

AYSO REGION 76 • BEVERLY HILLS

Non-Competitive Coach Handbook

Divisions 6U, 7U and 8U • Fall Season

No standings. No playoffs. No scores kept. Your job is to make a season of game days feel worth showing up for — and to send twelve children into 9U still wanting to play. This handbook covers everything you need to do that.

Links throughout are clickable. Everything is drawn from ayso76.org — always defer to the website if a rule changes mid-season.



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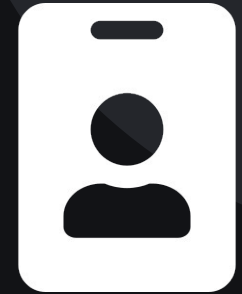
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01

Setting Up Your Team

Week-one housekeeping. About an hour of work that removes most of the friction from your season.



Team basics



Team name

- Let the players pick it at the first practice. At this age it is the single best five minutes of team-building you will get.
- Keep it positive and family-friendly.
- Submit it to your Division Director before week one.



Uniforms and numbers

- Registration fees include the jersey, shorts and socks. Families buy shin guards and shoes themselves.
- Uniform numbers are sized — low numbers are the smallest jerseys, high numbers the largest. A player's number follows the size they need.
- Don't hand them out one by one. Wait until most of the team is there, then line players up by size and work along the line.
- Enter every number into InLeague so the roster stays accurate.
- Sneakers are fine at this age — cleats aren't required.



Roster check

- Confirm every player appears on your InLeague roster before game one.
- Flag anyone missing to your Division Director right away.
- Share the roster and number list with your co-coach.

How teams are formed at 8U and below: ayso76.org/how-we-form-teams



Your first email to parents

48

hours after rosters drop

For most of these families this is their first season of organized sport. What they want to know is where to go, when, and what their child needs to bring. Answer that clearly and you have solved eighty per cent of the questions you would otherwise field all fall.

Use BCC or the team platform.

Put all seven of these in it

- 1 Introduce yourself and your co-coach**
A sentence each: who you are, how to reach you, and when you answer.
- 2 Practice: day, time, field, start date**
One mandatory practice a week, on a fixed day and time. Link the field map.
- 3 First game details**
Date, location, and your arrival expectation — 30 minutes before kickoff.
- 4 What every player brings**
Shin guards, water, size 3 ball. Sneakers are fine; no jewelry at all.
- 5 Set expectations early**
No scores. No standings. Every child plays at least three quarters, every game.
- 6 Your volunteer asks**
Snack coordinator and team parent. Families can also train as referees for the older divisions.
- 7 How you'll communicate**
Pick one channel. State your response time so nobody expects a reply at 11pm.



Find your snack coordinator

One parent runs it — not you. Ask out loud at the first practice while everyone is still standing there. At this age the snack is genuinely part of the experience, so it is worth doing properly.



1. Recruit

Ask in person at the first practice and repeat it in the welcome email. Describe the job as small: building one schedule, not a season of shopping.



2. Build the rotation

Each family takes one or two dates across the season. Share the whole schedule in writing so nobody is surprised on game day.



3. Collect allergies first

Before anything is bought. Circulate the list to every family — at this age allergies are common and parents are still learning who has what.



What good looks like

Halftime: orange slices and water. • Postgame: something light. • Games here are short — a 6U game is 20 minutes total — so hydration matters far more than food. US Soccer advises drinking on a schedule rather than waiting for thirst.

02

How The Game Works

6U, 7U and 8U play a different game from the divisions above. Smaller sides, no goalkeeper, short halves, and no score kept.



The format at 6U, 7U and 8U

4v4 / 5v5

agreed by both coaches

No

goalkeeper

12

players per team

Size 3

ball

Two games at once

- Games are 4v4 or 5v5 — it depends on your division and on how many players each team has that day, so the two coaches agree the format before kickoff.
- Two games run at once on adjacent mini-fields, so your squad is split across both and substitutions are constant.
- Know which field is yours before warm-ups start, and tell parents where to stand.

No goalkeeper changes everything

- There is no keeper and no build-out line at these ages — those arrive at 9U.
- Don't post a child in front of the goal as a substitute keeper. It isn't the game and they learn nothing standing there.
- Teach everyone to defend and everyone to attack. Positions barely matter at 6U–8U.

Team and field sizes: ayso76.org/program-overview



Game length and playing time

How long a game lasts

Division	Half (max)	Game (max)	Ball
6U	10 min	20 min	Size 3
7U & 8U	20 min	40 min	Size 3

What that means in practice

- At 6U the session is a 20-minute practice followed by a 20-minute game — about 40 minutes in total.
- Don't over-program the day. Arrive, play, circle up, go home.
- Quarters are short, so substitutions come around fast. Have your rotation written down before kickoff.

Every player plays at least 3/4 of every game — all season long.

- AYSO nationally requires half a game. Region 76 requires three quarters.
- It is the same rule in every division in Region 76. The older divisions describe it as applying to the "regular season" only because they have playoffs; 6U-8U have none, so it simply applies to every game you play.
- The player who starts a quarter is credited with it. A substitute coming on for an injury is not.
- Small-sided games and two fields mean substitutions come around fast. Write the rotation down before kickoff rather than improvising it.

Full text: ayso76.org/everyone-plays-guidelines



What you're actually coaching

There are no standings, no scores recorded, and no playoffs at 6U–8U. That is not a consolation prize — it is the design. Here is what to optimise for instead.



Aim for this

- Every child touches the ball hundreds of times per session
- Everyone finishes wanting to come back next week
- Players learn to dribble, turn, and try things without fear of a mistake
- Parents leave knowing one specific thing their child did well
- Twelve children arrive at 9U still in love with the game



Not this

- Winning a game nobody is recording
- Playing your strongest five for most of the match
- Shouting instructions through every possession
- Set-piece routines and formations — they don't hold at this age
- Anything that makes a seven-year-old afraid to lose the ball



The AYSO philosophies

- Everyone Plays
- Balanced Teams
- Open Registration
- Positive Coaching
- Good Sportsmanship
- Player Development

You are the one they copy

Two of AYSO's six philosophies are Positive Coaching and Good Sportsmanship. They are not decoration on a website — at 6U to 8U they are most of the job.



Fun is the whole strategy

- Children leave youth sports for one reason more than any other: it stopped being fun.
- Fun at this age is not silliness. It is touching the ball constantly, being trusted to try things, and not being afraid of a mistake.
- A child who enjoys game day comes back in the spring. That is the only retention plan the region has.
- If a session is joyless, it has failed — however well-organized it was.



What positive coaching sounds like

- Praise the action, not the child: "great decision to pass there" lands better than "good boy."
- Coach the next action, not the last mistake.
- Ask rather than shout — "what could you try next time?" teaches; instructions don't.
- Never single out a child for an error in front of the team.
- Your first words after conceding a goal set the tone for the next ten minutes.



Parents copy you

- Your sideline is the loudest signal on the field. You make the calls in these games, so how you handle a disputed one is what the parents copy.
- There is no referee at these ages — the coaches run the game. Treat the other coach the way you would want a referee treated; your players are watching.
- Shake hands. Applaud good play by the other team. Model losing well, because they are watching you more closely than the ball.

Nobody remembers the score of a 6U game. Everybody remembers how the coach made them feel about playing.

03

Expectations

Say all of it in week one. For many of these families this is their first season of organized sport, so nothing is obvious yet.



Players: expectations and equipment

What to ask of a six- or seven-year-old

- Arrive ready to play — shin guards already on, not being wrestled into at the cones.
- Water bottle with their name on it.
- Listen when a coach is talking, then get straight back to playing.
- Hands and feet to themselves.
- Try things. Losing the ball while attempting something is exactly what practice is for.
- Say something kind to a teammate who makes a mistake.
- Tell a coach right away if something hurts.
- Help carry something back to the car.

In the bag, every single time



Region 76 rule: shin guards are required at games AND practices. No exceptions are allowed.

- Shin guards, worn under the socks
- Team socks pulled fully over the guards
- A size 3 ball
- Sneakers are fine — cleats optional at this age
- A full water bottle, named
- Weather layers and sunscreen
- Inhaler or medication if they need one

No jewelry of any kind. Earrings must be removed before every game and practice and may NOT be taped over. The only exception is a medical alert bracelet, properly taped down.

Player safety rules: ayso76.org/health-and-safety



Parents: what to ask for

THE ARRIVAL RULE

Ask for 30 and plan for 15.

Tell families the team meeting is 30 minutes before kickoff. Most arrive at 15. Build the warm-up around 15 and hold the meeting there — with a 20-minute game you cannot afford to start late.



Front-load all of it

Cover this at your first practice, in writing as well as out loud. Region 76 publishes a Code of Conduct you can link directly: ayso76.org/code-of-conduct

On the sideline

- Cheer effort and good play from both teams. The coaches run these games — both the coaching and the calls come from us.
- Stay on the spectator side. The team side is players and coaches only.
- Nobody is keeping score or standings. If a parent is tracking the score, gently let it go.
- Tell a coach in advance about absences so the rotation can be planned.
- Every family takes one job: snack, team parent, photos, or training as a referee for the older divisions.
- Raise any concern with the coach privately, not on the sideline and not in front of the children.
- The ride home is the hardest part of youth sports. "I loved watching you play" is enough — and at six years old it is genuinely all they need.

Check in with your co-coach

With two games running side by side you will often be managing separate halves of the same squad. Split the jobs out loud before every game.

ONE OF YOU OWNS

The written quarter rotation

Agreeing 4v4 or 5v5 with the other coach

The halftime message — keep it to one idea

The postgame circle

THE OTHER OWNS

Watching the clock and calling the changes

Player check: shin guards on, no jewelry, water

Head-count between the two adjacent fields

Packing up and the head-count home

Text each other the night before to confirm you'll both be there. With twelve small children and two fields, one coach on their own is a genuinely hard afternoon.



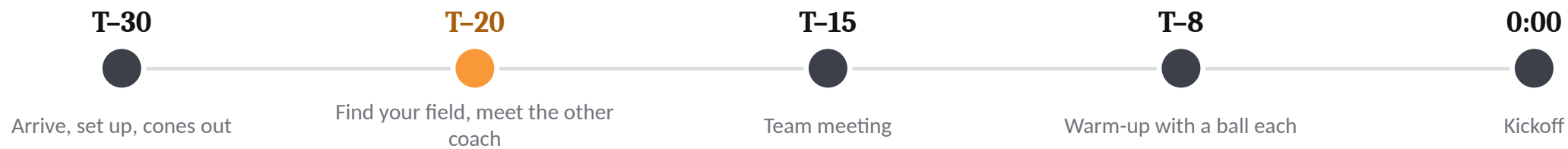
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Game Day

Short games, fast substitutions, and a circle-up at the end that matters more than anything that happened during play.



Pregame checklist



In your bag

- Your written quarter rotation for both fields
- A ball per player if you can — small-sided warm-ups need them
- Cones, pinnies, first aid kit, ice packs
- Spare water and sunscreen
- Check the schedule: divisions play Saturdays or Sundays, and your day can differ from another team's



On arrival

- Confirm which of the two adjacent fields is yours, and tell the parents
- Introduce yourself to the other team's coaches and agree 4v4 or 5v5 for the day
- Check every player: shin guards under socks, earrings out, water
- Count heads and adjust the rotation for whoever is missing
- Warm up with a ball at every child's feet — no laps, no lines

Before anyone leaves the field



1

Circle up

Every player, one specific positive each. Name the moment — "you chased that ball all the way to the corner" — not "good job." With twelve children this takes about four minutes and it is the part they remember.



2

Say nothing about the score

No score is recorded and no standings exist. If a child announces the score, acknowledge it warmly and move on to what they did well. What you dwell on is what they learn to value.



3

Thank the other coach

You and the other coach ran the game between you. Thanking them in front of your players teaches the children how to treat the other team, and it makes the next fixture against them easier.



4

Tidy up and check the card

Confirm the quarters recorded match what you played, hand in whatever your division requires, and make sure no water bottle or jacket is left on the field.

The circle-up is the last thing they hear before they get in the car. At this age it is the whole product.



05

Planning Your Season

One mandatory practice a week, on a fixed day and time. Here is how to spend it.



What a 6U–8U practice looks like

Roughly 50 minutes. The single rule: a ball at every child's feet as much of the time as possible. No laps, no lines, no long explanations.

10 min

Free play

Ball each, from the moment they arrive

10 min

Warm-up game

Tag or sharks-and-minnows with balls

10 min

One skill

Dribbling, turning, or striking. Just one.

15 min

Small-sided game

2v2 or 3v3, tiny goals, lots of touches

5 min

Circle up

One thing each, then home



Rules of thumb at this age

- Attention span is roughly one minute per year of age. Change activity often.
- Demonstrate, don't explain. Ten seconds of showing beats a minute of talking.
- Everything is a game. Nothing is a drill.



Region 76 things worth using

- The BH76 Coaches WhatsApp group, for new and seasoned coaches: ayso76.org/coach-whatsapp-group-signup
- Monday Open Practice: ayso76.org/monday-open-practice
- Send families three sentences the same day each week — focus, schedule, next game.



The season, start to finish

WEEKS 1-2



MID-SEASON



THE FINISH



Getting started

- Parent orientation at the first practice — twenty minutes while the children play.
- Cover the 3/4 rule, arrival times, equipment, and the fact that no score is kept.
- Recruit your snack coordinator and team parent now.
- Learn every child's name by the end of week two. It matters more than any drill.

Keeping it going

- Picture day — remind twice, the week before and the night before:
ayso76.org/picture-day
- Check nobody has quietly stopped enjoying it. At this age withdrawal is silent.
- Rotate who starts. Six-year-olds notice starting far more than minutes.
- Vary the games — repetition of format, not of activity.

Wrapping up

- Book any celebration before the season ends, not after.
- A certificate for every player, with something specific written on each one.
- Thank your volunteers by name, out loud, in front of everyone.
- Tell families what comes next at 9U — bigger field, goalkeepers, 7v7.



06

Safety and Problems

The protocols you are responsible for, and what to do on the game days that don't go to plan.



Health and safety



Concussions

- Any player suspected of a concussion by a coach or a parent must be removed from play for at least the remainder of the day.
- Complete an AYSO Incident Report and submit it to the Region 76 Safety Director.
- A signed Participation (Return to Play) Release Form is required before they return.
- All coaches must complete the CDC's free Concussion Awareness Training on eTrainU, alongside the background check and player safety course.



Equipment and heat

- Shin guards at all games and practices. No exceptions permitted.
- No jewelry. Earrings must be removed and may not be taped over. Medical alert bracelets are the sole exception and must be taped down.
- Headgear of soft, padded material is permitted and cannot be required. As the coach running the game you inspect it like any other equipment and may disallow an item you judge unsafe. Hard face masks are never allowed.
- Several Region 76 fields have little shade — sunscreen and shade breaks matter, especially in September.
- Children should drink on a schedule, not when thirsty.



If someone gets hurt

- The coach supervising the practice or game completes an AYSO Incident Report and submits it to the Safety Director.
- Soccer Accident Insurance is free and automatic for every registered player and volunteer.
- The claim form must be submitted within 90 days of the injury — even if your own insurer hasn't paid yet.
- The form must be signed by a coach or AYSO official and by the Safety Director.

Forms, policy detail, and the return-to-play release: ayso76.org/health-and-safety



Short squads, disagreements, and rain



Not enough players

- Tell your co-coach, the opposing coach, and your Division Director as soon as you know.
- Count heads at T-20, not T-2.
- At 6U-8U the games are informal and short-sided by design, so a small squad is usually absorbed by playing 4v4 or borrowing a player by mutual agreement.
- Region 76 publishes minimum-player rules for 9U-14U only. Confirm with your Division Director what applies in your division rather than assuming.



Disagreements over calls

- There is no referee at 6U-8U — you and the other coach run the game between you, so you will occasionally disagree.
- Agree the format and ground rules before kickoff — most disputes start with something never settled.
- If you disagree during play, give the benefit of the doubt and move on. Nothing is being recorded and no standings exist.
- Never argue it in front of the children. They are watching how two adults resolve a disagreement.
- If something genuinely needs resolving, take it to your Division Director afterward.



Rain and field closures

- Closures are a regional decision, not yours. Never make the call yourself.
- Check the Current Field Status banner at the top of ayso76.org before you leave the house, and again before you tell anyone anything.
- Weather policy and field status: ayso76.org/region-76-fields
- Have a wet-weather message ready to send. Families with small children need more notice than most.

Who to contact, and every link you need

People

Division Director

Rosters, scheduling, short-squad questions

ayso76.org/regional-board-of-directors

Coach Administrator

Certification, coaching questions, practice support

coach@ayso76.org

Referee Administrator

Training as a referee for the older divisions

referee@ayso76.org

Registrar

Player registration and roster problems

registrar@ayso76.org

Regional Commissioner

Escalations and anything unresolved

commissioner@ayso76.org

Pages

InLeague login (rosters, schedules)

ayso76.net/app

Coach information hub

ayso76.org/coach-information

"Everyone Plays" — the 3/4 rule

ayso76.org/everyone-plays-guidelines

Program overview — formats and field sizes

ayso76.org/program-overview

How teams are formed at 8U and below

ayso76.org/how-we-form-teams

Health and safety, forms, insurance

ayso76.org/health-and-safety

Code of Conduct

ayso76.org/code-of-conduct

Fields, maps, field status, weather

ayso76.org/region-76-fields

Regional calendar

ayso76.org/regional-calendar

Picture day

ayso76.org/picture-day

Coaches WhatsApp group

ayso76.org/coach-whatsapp-group-signup

Monday Open Practice

ayso76.org/monday-open-practice

8U Spring League

ayso76.org/8u-spring-league

Program FAQ

ayso76.org/program-faq



Your first week, in eight boxes



Confirm your team name with your Division Director

Page 4



Confirm your full roster is correct in InLeague

Page 4



Send the welcome email — all seven items

Page 5



Recruit a snack coordinator and team parent

Page 6



Write your quarter rotation template

Page 9



Plan your first practice — a ball at every child's feet

Page 20



Complete your background check, safety course, and CDC concussion training

Page 23



Read the positive-coaching page before week one

Page 11

Thank you for coaching. For most of these children you are their first experience of the game — and that is the whole job.

