

Frequently Asked Questions – National Coaching Program
Answers provided by the AYSO National Coach and the
National Coaching Commission

Why do we play short-sided games and is it mandatory?

AYSO highly recommends that all children under the age of 12 play short-sided (less than 11 players per team) soccer for the following reasons:

Young soccer players need special consideration:

- They are children playing a child's game
- They must be regarded as young children, not mini adults
- They are essentially self-oriented and relate naturally to one or two others, not to large groups
- Fun and activity factors must be a central part of a child-centered program

Educators agree early learning experiences are the most important and produce the most retention:

- Most children cannot sustain prolonged activity
- They function best in suitable starts and stops (rest periods)
- Concentration span is limited, so frequent changes of pace and activity are essential

Children love to learn:

- They learn a great deal more when the ratio of teacher (coach) to student (player) is reduced
- With small numbers and the simple nature of the game, the best teacher is the game itself
- With fewer players on the field, each player gets more touches on the ball and has greater opportunity to change location in a fast-flowing, fluid game
- Playing short-sided allows players to make simpler decisions and develop an earlier, better understanding of organization of play
- Smaller fields mean more players are directly involved in play, creating increased levels of both concentration and interest
- The reduced field size encourages more shots on goal by all players, therefore more goals scored

Residual benefits:

- Parents are introduced to the game in smaller, more understandable doses
- Short-sided soccer is a great place to train new referees
- The rest of the world is playing short-sided and we are part of the soccer world

Can we have paid trainers?

In the AYSO Reference Manual under Article One: Use of AYSO Name, Trademarks, Mailing List, AYSO's Licensing Program, Paying Volunteers, Part 2.5 in the last paragraph it states: AYSO is a volunteer organization and does not condone or approve of the use of paid volunteers such as trainers of coaches. The use of such personnel is contrary to the basic philosophy of AYSO.

Now, if your question is about using a soccer camp company to provide trainer type activities; the following is read from the National Coaching Commission and the National Board of Directors. The National Board of Directors must be assured that any such program will not overburden or conflict with the current existing programs and philosophies of AYSO.

So:

Trainers may not be used to benefit individual teams or players within a Region. Such training must be offered to all players within the Region.

The curriculum used must be consistent with the practices of AYSO and must be approved by the AYSO National Coach.

All trainers must be approved in writing by the Regional Commissioner, Area Director and Section Director

Does each player have to play ½ of every game, or can it be averaged out across the season?

True to one of AYSO's founding philosophies, Everyone Plays, every player must play at least ½ of EVERY game. Additionally, it is strongly recommended that no player play four (4) quarters before all players have played three (3) quarters. The only exception to this rule would be a serious injury that truly prevents the player from participating or if the player arrives to the game after it has commenced, in which case the following National Rules and Regulations apply:...if the player arrives in the first quarter, the player must play a minimum of two (2) of the remaining three (3) quarters...if the player arrives during the second or third quarter, the player must play a minimum of one (1) quarter.

What are the correct field dimensions/markings, goal sizes, ball sizes, number of players on the field and on a roster, and game durations for each age group?

All these items are part of AYSO's National Coaching Program guidelines. These guidelines are available on soccer.org with answers to these questions. You can find them at www.soccer.org by clicking on Coaches/Overview/Short-sided Games Guidelines. You may also obtain a manual through the Supply Center, AYSO Coaching Program.

When and where is the next coaching course I need to take:

All coaching courses that are registered with the National Support & Training Center are entered into eAYSO. An Excel or Acrobat file of these courses, are available on the Instructor Help page at www.aysohelp.org. On the home page, find the blue box on the right titled General and click on the Roster Status option, then open the file for 2006 rosters. Once open, you can sort through the courses to find the one you want within your region or area.

What are the various levels of coach certification?

AYSO offers coach training for every level of play. The various “levels” are as follows and each one has its own course:

U-6, U-8, U-10, U-12, Intermediate, Advanced and National

What are the requirements and time involved with the various coach certification?

AYSO’s U-6, U-8, U-10, and U-12 courses are all considered “stand-alone” courses, meaning that you may take any one of them without having taken any prior courses. The U-12 course then becomes the pre-requisite for taking the Intermediate course, which is the pre-requisite for taking the Advanced course, which is the pre-requisite for taking the National course. Course times are as follows:

- U-6 Coach – 2 hours
- U-8 Coach – 2 hours
- U-10 Coach – 3 hours
- U-12 Coach – 5 hours
- Intermediate Coach – 15 hours
- Advanced Coach – 18 hours
- National Coach – 56 hours

What and/or where is my certification?

Record of all coach training is stored in AYSO’s on-line database, www.eayso.org. Every individual that has filled out a Volunteer Registration Form is entered into the database and record of all training is attached to the individual’s file. Anyone is allowed access to eAYSO by going through a short, one-time registration on the home page. Once in the database you may view your own records by going to Look-Up/Volunteer and looking up your record. Once there, click View Certifications. Alternatively, you may call the AYSO Programs Department at (800) 872-2976 and someone there will assist you. If your records do not reflect the training you have taken, please call Crissie Hull (800) 872-2976, x-5474.

Can an individual under 18 years of age be a coach?

No, but they may assist the team. Though AYSO appreciates and encourages young people to participate in all aspects of soccer including coaching, an individual under 18 years of age may not be listed as the Head Coach or Assistant Coach on the official roster due to liability purposes. They can certainly assist in training and even making decisions regarding the team, but may not ever be left alone with players and may not be listed on the official roster.

How do I become an AYSO coach?

AYSO is a volunteer organization and the smallest local groups run by volunteers are referred to as regions. To become a coach in your local region, you can attend the registration and sign up there to coach. Alternatively, you can contact the Regional Coach Administrator who is in charge of all the coaches for the region and discuss the process with them. If you need contact information, you can contact the Programs Department of the AYSO National Support & Training Center at (800) 872-2976.

Does an AYSO coach have to have a child on the team?

No. Anyone over the age of 18 can volunteer to be a coach in AYSO. Generally speaking, most coaches are the parents of a child on the team, however, AYSO welcomes and encourages anyone who wants to volunteer to come out and coach!