



## AYSO Region 92 Policy on Short-Sided Games

*Approved by Board: July 18, 2022*

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this policy is to establish guidance for team formation and implementation of age appropriate short-sided games. AYSO recommends age appropriate small-sided games for younger children to allow more touches on the ball and to foster a more successful soccer learning environment.

**APPLICABILITY:** This policy applies to the 6U thru 14U divisions. The 14U division plays with a full 11v11 format, however, it is included herein for additional guidance. Field size should be adjusted accordingly to the short-sided teams. The U16 and U19 divisions are governed by Area 1D rules & regulations; 5U plays under the “Jamboree” format.

**TEAM STRUCTURE:** Short-sided teams are formed to allow three-quarters play. During the Primary (Fall) season, every player in the 6U through 14U divisions shall be entitled to play at least three-quarters of every game, unless the player is injured, ill, arrives after the start of the game, leaves before the end of the game, or is sent off by the referee. Coaches are encouraged to allow different players to start the first quarter of each game.

**GAME FORMAT:** Each game is played in four periods, with a 5-10-minute halftime interval between the second and third periods and a brief (one-minute) interval between the first and second periods and between the third and fourth periods. Except for injuries, substitution is permitted only at the break between periods. Teams are discouraged from playing more than the maximum number of players, as this tends to over crowd the field of play and reduce the benefits of short-sided games. A game may not be played with fewer than the minimum number of players.

**Table 1 – Roster Size and Match Duration**

Division	Maximum # of Players on Roster	Maximum # of Players on the Field (including Goal Keeper)	Minimum # of Players on the Field (including Goal Keeper)	Duration of the Match (minutes - divided into 4-periods)
6U	6	5 (no GK)	3	20
7U	8	6 (no GK)	4	40
8U	9	7 (no GK)	4	40
10U	10	8	6	50
12U	12	9	6	60
14U	14	11	7	70

## **Referee and Laws of the Game**

AYSO games shall be conducted in accordance with the current FIFA Laws of The Game as modified by AYSO and as otherwise noted herein. Short-sided games are intended to be an opportunity for the very youngest players to experience the fun of playing. The minimum rules are needed and should be applied with a generous amount of flexibility, but with an emphasis on safety. Refer to the Division specific coach handbook for additional rules.

Penalty kicks are not allowed in 6U through 8U games; free kicks must be indirect (cannot score a goal directly without the ball touching another player). A free kick resulting from a foul that occurred inside the penalty area must be taken from outside of the penalty area. Opponents must be no less than five yards away from the ball on a free kick. There is no offside in 6U-8U games.

There is no need for certified referees for 6U through 8U games. A coach or volunteer from each team should share the referee duties, with each team taking responsibility to officiate one half of the game. Only one referee should be on the field at a time. Referees should not “coach” their players, but they are encouraged to take advantage of teaching opportunities to help develop all players throughout the game. Youth volunteers are also encouraged to participate as referees, provided that he or she is at least 12-years old. Volunteer referees must submit a volunteer form to the Region and complete Safe Haven training before participating as a referee in 6U through 8U games.

Referees in 10U games and above, must be AYSO certified at the Regional level, or above, or as an Assistant Referee if participating in that role.

## **Ball Size and Equipment**

A size 3 ball shall be used for all 6U through 8U games; a size 4 ball shall be used for 10U and 12U games; a size 5 ball is used for 14U games. Shoes and shin guards are required equipment for all players at all practice and game activities. Each player must wear shin guards under the socks. Soccer shoes, tennis shoes, or similar type athletic shoes are recommended footwear.

## **Score and Standings**

Scores and standings are not kept in 6U through 8U divisions. No winners or losers are declared. Coaches should emphasize good sportsmanship and player development among all players.

## **Practices**

The 6U, 7U and 8U divisions may practice once per week for 60-minutes maximum. The 10U and 12U divisions may practice twice per week for 60-minutes maximum per session. The 14U division may practice twice per week for 90-minutes per session. Teams may practice only at the times and locations designated by the Regional Commissioner or designee. Teams that wish to practice at alternate locations must receive written approval from the Regional Commissioner.