

# **AYSO REGION 1031**

## **U-8 Guidelines**

### **THE FIELD:**

2 fields approximately 40 yards long and 20 yards wide each, with a set of pop up goals. No field lines will be drawn. Flat cones and tall cones will help demarcate the field.

### **THE GOALS:**

Pop up goals.

### **THE BALL:**

A size 3 ball is used for U-8 games.

### **METHOD OF PLAY:**

We will play split squad games so that ALL the children play the whole game. As the game itself is the best teacher, it does the players little good sitting on the sidelines. Each team will be made up of (8) eight players. On game day each coach will divide his team into 2 separate and equally strong teams, or a split squad. One of the teams will play one of the split squads from the other team, while the other split squad will play the other split squad on another field.

At the half break, one team will have both its split squads switch fields. This way, ALL the kids get a chance to play each other. Obviously we may have situations where a team will not have all its players. In the event of this, ALL the kids will still play. One team may have a split squad with 3 players, and 4 players. They will thus play short sided 3v4, while their other split squad will play 4v4. If the numerical difference is great than 1 player, coaches are required to allow a player(s) to play on one of the other teams split squads. Coaches you will need to prepare your players for this, as well as having at least 4 practice vest/pennies.

REMEMBER U8 is A NON COMPETITIVE DIVISION, THE SCORE IS NOT TO BE KEPT, OR SPOKEN! All the teams, and split squads are winners, please do not talk about season wins and losses. This is a non competitive division. There are NO team standings or playoffs. In addition, it is fine and desirable to mix the roster in the event of one side being strong. This not only helps to develop good sportsmanship, but helps strengthen the children's skills. Under no circumstance should a child be held out of the match to even out the teams numbers!

### **GOAL KEEPERS:**

We will play with no goalkeepers in U8. Players are not encouraged to hang by the goal. Coach them to attack, and play positively, not to hang back and defend their own goal.

**PLAY:**

The coaches are encouraged to let the kids play. Shouting directions and actions are not encouraged. Let the kids play. The Referee will help direct and instruct the players during the match. The Coaches will NOT be allowed to be inside the field of play during the match. Let them play and learn the game. Training or practice is the time to instruct, and shout directions if you so chose. On Saturday, just let them go at it.

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

**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. The Center Referee in U8 will also help instruct the players to the ways of the game when needed. They will be on the field of play with the players, not the coaches.

**ASSISITANT REFEREE/CLUB LINESMAN:**

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.

**THE START OF PLAY:**

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

**THE KICK OFF:**

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. 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:**

The Referee will assess direct free kicks for all fouls, with the opponents six yards away from the ball. Direct free kicks for all fouls, with the opponents six yards away from the ball. Free kicks are 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. There are 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

**DURATION OF THE GAME:**

Four 8-minute periods. Halftime break of 4–8 minutes. Please note that any late starting match will not make up the lost time. Each match **MUST END** at the designated time.

**END OF PLAY:**

The game needs to end approximately 1-2 minutes **BEFORE** your allotted end time. Teams will not be allowed to extend the matches because of a late start. At the end of play, and near the center of one of the fields, the players will reform as two separate teams, line up, and shake each other's hands, including the referee. As this happens all the spectators are encouraged to form a team tunnel for both teams to run thru.

**PLAYER EQUIPMENT:**

Shoes and shinguards, **COVERED BY SOCKS** are mandatory at all practice and game activities. Soccer shoes, tennis shoes, or similar type athletic shoes are recommended. Baseball or Football Cleats which have a toe cleat are not allowed (A single cleat at the very front of the shoe). The type and condition of cleated shoes must be inspected for safety before use.