions of soccer have embraced the idea that a single, neutral person is better able to manage the match, make quick decisions and keep the game flowing than would be a committee of officials. In this traditional view, coaches have less influence during the match than in other common American sports. In AYSO, referees are trained to work cooperatively with the coaches whenever possible to have the greatest positive impact on players.

The Spirit of the Game

The referee has an obligation to revere the Spirit of the Game. In simple terms, this means you will be concerned that the game be conducted in a safe, fair and fun manner. The players, substitutes and coaches must display good sportsmanship and show positive respect for the rules and for your authority (this is what's called "sporting behavior"). The FIFA Laws of the Game is written to help you enforce the safe, fair and fun principles, but the Laws are not greater than the game's spirit. To ensure fair play is achieved within the Laws, referees should apply the spirit of the Laws and recognize the letter of the Law is not always appropriate.

Laws of the Game

The rules of soccer are contained in FIFA's Laws of the Game. Each year, AYSO publishes its own edition of the Laws, which contains notes about the various rule modifications that AYSO practices in accordance with FIFA guidelines.

The Referee's Duties

The referee is charged with many responsibilities. There are five duties you need to know now. The referee shall:

- enforce the Laws (rules)
- keep score and time
- control substitutions
- stop play for injury
- suspend or terminate the match for cause.

To enforce the rules, you first have to read and study them. Proper enforcement also requires consistent application—that is, equal justice for both sides. You need to balance the spirit against the letter of the Laws to avoid constant, irritating whistling for trivial offenses that don't affect the game.

You will learn about keeping score and time in Chapter 4, "Playing the Game."

You learned how to control substitutions and what to do in case of injury in Chapter 2, "Players and Their Equipment."

There are many reasons to suspend or terminate play. These may include: