

# A PARENT'S POCKET GUIDE TO



## The ABCs OF YOUR SOCCER PLAYER

- EVERYONE PLAYS® IN AYSO
- WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT
- INSIDE THE GAME OF SOCCER

1

## EVERYONE PLAYS

at least half of every game

OPEN REGISTRATION

no tryouts, no cuts

2

3

## BALANCED TEAMS

no stacked teams



AYSO has become the leader in youth soccer by using its Six Philosophies to accomplish its mission.

4

## POSITIVE COACHING

building confidence

## GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP

winning and losing gracefully

5

6

## PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

improving skills

[AYSO.org/mission](http://AYSO.org/mission)

To read AYSO's mission and vision statements, visit [AYSO.org/mission](http://AYSO.org/mission) or scan the QR code.





## ABOUT AYSO

### WHAT MAKES AYSO THE BEST YOUTH SOCCER PROGRAM?

Founded in 1964, AYSO is a child-first and child-focused non-profit organization. Every decision, every rule and every program has “what’s good for kids” as its basis.

Here are a few things that make AYSO the best youth soccer program for your child:

**WE'RE A FAMILY.** AYSO is a nationwide organization with over 500,000 players and 200,000 volunteers.

**SIX**  
PHILOSOPHIES

(see previous page)

**EVERYTHING IS AGE-APPROPRIATE.** We encourage small-sided soccer and no goalkeepers in the young age divisions.

**WE BRING FAMILIES TOGETHER.** AYSO runs on volunteer power. Because moms and dads are referees and coaches, AYSO helps create lifelong memories for thousands of families every year.

**WE'RE HERE FOR YOU.** From your local Region to the National Office, AYSO is happy to help and support you throughout the season.



AYSO is more than soccer — it's about community,  
family and making memories.



## SAFE HAVEN

You can trust your child with AYSO - our Safe Haven program makes AYSO a safe place for your player and our volunteers. Safe Haven was the first of its kind in youth sports and does four important things:

- 1 Creates and enforces policies to keep members/players safe
- 2 Screens volunteers
- 3 Trains volunteers
- 4 Promotes education and awareness



THESE COMPONENTS HELP CREATE A SAFE, FUN, FAIR AND POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT – A “SAFE HAVEN” FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS.

LEARN MORE ABOUT SAFE HAVEN AT [WWW.AYSO.ORG/SAFEHAVEN](http://WWW.AYSO.ORG/SAFEHAVEN)

[AYSO.org/safehaven](http://AYSO.org/safehaven)



# ? SOCCER ?

## What does my child need?

Every player needs a jersey, shorts and socks all of which are provided by your AYSO Region.

## How is it played?

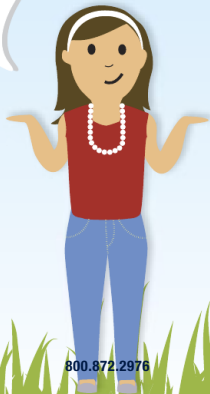
Soccer is a simple game. It requires a field, a ball, two teams of players and a referee. It's played on a rectangular field about the size of a football field. Smaller fields may be used for younger players.

Each AYSO game is broken up into two halves (four quarters) of equal length. The length of the halves depends on the age of the children playing.



### YOUR SHOPPING LIST SHOULD LOOK SOMETHING LIKE THIS:

- Shin guards *\*required*
- Cleats
- Soccer ball (*highly recommended for practicing at home*)
- Re-useable water bottle *\*optional*
- Soccer bag *\*optional*



# New to soccer? Learn the basics and get involved!



**GETTING TO KNOW  
THE FIELD**

# SOCCER GLOSSARY

getting to know soccer terms

## KICKOFF

A kickoff is taken from the center circle to start the game or the second half, and to restart the game after a goal.

## THROW-IN

Once the ball has gone “out of bounds” on the side boundary lines (touch lines), a throw-in is given to the team that **did not** last touch the ball. Throw-ins are taken from where the ball left the field and are thrown with two hands.

## GOAL KICK

Once the ball has gone “out of bounds” on the goal lines, a goal kick is taken by the defending team. The ball may be placed anywhere in the goal area for the kick.

## CORNER KICK

If the defense kicks the ball over its own goal line, a corner kick is given to the attacking team. The ball is placed near the corner flag.





# New to soccer? Learn the basics and get involved!

## THE TEAM

Teams in AYSO vary in size according to age. Smaller teams allow more touches on the ball and a better learning experience for younger players. This is how the world's greatest soccer stars honed their skills!

Even better, every child plays at least half of every game in AYSO – making Player Development a huge priority.

### HERE'S SOME NUMBERS:

**U-6**

PLAY 3-V-3 (NO MORE  
THAN 5 ON A ROSTER)

**U-12**

PLAY 9-V-9 (NO MORE  
THAN 12 ON A ROSTER)

**U-8**

PLAY 5-V-5 (NO MORE  
THAN 7 ON A ROSTER)

**12+**

PLAY 11-V-11  
(FULL SIDED SOCCER)

**U-10**

PLAY 7-V-7 (NO MORE  
THAN 10 ON A ROSTER)

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE  
ADVANTAGES OF SMALL-SIDED  
SOCCER:

[AYSO.org/smallsidedsoccer](http://AYSO.org/smallsidedsoccer)

FOR  
MORE  
INFO





All standard teams in AYSO are re-formed each season, giving players a chance to make new friends, play with new coaches and learn new skills.

Our **BALANCED TEAMS** philosophy models playground etiquette. Just think: When kids play sports on their own, everyone lines up and the two captains pick players. Good, medium and lesser skilled kids are evenly dispersed. All kids have the chance to play, learn and have **FUN**.

Same goes for AYSO! The objective is to prevent blow-outs and stacked teams, while providing valuable learning experiences for everyone.

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT BALANCED TEAMS?  
VISIT: [AYSO.ORG/AYSO\\_PHILOSOPHIES](http://AYSO.ORG/AYSO_PHILOSOPHIES)

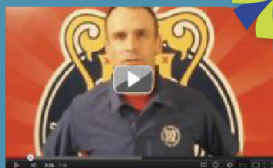


# AYSO's Balanced Teams philosophy makes soccer a special experience.

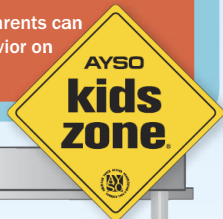
## COACHES, COACH. PLAYERS, PLAY. PARENTS, CHEER.

In AYSO, parents and spectators are asked to be cheerleaders, not critics. This means cheering for all players (even on the other team), giving positive reinforcement and no coaching from the sidelines.

To help spread the word, AYSO created Kids Zone – a program that reminds moms and dads about the importance of setting a great example for their player. There's even a pledge parents can sign to commit to positive and encouraging behavior on game days. Sign it here! [www.AYSO.org/kidszone](http://www.AYSO.org/kidszone)



Jim Liston – an AYSO dad and professional soccer trainer – talks to parents about staying positive on the sidelines. Scan below to watch or visit [www.AYSO.org/jimliston](http://www.AYSO.org/jimliston)



[AYSO.org/jimliston](http://www.AYSO.org/jimliston)



[WWW.AYSO.ORG](http://www.AYSO.org)

## STANDARD PROGRAM

AYSO's standard program is home to the majority of our players and volunteers and includes age divisions U-6 to U-16/19



AYSO's VIP Program provides a quality soccer experience for children and adults

whose physical or mental disabilities make it difficult to participate on mainstream teams.

Learn more:  
[www.AYSO.org/vip](http://www.AYSO.org/vip)



## Jamboree

U-5 (Jamboree) – AYSO's youngest age division is more of a “Parent and Me” program rather than a competitive soccer experience. Kids learn basic soccer skills and play fun soccer games.

Learn more:  
[www.AYSO.org/u5](http://www.AYSO.org/u5)



Learn about all the exciting programs  
AYSO offers your family.

# TEAM AYSO!



EXTRA™ is designed for players who have the interest, skills and abilities for more competitive play and want their soccer experience to retain the spirit of AYSO.  
*Learn more: [www.AYSO.org/extra](http://www.AYSO.org/extra)*

National Games – The AYSO National Games is a week-long celebration of AYSO soccer that takes place every other year, changing locations each time. Players and volunteers from all over the nation attend AYSO's only national tournament.  
*Learn more: [www.AYSO.org/ng](http://www.AYSO.org/ng)*



[www.AYSO.org/ng](http://www.AYSO.org/ng)



## THE COACHES

AYSO coaches are volunteers that are trained and certified to instruct the age-group they are coaching.

Coaches are essential to the game. They teach children soccer skills and help them develop a positive attitude, teamwork and good sportsmanship.

Learn more about  
AYSO coaches!  
Scan here or visit  
[www.AYSO.org/coaches](http://www.AYSO.org/coaches)



Most coaches are parents, just like you, and chose to coach to spend time with their child and have a richer AYSO experience. Don't know anything about soccer? No problem! AYSO will fully train and prepare you for the position - free of cost.



What if the kids coached the teams?  
Scan here to watch what AYSO players  
would do if they were in charge. Or visit  
[www.AYSO.org/kidcoaches](http://www.AYSO.org/kidcoaches)

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A COACH?  
CONTACT YOUR REGIONAL  
COMMISSIONER.

**AYSO runs on volunteer power.  
Parents like you keep AYSO going.**

## THE OFFICIALS

Referees are critical to soccer - the game can't be played without them. The referee's No. 1 concern is to keep the game safe, fair and fun for the players, coaches and spectators.

AYSO recommends the use of three game officials - one referee and two assistant referees.

Similar to coaches, most referees are parents like you. AYSO fully trains and prepares all who volunteer to help out their Region and officiate games.

AYSO referees are volunteers that are trained and certified to call games.

**INTERESTED IN BECOMING A REFEREE?  
CONTACT YOUR REGIONAL  
COMMISSIONER.**

Learn more about  
AYSO referees!  
Scan below or visit  
[www.AYSO.org/referees](http://www.AYSO.org/referees)

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# Soccer Activities

## Perfect for the Offseason

We know you and your player are excited for the upcoming season – we just want you to know that once the season ends, the excitement doesn't have to!

Here are 11 fun activities that you and your budding soccer star can do together in the offseason:

### 1. Soccer Tennis

To play, find a tennis court and take turns kicking the ball back and forth over the net. Can't find a tennis court? You can create a "net" by drawing a line on the ground with street chalk.



### 2. Soccer Bowling

Line up water bottles (or other unbreakable items) in the traditional bowling formation and kick the ball (keeping it on the ground) to knock over as many "pins" as you can.

Tally the score after 10 rounds!



**[FOR 9 MORE SCAN BELOW]**

[AYSO.org/11activities](http://AYSO.org/11activities)

Also, watch retired soccer star Greg Vanney's fun juggling game by visiting [www.AYSO.org/juggle](http://www.AYSO.org/juggle)





Practice makes perfect — stay active  
with fun activities.

## YOUR JOB AS A PARENT



If possible, donate some time to AYSO.

While your schedule may not allow you to volunteer as a coach or referee, there are many volunteer jobs that need filling and don't take much time, including:



### 1 TEAM PARENT:

Helps distribute uniforms, organize snack-duty and plan picture day.

TIME COMMITMENT:

4 hrs.  
a season

### 2 CONCESSION STAND:

Someone has to sell the snacks!  
Serves concessions and other items.

TIME COMMITMENT:

4 hrs.  
a season

### 3 FIELD STRIPER:

Helps line the fields for game days.

TIME COMMITMENT:

4 hrs.  
a season

[AYSO.org/volunteering101](http://AYSO.org/volunteering101)



AYSO



ALUMNI



## FAMOUS AYSO ALUMNI GREAT SOCCER STARTS HERE

# LANDON DONOVAN

Did you know U.S. Soccer star Landon Donovan started AYSO at 5 years old and played for his local Region until he was 14?

"I wanted to continue playing AYSO because I enjoyed the camaraderie and the ability to just play for the love of the game."

*Old School Landon - Donovan's  
AYSO photo at age 11*

There are a lot more famous AYSO alumni, including Shannon Boxx, Maurice Edu, Brian Ching, etc. Visit [www.AYSO.org/AYSOalumni](http://www.AYSO.org/AYSOalumni) for more, or just scan below!

[AYSO.org/aysoalumni](http://AYSO.org/aysoalumni)



FOR  
MORE  
INFO

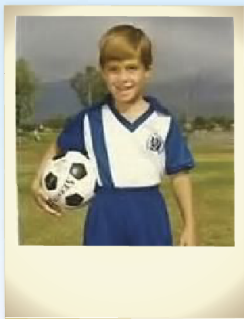
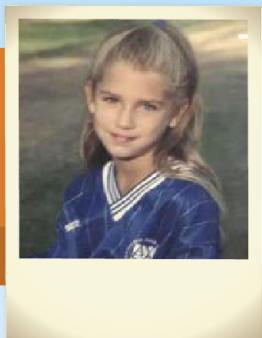
## A lot of soccer stars found their love of the sport in AYSO.

### ALEX MORGAN

U.S. Women's National Team star Alex Morgan also has fond AYSO memories.

"I just really liked playing with my friends and being coached by my dad – it was a lot of fun."

*Alex's favorite team name was the Blue and Beautiful*



### CARLOS BOCANEGRA

Carlos Bocanegra – a defender for the U.S. Men's National Team – played AYSO in Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., and his mom was his first coach!

"Carlos is still friends with some of his teammates from his very first team. They went undefeated for the season and had a lot of fun!" – *Kelly Bocanegra, Carlos' mom and first soccer coach*

*Carlos immediately fell in love with soccer when he joined his first AYSO team*

# FAQ: ALL THE INFO YOU NEED TO KNOW

## WHO DO I CALL?



You'll want to contact your AYSO Region for information. The Region website should have most of the info you're looking for: game schedules, registration dates, etc. If you have questions or concerns, contact your Regional Commissioner. His/her info should be listed on the Region site.

## WHEN WILL MY KID'S COACH CALL?

Teams usually begin practice 2-3 weeks before the season starts – the coaches call the parents around that time. They will give you all the info you need, i.e. practice times and locations.



**Got questions?  
We've got answers.**

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## HOW OFTEN ARE PRACTICES/GAMES?

Practices are held once or twice a week; sometimes the youngest players have a combined practice and game on a weekend. Games are usually held on weekends – the location will be determined by your Region.



## MY CHILD WITHDREW - CAN I GET A REFUND?

We're sorry to see you go! Refund policies are set locally by the Regions, and do vary. Please refer to your Region's website for complete information.



## WHAT'S MY REGION WEBSITE?

You can find that information by visiting [www.AYSO.org/region\\_locator](http://www.AYSO.org/region_locator). Type in your zip code, and your Region number and the website address will pop up.



### **MORE QUESTIONS?**

VISIT [WWW.AYSO.ORG/PARENT\\_FAQ](http://WWW.AYSO.ORG/PARENT_FAQ)  
FOR MORE ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS.

[AYSO.org/region\\_locator](http://AYSO.org/region_locator)



WELCOME



TO AYSO



WELCOME TO THE AYSO FAMILY!

We're so happy that you and your family have chosen AYSO as your youth soccer program. We know you'll have a great season – and many more down the line. To show our appreciation, we're giving away special AYSO prize packs to random AYSO families all over the country.

It's time to fall in love with soccer.

## HOW DO YOU ENTER? THERE'S TWO WAYS:

**1** Capture your AYSO experience! Take a photo of something AYSO – a jersey, the fields on game day, etc., and upload it to our Facebook page: [Facebook.com/AYSOSoccer](https://www.facebook.com/AYSOSoccer).

**2** Tweet @AYSO\_Soccer with #AYSOParentGuide with your favorite tip from this booklet.



#AYSOParentGuide



"Our AYSO gear!"



And you should stay connected with AYSO on social media. Periodically throughout the year, we'll be quizzing our fans and followers on facts from this Parent's Guide and giving away more fun prizes!

Remember, once in the AYSO family, always in the AYSO family!

*(Many will enter, few will win)*

[facebook.com/AYSOSoccer](https://www.facebook.com/AYSOSoccer)





[www.AYSO.org](http://www.AYSO.org)



[Twitter.com/AYSO\\_Soccer](https://twitter.com/AYSO_Soccer)



[Facebook.com/AYSOsoccer](https://Facebook.com/AYSOsoccer)