

WHY SHORT-SIDED SOCCER?

Short-sided soccer is about what is best for young soccer players. It's for AYSO coaches, referees, administrators, spectators, and anyone else concerned with the development of 5 to 12 year old soccer players

- *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 is 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 of 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. Young soccer players need special consideration.

U-5

INTRODUCTION

During the 2004 AYSO NAGM in Phoenix, AZ, AYSO Executive Membership voted on and passed an amendment to the National Rules and Regulations to lower the minimum age requirement for participation in AYSO to four years of age.

The objective of this program is to provide young players and their parents with a “**pressure free**” introduction to the beautiful and simple game of soccer. At this age players should be exposed to soccer by playing simple, fun activities and games that **require little to no practice**, and a minimal time commitment.

This program allows players **to discover the game for themselves**, while parents are given a soccer foundation on which to build and grow into future AYSO coaches, referees and administrators.

The **AYSO National Coaching Commission** supports this program predicated on the basis that the guidelines provided within this document are followed and that all decisions regarding the program are made in the best interest of the players.

U-5 Program Guidelines

GENERAL

- *Every effort should be made to institute a U-5 division separate from U-6, as there are significant social, emotional and physiological differences between U-5 and U-6 players.
- *The effective date of age determination shall be the player's age as of July 31st of the year that the season commences. Players who have reached the age of four as of this date are eligible to participate—NO EXCEPTIONS!
- *Every effort should be made to have separate girls and boys divisions.
- *The Jamboree One With One format described within this document is the preferred program and should be followed when offering the U-5 program.
- *The U-5 program consists of one day per week of the Jamboree One with One program for 6-8 weeks.

UNDER-5 — JAMBOREE ONE with ONE

Organization

Jamboree One with One is the combination of two different formats that, put together, will provide the best possible introduction to soccer for our youngest players. In AYSO soccer, a jamboree means that teams are formed on a weekly basis depending on how many players attend a given session. One with one refers to the concept that each player will have a parent (or other adult) working with them on the field.

A “**Master Coach**” will lead each session. The “master coach” will introduce a game/activity that will practice a certain skill or part of the game using explanation and demonstration. Each pair (player/parent) will then attempt the activity while the master coach circulates between pairs providing specific help or suggestions so that the activities are performed as intended. After a suitable amount of time, the “master coach” will bring the players and parents back together as a group and recap what they have done, introducing the next game/activity.

Each Jamboree One with One session will end with a 20 minute short-sided game (3 v 3). Details regarding the game are explained later in this document. Most importantly allow the players to play without coaching or teaching them as this experience is designed to expose them to soccer, not to begin developing them. The two goals of the program are to allow the players to enjoy the activities and to let the game be the teacher.

Master Coach:

The master coach should be certified (at a minimum) as an AYSO Advanced Coach and Advanced Coach Instructor. The Regional Coach Administrator shall work with the Regional Commissioner to determine the most qualified (and willing) instructor.

The master coach is, “in charge” at the field! He/she will introduce and demonstrate each game/activity, then circulate to help the parents as they help the kids, providing all with a positive learning experience.

3 v 3 Game Set-Up and Guidelines

Each player in the U-5 division can receive a uniform, since it is part of the fun to get dressed up for “the big game”. Having fun will make the kids want to come back. The uniforms should be identical for all players. Each week before the game portion of the day begins, players will be divided into groups of 4 (3 on the field with 1 substitute/reserve). Based on how many players arrive, pennies (different colored “vests”) to differentiate the “teams” for games for a particular weekend will be used.

Session Schedule

Sessions should last one hour and fifteen minutes including organizing time and breaks—NO MORE.

10 minutes — Group Warm-Up and Activities

5 minutes — Water Break

20 minutes — Training Activities and Games

10 minutes – Team organizing and water break

Assigning players to teams

Assigning field locations

20 minutes 3 vs 3 Game (played in two halves of 10 minutes each with a short break at the quarter to make substitutions and get a quick drink)

5 minute — Half-time

5 minutes to help make changes between quarters

During the game, one parent from each team should be selected to act as the **game supervisors** for the week. These parents should only be required to keep the game going. All other parents should be encouraged to cheer positively and **refrain** from “coaching” (giving directions) from the sideline. **This is the time for the kids to play – LET THEM!**

The following guidelines include the only elements of the Laws of the Game that apply to the AYSO Short Sided Game Program for U-5:

The Field:

The recommended field size for U-5 games is 30 x 15 yards marked with lines or cones. See diagram.

The Goals:

The goals in U-5 games should be a maximum of 4 feet high and 6 feet wide or 2 tall cones set 6 feet apart.

The Ball:

A size 3 ball is used for U-5 games.

The Teams:

Each U-5 team should have a maximum of 5 on the roster. Games are played with 3 players per team on the field (3v3) and **no goalkeepers**. Substitutions are made at quarters, halftime and for injuries. A minimum of 2 quarters is required for each player and it is recommended that no one play 4 quarters until everyone has played 3 quarters. Separate boys and girls teams are recommended at all levels.

Player Equipment:

Shoes and shin guards, 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.

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 Kick-off:

The kick-off 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-5 games, the game supervisors for the week 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.

Method of Scoring:

A goal 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. In U-5 games, goals are not recorded to determine who wins as everyone is a winner.

Fouls and Other Stoppages:

Deliberate fouling should be rare in U-5 games. Kicking, tripping, handling the ball and dangerous play may occur. There should be few, if any additional reasons to stop play in U-5 games. 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 train, butterfly or frog), refocus the players and begin again with a free kick or as may be appropriate. Award the restart to whichever team deserves it. Stoppages must not become a lengthy ceremony.

Free Kick:

Play may have to be stopped occasionally to "sort things out" in U-5 games. When this is necessary, correct the situation then restart with a free kick for a deserving team. The opposing team should be at least 5 yards from the ball in U-5 games. All free kicks in U-5 games are direct free kicks which means, if you're lucky, a goal can be scored directly from the kick. Without the ball having to be touched or played by another player on the field (in-direct kick).

Throw-in:

When the ball goes out of play in U-5 games across the touch line (side lines) or the goal lines (end lines) without a goal being scored, a throw-in is awarded at the point it crossed the line. The throw-in is awarded to the team that didn't touch the ball last. In U-5 games, whether the throw-in is properly taken or not, let it go...teach proper technique later. Again, let them play with minimum interruption. Keep the game moving and fun.

Should you have any questions or require additional information,

Please contact the National Support & Training Center – Coaching Program at (800) 872-2976.

If you have time, drop us a note about how things are going as this a new program in AYSO – we are interested in getting feedback.

U-6

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.

Field

Dimensions: 30 yards long, 15 yards wide (max).

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

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

Ball Size 3

Players

Number: **Three per team on field; no goalkeepers. Five max on roster.**

Substitutions: Between periods, at halftime and for injuries.

Playing time: Minimum of two periods per game and no player should play four periods until everyone has played three.

Teams: Separate 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.

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.

Shinguards: MANDATORY, must be covered entirely by socks.

Duration of Game

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

Start of Play

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

The coaches determine which team starts the game with a coin flip and the opposing team starts the second half.

Coaches will ensure that opponents are at least five yards from the spot of the kick.

Ball In & Out of Play

To be determined by coaches.

Fouls & Misconduct

To be assessed by coaches.

Direct free kick 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-6 Jamboree

The Jamboree is an alternative method of conducting the standard U-6 short-sided program. Following are guidelines for how to put together and run a Jamboree for your region.

Organization

Master Coach: To run a jamboree, the first step is to find a "master coach." The master coach should be certified (at a minimum) as an AYSO Advanced Coach and Advanced Coach Instructor. The Regional Coach Administrator should work with the Regional Commissioner to determine the most qualified (and willing) instructor.

The master coach is in charge of the field! The purpose of the master coach is to guide new players through skills, activities and training games with the help of the parents, which will, in turn, ease the parents into learning how to coach.

Throughout this process, parents of each team will guide their team through the activities and games with the help and supervision of the master coach. The master coach should introduce and demonstrate each section first, then circulate to help the parents as they help the kids, giving all a positive learning experience.

Teams

Teams of five players on a roster should be formed before the season and have at least two parents per team who are willing to help on the weekend. Each player should receive a uniform, since it is part of the fun to get dressed up for “the big game”—and having fun will make the kids want to come back.

(Alternatively, teams may be formed each week at the beginning of the session based on how many players arrive, dividing them equally and using pinnies instead of uniforms.)

Session Schedule

Sessions should last one hour. Run as many sessions with as many players as is necessary throughout the day to have all players attend one session. (Example: 100 players = five sessions with 20 players [four teams] per session)

—————U-8—————

Field

Dimensions: 50 yards long, 25 yards wide (max).
Markings: Distinctive lines recommended.

Halfway line the width of the field, marked equidistant between the goal lines.
Center circle with a 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.

Goals: Maximum six feet high and six yards wide.

Ball Size 3

Players

Number: Five **per team on field; no goalkeepers**. Seven maximum on roster.

Substitutions: Between periods, at halftime and for injuries.

Playing time: Minimum of two periods per game and no player should play four periods until everyone has played three.

Teams: Separate girls and boys teams should be promoted at all levels of play.

Duration of Game

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

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.

Shinguards: MANDATORY for both practices and games, and must be covered entirely by socks.

Start of Play

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

The coaches determine which team starts the game with a coin flip and the opposing team starts 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

Direct free kicks for all fouls, with the opponents six yards away from the ball.

Free kicks 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.

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

Field

Dimensions: 80 yards long, 40 yards wide (max).

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.

Goals: Maximum seven feet high and seven yards wide.

Ball Size 4

Players

Number: **Seven per team on field; one of which is a goalkeeper.** Ten maximum on roster.

Substitutions: Between periods, at halftime and for injuries.

Playing time: Minimum of two periods per game and no player should play four periods until everyone has played three.

Teams: Separate girls and boys teams should be promoted at all levels of play.

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.

Shinguards: MANDATORY for both practices and games, and must be covered entirely by socks.

Duration of Game

Four 12.5-minute periods.

Halftime break of 5–10 minutes.

Start of Play

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

The 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

Field

Dimensions: 100 yds long and 50 yds wide (max).

Markings: No change from Laws of the Game.

Goals: No change from Laws of the Game.

Ball Size 4

Players

Number: Nine **per team on field; one of which is a goalkeeper.** 12 maximum on roster.

Substitutions: Between periods, at halftime and for injuries.

Playing time: Minimum of two periods per game and no player should play four periods until everyone has played three.

Teams: Separate girls and boys teams should be promoted at all levels of play.

Players' Equipment

Footwear: Soft-cleated soccer shoes or tennis shoes.

Shinguards: MANDATORY for both practices and games, and must be covered entirely by socks.

Referee The referee must be a certified regional referee or above.

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.