



6U GUIDELINES - FALL 2019

(These are specific to Region 87 – AYSO National differs)

Welcome to the first real opportunity for AYSO Soccer play into specific teams, specific coaches, and introducing the Laws of the Game for Soccer.

This is a really fun age to watch and participate in and we are thankful that you all have stepped up to help lead these kids to a fun future in youth soccer.

WHILE AYSO HAS 6 CORE PHILOSOPHIES... THE FOLLOWING ARE CORE PHILOSOPHIES THAT WILL LEAD YOU AS A COACH:

- **EVERYONE PLAYS** – We want all kiddos to play... (and have fun!)
- **POSITIVE COACHING** – This is the most important part of your role... encourage your players, they will become more motivated and develop stronger skills
- **GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP** – We strive to create a safe, fair, fun, and positive environment for the players to thrive based upon mutual respect... a win-at-all-cost attitude is not a trait of Good Sportsmanship.
- **PLAYER DEVELOPMENT** – Touches... opportunities... skills that will advance with their movement through the divisions... all starts with you! This is why we play 4v4.

Just a few points for coaches, referees, & parents to remember; especially for those who have experience in other divisions, as to how 6U differs from other divisions and how the Laws of the Game are applied.

These games are intended to be an opportunity for the very youngest of our players to experience the fun of playing organized soccer. The barest of minimum rules are needed and should be applied with a generous amount of flexibility.

1. **Duration of game:** Each game is thirty minutes and is played in 2 - 15 minute halves with substitutions allowed about 7 minutes into each half. The half-time break is approx. 5-10 minutes. Play should be stopped at a normal stoppage in play for the substitution break. Due to lack of substitutes or in cases of hot weather, the referee/coaches may use their discretion to allow for a short break for players to get a drink. (THERE IS NO 'FREE' SUBSTITUTION) All Players are to play at least 2 quarters – and no player shall play 4 unless all have played 3)

2. **Pass-Ins:** When the ball goes out of play across the touch lines (sidelines), the ball will be introduced back into play by a ‘pass-in’ where the ball is placed on the ground at the touch line and the player kicks it to their teammate (This was a new policy for 2017 – throw-ins are introduced in the 7U/8U program). This pass-in is awarded from where it crossed the line to the team that didn’t touch it last. In 6U games, whether the pass-in is properly taken or not, let it go! Proper technique can be taught at practice later by the coach. Again, let them play.

Referees/coaches should give quick explanations when necessary and minimize interruptions. Keep the game moving and fun.

3. **Fouls and Other Stoppages:** Deliberate fouling should be extremely rare in 6U games. If a player is having issues, please gently work with them – this is not intended to be competitive soccer, so coaches please be mindful about how much you push these players.
 - a. Kicking, tripping, handling the ball and dangerous play may occur and if it does, quickly deal with it without focusing on the player more than is necessary to get a quick understanding of the issue and then get the game started again. there should be few, if any, reasons to stop play in 6U games.
 - b. If a player is “not playing well with others” or if play must be stopped for any other reason (injury, substitution, confusion, or to watch a passing plane, or butterfly), the Coach/Referee should refocus the players and begin again with a free kick or pass-in as appropriate.
 - c. Award the restart to whichever team deserves it or flip a coin to decide but do not make it a lengthy ceremony.
 - d. Exercise common sense. The Coach/Referee should briefly explain infractions and stand back and let’em play.
4. **Free Kicks:** Play may have to be stopped occasionally to “sort things out” in 6U games. A player may pick the ball up and start running with it, or want to keep it away from the other players, or perhaps there is a pile of kids on the ground kicking at both the ball and each other. If this occurs, the Coach/Referee should stop play and correct the situation, then restart with a free kick for a deserving player.
 - a. **All free kicks in 6U games are direct free kicks**, which means, if you’re lucky, a goal can be scored directly from the kick.

- b. **There are no penalty kicks** (in which only one player defends the goal – the whole team is always there).
5. **Distance from Ball:** Players should be asked to stand back roughly 3-5 yards from the ball being kicked (for free kicks, goal kicks, kick-offs, etc.) to give the kicker room to kick the ball without it immediately hitting an opponent.
6. **Offside** should never be called. We do not introduce offside play or penalties until a player is in the 10U division.
7. **Playing time: Region 87 follows the 3/4 rule.** THE 3/4 rule applies to all players on the team (no one plays the entire game unless everyone else has played 3 quarters). Unlike other AYSO divisions, 6u division referees do not record player participation on game cards and will not know who plays or does not. It is the responsibility of coaches to make sure that everyone plays.
8. **A goal**, as in all age group games, is awarded when **the ball completely crosses the goal line** into the goal. Goals should be enthusiastically celebrated by everyone; but in 6U games, they are not recorded to determine who wins.
9. **Everyone wins in 6U games.** We want to encourage this to be a fun and profitable experience for the kids... thus, if your team is dominating the other team, think about maybe switching players around, moving kids to the other team and /or mixing it up if you have one dominant player. Remember, we don't keep score... but the kids tend to and we want this to be a good experience for all.
10. **Play is 4 vs. 4 with no goalkeepers.** If the opposing team has less than 4 players then you have to play down (play the same number of players). *This is our only division where this rule occurs (all other divisions play the full complement of players regardless of the other team). For our 6U division, there should never be more than 2 subs. Coaches are encouraged to “lend” players to the opposing team to field the proper number of players.

YOU MUST NOT play more than 4 v 4.

11. ***AYSO is committed to following the National Player Development Initiatives for the younger players.***

The goal is MORE TOUCHES and more opportunity for the players to interact with the ball and begin to develop a 'relationship' with the ball and the game.

The fundamentals are focused on helping the players:

- Gain early basic ball control skills
- Advance the ball past opposing players by dribbling, passing and shooting towards the goal (the early principles of PENETRATION)
- Defend by slowing down the attack by closing gaps/denying space (the early principle of DELAY) and working to take the ball back

And, always... for attacking the overall goal is to score!

AND REMEMBER... THIS IS A SOCCER PARTY FOR BOTH THE PLAYERS AND YOURSELF!

OTHER NOTES/COMMENTS:

Referees:

There is no need for fully qualified referees to manage 6U games. One or both of the coaches should “officiate”. (and a bucket of flags and YELLOW pennies will be at the pitch for parents to come along and step in as line judges (and if they are Safe Haven Certified and a registered Volunteer, they can act as a ‘referee’ too).

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.

You may be fortunate and have a referee available to officiate the game:

Referees should briefly explain any infringements to ALL the players and help players with instructions. They are the teachers on the field – they should encourage proper play and sporting behavior. Every effort should be made to keep the game moving and free from stoppages for doubtful infractions. Let them play and enjoy.

Referees must be registered AYSO volunteers (*meaning completion of safe haven and eAYSO volunteer background check*). Assistant Referees work each sideline and assist the Center Referee with calling the ball in and out of play.

You have your field for 1 hour – on the hour. If you start late, or take a long half-time break, please make-up that time somehow so you still end on time as a courtesy to all the parents who have games after you. As the official timekeepers, this is the Referee’s responsibility. However, if the Referee feels s/he has too much going on to keep track of time, select someone to be the timekeeper.

Spectators from each team should be on opposite sides of the field. Spectators must stand/sit at least 1 yard away from the touchlines – Have the coaches & assistant referees encourage this. Team Managers should help ensure proper sideline etiquette.

Ball Size is size 3.

Players’ equipment: Footwear: 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.

Shin guards are MANDATORY and must be covered entirely by socks. Shin guards go against bare skin and socks go over the shin guards.

Coin toss: The “Home team” makes the call; either “heads or tails” in the air. If the call is correct the home team decides what end they will defend. If the call is incorrect then the “Visiting team” decides what end they will defend. Losing the coin toss means you kick off first. Coaches should prepare their captains on what end to choose to defend first. (Sometimes a great game of Rock-Paper-Scissors also provides another way to determine who ‘wins’ the toss.

Field Set-Up is the responsibility of all the teams with the first game. Please arrive early to complete this task in time for the players to practice with the goals. Each field has 2 goals & nets, plus 4 flags – 4 on each of the corners.

Additionally, the Kids Zone sign (if available) needs to be placed in a visible location.

Field Take-Down is the responsibility of the teams with the last game on that field. *Sometimes, one field may end earlier than another, so be sure to check if yours is the last game for that field. All field equipment needs to be returned to the storage room, along with the Kids Zone sign. Please also pick-up any trash or recycling.

Thanks for your help and cooperation in making this an enjoyable experience for all the children!

Questions & Answers for 6U

Q. What happens when a player on offense moves the ball into the goal area? Can a defender enter the goal area to defend?

A. Yes, the defender can and should defend as long as they are chasing an offensive player into the goal area. The goal area markings are intended to prevent players from “camping out” in front of the goal and therefore de facto acting as a goal keeper. ‘Think that the goal area is ‘quick sand’ or ‘lava’ and the kiddos can enter and move through, but cannot stand within the space.

Q. What if a player doesn’t pass the ball in to play correctly on the first try?

A. Players are still trying to learn this skill. To that end, if the first try doesn’t follow the rules don’t whistle the play and let the play flow for the first half of the season otherwise there will be more whistles than play. (Practice pass-ins as necessary the following week at practice.) Beginning game six, (the second half of the season), there should be no more improper pass-ins and if one occurs, play should stop and should result in a change of possession with the other team now taking possession and completing the pass-in.

Q. Are there goal kicks and corner kicks at this age group?

A. Yes, we are really trying to introduce many concepts that make sense to younger players as to how the game is played at all age levels. Unlike pass-ins, there are no redo’s for corner kicks. There is a redo for goal kicks only when the ball is not kicked out of the penalty area (the larger painted box outside the goal). That redo is necessary because it is an infringement to the rules.

Q. What happens if one team is far more skilled and the scoring is getting out of hand?

A. History tells us this could very well happen. If there is a five-goal differential, the coach of the team that is ahead should take immediate measures to STOP further scoring until the gap closes under five goals.

Some suggestions to accomplish this: put your strongest players in the back and not up front in a better scoring location; score only after there has been 3-4 passes linked together before shooting; dribble and shoot only with the weaker foot - generally the left foot; take a player off the field and play a man down is acceptable **but not encouraged and only as an absolute last resort as it takes a player out of what he is there to do - PLAY and HAVE FUN**; this is really a last resort.

Teams that are down 6-0, 8-0 are not having fun. Remember we are all volunteers for our children. Scores and winning at this age is not important. Participating, learning and having fun is the objective.

Q. Who provides referees and who is the official timekeeper?

A. The HOME TEAM shall provide the referee (sometimes the coach) and the referee shall also be the OFFICIAL timekeeper.

Q. How many coaches can be on the field at once?

A. Each team is allowed only one coach on the field at a time. A coach is permitted to referee and coach at the same time if he/she is the home team (the preferred way would be to have two different people so each can focus on just a single responsibility). If the home team coach decides the assistant will referee so the head coach can coach on the field, then the assistant coach must act solely as referee and not another coach. Remember only one

coach on the field at a time. **Beginning game six, the second half of the season, coaches will be asked to move and coach from the sideline. They will no longer be allowed to coach being on the field.**

Q. With this tight timeline, how can the kids enjoy the after-game snack and celebration?

A. This is still a really important aspect of soccer that the kids anticipate and enjoy. Snack time, encouraging comments from game should be enjoyed, simply move away from the immediate playing and spectator areas to be considerate of the next team's game. (WE play the 6U program adjacent to the restrooms at Cooks, and there are picnic tables in the shade right there for after play festivities. Please move there once your game is complete.

Q. To make it easier to break down after games maybe we should just go behind the goal to watch and be out of the way?

A. Players, coaches and parents are not allowed to gather behind the goals. This is very distracting to the ongoing game. – this policy begins at 6U and goes all the way up to 18U.

Q. Our game was later in the day and there were old bottles left from previous games. How can we address that situation?

Ultimately it is the coaches' responsibility to be sure the field is free of trash and bottles. It is suggested that the parent who is responsible for snacks that game day, also bring a trash bag so all trash is picked up and disposed of properly before the next game.

Q. I noticed in some games kids were back "playing goal". I thought there were no goal keepers?

A. It is understandable that players want to come back and get in front of the goal to defend. Additionally, It wouldn't be the first time that a player got distracted and is actually day dreaming and simply camped out right in front of the goal.

The solution: Defenders are NOT allowed to camp out in the "immediate goal area" (area lined on the field). Defenders are NOT allowed to go into that area unless the ball has entered. Once that has happened they are free and encouraged to enter that area and defend their goal.

Q. Can you give us some guidance as to on field coaching during the game vs. just letting the kids play?

A. There probably is some room left for interpretation, but here is our recommendation to you.

Example: delaying the game for 30-45 seconds so that the team is coached and perfectly lined up for a throw, a goal kick and center off etc. **is not a good idea.** More general coaching during the game that takes a few seconds is more appropriate: "try not to kick with your toe", "score at this end", "pass to teammate", "remember to stay out of the defensive goal", "your turn to throw in or take the goal kick", etc... are all good and appropriate things to help the players.

The barest minimum of rules should be used with a generous amount of flexibility. Try to keep interruptions to the minimum so the players have the freedom for continuous play. Practice is more the time for rules, technique and coaching. **Game time is for pleasure and play expressing what they have learned during practice week.**

Q. Are there "penalty kicks" at this age group if a player handles the ball?

A. At this age group and especially without goal keepers, **there are NO penalty kicks.** If a foul occurs, place the ball parallel to the infringement outside the penalty area and continue with a direct free kick. Defending players should be at least five yards (full size is 10 yards) from the ball but not into the goal area.