



Referee FAQ's

Who are the referees?

All volunteers, they are us. Many referees start when their children are young and move up with them. Referee training is provided for all age groups and levels.

Why does AYSO need volunteer referees?

AYSO is 100 percent volunteer organization; we all do it for the kids. Each season we need as many referees as coaches if not more; refereeing is easier and less of a time commitment. AYSO is about playing Fun, Fair and Safe. Our referee training is what makes it possible. If there is no official to referee a game the kids don't get to play.

How do I become an AYSO referee?

You must first complete an AYSO volunteer application form and be approved as an AYSO volunteer by your local AYSO Region. Once you are approved as a volunteer, the training to become an AYSO referee is provided to you for free. You should contact your AYSO Region's Referee Administrator to get more information about the training schedule for referees in your Region. If you don't know who that is, contact the AYSO National Office in Torrance, Calif. at (800) 872-2976. They'll get you the contact information you need.

Is prior soccer experience required to officiate?

No, but some familiarity with soccer is certainly a plus. Coaches, parents, players and other volunteers have all proved to be excellent referees even if they have never played soccer. Youth referees are welcome!

What are the certification levels?

There are the six certification levels for AYSO referees. Here is a brief description of the requirements for each. Contact your Regional Referee Administrator (RRA) for more details:

U-8 Official

(minimum age 10)

Complete the U-8 Official Course and pass the U-8 Official Exam.

Assistant Referee

(minimum age 12)

Complete the Assistant Referee Course and pass the Assistant Referee Exam.

Regional Referee

(minimum age 12)

Complete the Basic Referee Course and pass the Regional Referee Exam.

Intermediate Referee

(minimum age 14)

Complete 25 games as referee with at least five in U-12 games, complete the Intermediate Referee Course, pass the Intermediate Referee Exam and be (observed) mentored in a U-12 game.

Advanced Referee

(minimum age 16)

Complete 50 games as referee with at least 10 in U-14 and five as an assistant referee (in U-14), complete the Advanced Referee Course, pass the Advanced Referee Exam, pass one assessment as referee and one as assistant referee in a U-14 match, pass the AYSO Physical Fitness Test and do a minimum of five service units (contact your RRA for details).

National Referee

(minimum age 18)

Complete 100 games as referee with at least 30 in U-16 and U-19 games and 25 as Assistant Referee with at least 10 in U-19, complete the National Referee Course, pass the National Referee Exam, pass two assessments as referee in U-16 or U-19 matches and one as assistant referee in a U-19 match, complete the AYSO Physical Fitness Test and do an additional five service units (contact your RRA for details).

Who is the Referee Administrator? What do they do?

The Referee Administrator is the person responsible for implementing the AYSO National Referee Program in specific parts of the country (Region, Area, Section or National). Contact the AYSO National Office for the contact information of the Referee Administrators in your part of the country.

What do I do if I have a problem at a game with a coach or a spectator?

Report to the Referee Coordinator for the appropriate age group all incidents in which a coach or a spectator behaves in a way that makes a game something other than a safe, positive, enjoyable growth experience for the children.

Is it safe for a teenage player or sibling to referee?

Teenagers who already like soccer have no trouble adapting at all - they know the game and what it takes to keep it safe, fair and fun. The training and time refereeing games can also earn them community service points as AYSO is a non-profit, volunteer, community organization.

May referees wear hats or sunglasses?

Soccer referees have not historically needed to wear hats or sunglasses and AYSO referees are discouraged from doing so. Hats, in some cases, may be desired for sun-protection health reasons. Use of hats on cloudy days should be avoided. Hats should not be worn for night games.

Hats, if worn, should be solid black or predominately black with white trim, or solid white or predominately white with black trim. Hats should bear no logos or slogans other than AYSO logos (traditional, promotional, Regional or tournament) and AYSO national sponsor logos.

Sunglasses are likewise discouraged for referees as this restricts communication through eye contact with players and are generally considered unnecessary adornment.

Who is responsible for the players' Medical Release Forms?

It is the coach's responsibility to be in possession of the Medical Release Forms at all practices and games. Referees are not required, nor recommended, to ask coaches to prove that they have players' Medical Release Forms in their possession at games. Referees should not require coaches to produce the forms at matches as this would, in effect, put the referee in the position of assuming a responsibility that properly belongs with the coach.



U-6 to U-12 Guidelines

U-6 Guidelines

Activity Day at U-6

The U-6 activity day consists of a 60-minute session: 35 minutes of technical development and one 25-minute game.

The Field:

The recommended field size for U-6 games is 30 x 15 yards marked with lines or cones.

The Markings:

Distinctive lines can be used but are not required. Field can be marked using 20 flat pro-cones to mark all four sides.

The Goals:

Maximum four feet high and six feet wide OR four tall cones, two each set six feet apart.

The Ball:

A size 3 ball is used for U-6 games.

The Players:

There will be three per team on field; no goalkeepers. Five max on roster. Substitutions are between periods, at halftime and for injuries. The players will be separated by girls and boys teams at all levels of play. Only players should be allowed on the field, with the exception of a coach from each team who will manage the game.

Player Equipment:

Shoes and shinguards, covered by the socks are mandatory at all practice and game activities. Soccer shoes, tennis shoes, or similar type athletic shoes are recommended. The type and condition of cleated shoes must be inspected for safety before use.

Duration of Game:

Four five-minute periods. Half time break of 5 - 10 minutes.

The Start of Play:

To start the first and second halves, and following each goal in all age group games, play is started or restarted with a kick-off in the center of the field. A coin toss is used to determine which team kicks off to start the game and the other team kicks off to start the second half. Following a goal, the team scored upon kicks off.

The Kickoff:

The kickoff is taken from the center of the field with each team in their own half and the team not kicking off at least 5 yards from the ball. Do not insist the opponent be a minimum of precisely 5 yards from the ball as this is just a guide to give the kicker room to kick the ball without it immediately hitting an opponent. Remember, let them play and do not interfere for technicalities.

Ball In and Out of Play:

The ball is out of play in all age group games when it completely crosses the touch line (side line) or goal line (end line) either on the ground or in the air. In U-6 games, the coaches will determine when the ball is out of play and should guide the restart, interfering as little as possible. It's the player's game, let them play and work on technique later.

Fouls & Misconduct

The coaches will assess direct free kicks for all fouls, with the opponents five yards away from the ball.

Official:

There is no need for fully qualified referees to manage U-6 games. One or both of the coaches should "officiate". The games are intended to be an opportunity for the very youngest of our players to experience the fun of playing. The barest of minimum rules are needed and should be applied with a generous amount of flexibility. Let the players have the freedom to play with minimum interruption.

U-8 Guidelines

The Field:

The field size for U-8 games is 50 yards long, 25 yards wide (max).

The Markings:

Distinctive lines recommended.

Halfway line the width of the field, marked equidistant between the goal lines. Center circle with an six-yard radius in the center of the field. Corner arcs with a one-yard radius at each corner of the field. Goal area in front of each goal measuring 6 x 12 yards.

The Goals:

Maximum six feet high and six yards wide.

The Ball:

A size 3 ball is used for U-8 games.

The Players:

There will be Five per team on field; no goalkeepers. Seven maximum on roster.

Substitutions are between periods, at halftime and for injuries. The players will be separated by girls and boys teams at all levels of play. Playing time is a minimum of two periods per game and no player should play four periods until everyone has played three. Separate girls and boys teams should be promoted at all levels of play.

Player Equipment:

Shoes and shinguards, covered by the socks are mandatory at all practice and game activities. Soccer shoes, tennis shoes, or similar type athletic shoes are recommended. The type and condition of cleated shoes must be inspected for safety before use.

Duration of Game:

Four 10-minute periods. Halftime break of 5–10 minutes.

The Start of Play:

The game should be started with a kick-off in the middle of the field.

The Kick-off:

A coin toss is used to determine which team kicks off to start the game and the other team kicks off to start the second half. Opponents must be six yards from the center mark while kick-off is in progress.

Method of Scoring:

See U-8 Coaching Manual.

Fouls & Misconduct

The coaches will assess direct free kicks for all fouls, with the opponents six yards away from the ball.

Direct free kicks for all fouls, with the opponents six yards away from the ball. Free kicks are awarded the attacking team inside the defending team's goal area should be taken from the nearest point on the goal area line in front of the goal. There are no penalty kicks. Referees will work cooperatively with the coaches and eliminate the need for cautions and send-offs. Do not show yellow or red cards

U-8 Officials:

AYSO certified U-8 Officials or higher are required for U-8 games. The U-8 Official should briefly explain any infringements to the player(s) and encourage proper play and sporting behavior. As with all games, every effort should be made to keep the game moving and free from stoppages for doubtful infractions. Let them play and enjoy.

Assistant Referees/Club Linesmen:

If available, qualified assistant referees who have completed Assistant Referee Certification may be used to assist the referee. This is an opportunity for new assistant referees to begin getting experience. If qualified assistant referees are not available, Club Linesmen (untrained volunteers who may be affiliated with one of the teams/clubs) may be recruited from the spectators to assist the referee with calling the ball in and out of play only. This is an opportunity for parents to get involved.

U-10 Guidelines

The Field:

The field size for U-10 games is 80 yards long, 40 yards wide (max).

The Markings:

Distinctive lines recommended.

- **Halfway line** the width of the field, marked equidistant between the goal lines.
- **Center circle** with an eight-yard radius in the center of the field.
- **Corner arcs** with a one-yard radius at each corner of the field.
- **Goal area** in front of each goal measuring 6 x 15 yards.
- **Penalty area** in front of each goal measuring 14 x 30 yards.
- **Penalty mark** ten yards from the goal line.
- **Penalty arc** extending in a eight-yard radius from the penalty mark.

The Goals:

Maximum seven feet high and seven yards wide..

The Ball:

A size 4 ball is used for U-10 games.

The Players:

There will be seven per team on field; one of which is a goalkeeper. Ten maximum on roster. Substitutions are between periods, at halftime and for injuries. There will be a minimum of two periods per game and no player should play four periods until everyone has played three. The players will be separated by girls and boys teams at all levels of play.

Player Equipment:

Shoes and shinguards, covered by the socks are mandatory at all practice and game activities. Soccer shoes, tennis shoes, or similar type athletic shoes are recommended. The type and condition of cleated shoes must be inspected for safety before use.

Duration of Game:

Four 12.5-minute periods. Halftime break of 5 -10 minutes.

The Start of Play:

The game should be started with a kick-off in the middle of the field. Coaches determine which team starts the game with a coin flip and the opposing team starts the second half. Opponents must be eight yards from the center mark while kick-off is in progress.

Fouls & Misconduct

Opponents must be eight yards from the ball on restart kicks. Referees will work cooperatively with the coaches and eliminate the need for cautions and send-offs.

Referee:

AYSO certified Regional Referees or higher are required for U-10 and older games. The referee should briefly explain any infringements to the player(s) and encourage proper play and sporting behavior. As with all games, every effort should be made to keep the game moving and free from stoppages for doubtful infractions. Let them play and enjoy.

Assistant Referees/Club Linesmen:

If available, qualified assistant referees who have completed Assistant Referee Certification may be used to assist the referee. This is an opportunity for new assistant referees to begin getting experience. If qualified assistant referees are not available, Club Linesmen (untrained volunteers who may be affiliated with one of the teams/clubs) may be recruited from the spectators to assist the referee with calling the ball in and out of play only. This is an opportunity for parents to get involved.

U-12 Guidelines

The Field:

The field size for U-12 games is 100 yds long and 50 yds wide (max).

The Markings:

No change from Laws of the Game.

The Goals:

No change from Laws of the Game.

The Ball:

A size 4 ball is used for U-12 games.

The Players:

There will be nine per team on field; one of which is a goalkeeper. 12 maximum on roster.

Substitutions are between periods, at halftime and for injuries. The players will be separated by girls and boys teams at all levels of play. Playing time is a minimum of two periods per game and no player should play four periods until everyone has played three. The teams will be separate girls and boys teams should be promoted at all levels of play.

Player Equipment:

Shoes and shinguards, covered by the socks are mandatory at all practice and game activities. Soft-cleated soccer shoes or tennis shoes.

Duration of Game:

Four 15-minute periods. Halftime break of 5 - 10 minutes. No other changes from play as specified in FIFA Laws of the Game Printed for the American Youth Soccer Organization.

Referee:

The referee must be a certified regional referee or above.