



U6 GUIDELINES

(These are specific to our region – AYSO National differs in some areas)

Rev. September 5, 2008

Just a few points for coaches, referees & parents to remember, especially for those who have experience in other divisions, as to how U6 differs from soccer's Laws of the Game. 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.

1. **Duration of game** is twenty minutes and is played in 2 ten-minute halves with substitutions allowed 5 minutes into each half. The half-time break is 5-10 minutes. Play should be stopped at a normal stoppage in play. Due to lack of substitutes or hot weather, the referees may use their discretion to allow for a short break for players to get a drink.
2. **Throw-Ins:** When the ball goes out of play, in U6 games, across the touch lines (side lines), a throw-in is awarded from where it crossed the line to the team that didn't touch it last. In U6 games, whether the throw-in is properly taken or not, let it go! Proper technique can be taught at practice later by the coach. Again, let them play. Referees should give quick explanations when necessary and minimize interruptions. Keep the game moving and fun.
3. **Fouls and Other Stoppages:** Deliberate fouling should be rare in U6 games. Kicking, tripping, handling the ball and dangerous play may occur. There should be few, if any, additional reasons to stop play in U6 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 plane or butterfly), the Referee should refocus the players and begin again with a free kick or throw-in as appropriate. Award the restart to whichever team deserves it or flip a coin to decide but do not make it a lengthy ceremony. Exercise common sense. The Referee should briefly explain infractions and stand back and let 'em play.
4. **Free Kicks:** Play may have to be stopped occasionally to "sort things out" in U6 games. A player may pick the ball up and start running with it or want to keep it away from the other players or perhaps there is a pile of kids on the ground kicking at both the ball and each other. The Referee should stop play and correct the situation, then restart with a free kick for a deserving player. All free kicks in U6 games are direct free kicks, which means, if you're lucky, a goal can be scored

directly from the kick. There are no penalty kicks (in which only one player defends the goal – the whole team is always there).

5. **Distance from Ball:** Players should be asked to stand back roughly 5 yards from the ball being kicked (for free kicks, goal kicks, kick-offs, etc.) to give the kicker room to kick the ball without it immediately hitting an opponent.
6. **Offside** should never be called. It is too complicated for U6 players.
7. **Playing time:** 3/4 rule applies to all players on the team (no one plays the entire game unless everyone else has played 3 quarters). Unlike other AYSO divisions, U-6 division referees do not record player participation on game cards and will not know who plays or does not. It is the responsibility of coaches to make sure that everyone plays.
8. **A goal**, as 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; but in U6 games, they are not recorded to determine who wins. Everyone wins in U6 games. The no slaughter rule still applies, however (leading team must pull back to keep score within 5 goals).
9. **Play 5 vs. 5 with no goalkeepers.** If the opposing team has less than 5 players then you have to play down (play the same number of players). However, there should never be more than 2 subs. Coaches are encouraged to “lend” players to the opposing team to field the proper number of players. Do not play more than 5 v 5. (See AYSO’s *philosophy on short-sided games & the benefit to the players.*)

OTHER NOTES/COMMENTS:

Referees should briefly explain any infringements to ALL the players and help players with instructions. They are the teachers on the field – they should encourage proper play and sporting behavior. Every effort should be made to keep the game moving and free from stoppages for doubtful infractions. Let them play and enjoy.

Referees must be registered AYSO volunteers (*meaning completion of safe haven and eAYSO volunteer background check*). Assistant Referees work each sideline and assist the Center Referee with calling the ball in and out of play. The home team should provide the 3 referees. If someone is absent, they can recruit an Assistant Referee from the visiting team. In a pinch, uncertified parents may serve as Assistant Referees. This is a great opportunity for parents to get involved.

You have your field for 1 hour – on the hour. If you start late, or take a long half-time break, please make-up that time somehow so you still end on time as a courtesy to all the parents who have games after you. As the official timekeepers, this is the Referee’s responsibility. However, if the Referee feels s/he has too much going on to keep track of

time, select someone to be the timekeeper.

Spectators from each team should be on opposite sides of the field. Spectators must stand/sit at least 1 yard away from the touchlines – Have the coaches & assistant referees encourage this. Team Managers should help ensure proper sideline etiquette.

Ball Size is size 3.

Coin toss: The “Home team” makes the call; either “heads or tails” in the air. If the call is correct the home team decides what end they will defend. If the call is incorrect then the “Visiting team” decides what end they will defend. Losing the coin toss means you kick off first. Coaches should prepare their captains on what end to choose to defend first.

Field Set-Up is the responsibility of all the teams with the first game. Please arrive early to complete this task in time for the players to practice with the goals. Each field has 2 goals & nets, plus 6 flags – 4 on each of the corners, and 1 each at mid-field, about a yard away from the edge of the field (touchline). Additionally, the Kids Zone sign needs to be placed in a visible location.

Field Take-Down is the responsibility of the teams with the last game on that field. Sometimes, one field may end earlier than another, so be sure to check if yours is the last game for that field. All field equipment needs to be returned to the storage room, along with the Kids Zone sign. Please also pick-up any trash or recycling.

Thanks for your help and cooperation in making this an enjoyable experience for all the children!