



# 2021

## Spring/Summer League Coaches Manual

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## Administrative Manual

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# Arrowhead Youth Soccer Association (AYSA)

## Mission Statement

*AYSA strives to create a safe, fun, and nurturing environment that helps players grow in the sport of soccer while encouraging sportsmanship, respectful relationships, and positive experiences.*

To accomplish this, AYSA is dedicated to coaching, modeling, and promoting:

**Fun:** AYSA provides a fun and safe experience for players, adult volunteers, and officials in recreational and competitive youth soccer. Among the many life skills learned through soccer, the ability to have fun with others is central. AYSA provides an environment for players to improve skills, enjoy victory, learn from defeat, and build relationships on their team. Fun also facilitates commitment to the game of soccer, and helps players benefit from the discipline, respect, and teamwork required for success.

**Sportsmanship:** AYSA members (players, coaches, officials, and fans) accept the responsibility of respecting the entire soccer community they have joined by practicing sportsmanship. Sportsmanship includes fair play, doing your best, and winning and losing with grace. Sportsmanship also means respecting teammates, opponents, coaches, and officials alike.

**Respect:** Respect acknowledges the value, dignity, and inherent equality of every human being, and requires empathy for the experiences, perceptions, and feelings of others. AYSA is an organization built on respect. AYSA affiliated adults, players, and officials behave in ways that reflect the value, dignity, and equality of everyone in the soccer community, as well as the community at large.

**Community Building:** Teams perform best when they have built a strong sense of community. Healthy communities serve the interests of everyone regardless of classifications like race, gender, and economic status. AYSA promotes healthy relationship and leadership skills that will fuel successful soccer teams, build friendships, and help players strengthen their respective communities.

**Responsibility:** Success in soccer relies on individuals assuming roles in the best interests of the team. In addition to each player's position, those roles include taking responsibility for one's self and the well-being of each team member on and off the field. AYSA fosters responsibility to one's team, as well as one's family, friends, and community.

**Healthy Lifestyles:** Soccer promotes health beyond physical fitness. AYSA recognizes that coaches are in a powerful position to support the development of youth into joyful, balanced, and caring young adults who will grow to be parents, spouses, employees, and community members someday. AYSA is dedicated to building healthy players and a healthy community.

**Fulfillment of Potential:** AYSA recognizes its responsibility to provide every player and official with opportunities to succeed. AYSA coaches will help develop leadership skills within their teams, do their best to put each player in a position to contribute to success, and provide affirmation and encouragement for players' efforts on and off the field. AYSA believes all youth are equally valuable and deserve a place to shine.

### Tobacco-Free AYSA

The Arrowhead Youth Soccer Association is tobacco-free. The use of tobacco products is prohibited in parking areas as well as fields, sidelines and surrounding areas during all AYSA activities. Participants and fans should be aware that almost all fields used for AYSA activities are designated tobacco-free at all times. Coaches, parents, and players all contribute to making AYSA a healthy, tobacco-free environment!



Dear Coaches:

Let me first thank you for making the commitment to support youth soccer by giving your time, your energy, and your enthusiasm. Yours is an important job and I appreciate your willingness to volunteer. At AYSA, we are committed to providing the best possible youth sports experience, and you, the coach are the most important part of that.

In your role as a coach, you will influence players! They will observe your actions; they will listen to your words. Kids will absorb and learn from your interactions with them and others. In your role as a coach, you have a tremendous opportunity to help kids learn life skills. You are an important role model for your team. Please keep this in mind as you interact with players. We ask you to model appropriate behavior in the following ways:

- Be a consistent role model: maintain personal and professional integrity both on and off the field.
- Coach the whole person: promote the emotional, physical, academic, and athletic dimensions of the student athlete.
- Be sure to send a message about respect for all players, regardless of gender, physical appearance, or perceived athletic ability. Avoid messages and actions that are disrespectful and based on gender. For example, if you coach boys, avoid messages like “you play like a girl.” If you coach girls, avoid messages that indicate you have lower expectations of them as athletes because of their gender.
- Practice open communication with players and parents.
- Treat your players with respect and kindness. Care about them as individuals.
- Be sure that all your players are getting positive messages about their importance to the team.
- Treat all players equally. Make sure all players are getting appropriate playing time and attention in practice.
- Set clear expectations and goals that are realistic but high for individuals and teams.
- Do not yell at players. They play soccer to have fun, and it is never fun to be yelled at.
- Do not yell at referees or treat them disrespectfully. They are a critical part of the game with a difficult job. If you treat them with respect, they will continue to improve and thrive as officials.
- Do not disparage your opponents. Teach your kids to treat opponents with honor and respect.
- Make sure players treat each other with respect. Do not allow verbal abuse of teammates, opponents or officials.
- Win and lose with dignity and integrity.
- Keep the games fun.

Thanks again for coaching. I hope this is a fun season for you and your players.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julien Bratek".

Julien Bratek  
Executive Director

# AYSA GENERAL GUIDELINES

## **A. COACH RESPONSIBILITIES**

Coaching is a privilege granted by clubs and parents, which carries certain responsibilities. Coaches are role models for their players. They set the tone in sportsmanship for their players and fans. It is important to remember that the game is for the players, and that soccer is more than "winning at all costs." The coaches' objective should be skill development, fun, and sportsmanship.

- Coaches should follow the Coaches Code of Conduct.
- Coaches are required to complete the Minnesota Youth Soccer sanctioned background check.
- Coaches are required to complete concussion training at least once every three years.
- Coaches are required to complete child abuse prevention training every year (full training or refresher).
- Coaches should check the field for playability prior to games and practices. This includes ensuring that goals are anchored.
- Each player present must play a minimum of half of the game except in the case of injury or discipline.
- Coaches must have the official team roster at every game.
- Only coaches listed on the official team roster are allowed on the sideline for games.
- The coach is responsible for controlling the behavior of his/her team's players and fans.
- Coaches are responsible for dealing with game cancellations and scheduling makeup games. See J. for more information.
- No coach, player, or spectator may be behind or within 10 yards of the goal. Coaches and players not in the game should remain on their designated side of the field, at least 2 yards from the touchline and in the coaches or technical area. Coaches should remain in the coach's area, which begins 10 yards from the halfway line and extends fifteen yards towards the goal on either side of the halfway line. Coaches should never stand on the touchline or at the half line. Coaches should never cross the touchline onto the field without referee permission.
- Coaches should monitor Red Cards of their team. If a violation occurs, they should have their player sit out the required amount of games.
- Coaches must conduct themselves, at all times, in a responsible manner. Use of foul or abusive language by players, coaches, or spectators will not be tolerated. Violators will be asked to remove themselves from the field area.
- Use of tobacco or alcohol products is prohibited at all AYSA functions.
- Coaches should check the uniform color of the opponent prior to the game, and communicate changes if both teams have the same color. The home team is responsible for obtaining pinnies or wearing alternate colors.
- All teams must have adult supervision. Players may not coach themselves under any circumstances. All adult coaches must be registered with AYSA. Adults are defined as persons too old to be eligible for U19 youth soccer.
- Coaches should initiate post-game handshakes. Coaches who fail to shake hands and exhibit good sportsmanship in defeat as well as victory should be reported to the AYSA office.
- Any coach who is found guilty of abuse of a referee, player, or member of the AYSA will be subject to consequences based on the AYSA Disciplinary Policy (see appendix).

## **B. REFEREE RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Check the field for playability prior to the game.
- Ensure that goals are adequately anchored.
- Pass on to coaches any special instructions or information deemed pertinent.
- Check players for shin guards, proper eye wear, proper jerseys, hazardous equipment or clothing, and illegal spikes.
- Check AYSA official team roster to ensure that all players and coaches are eligible to participate in the game.
- Control play on the field.

The referee is the ultimate authority on the field. Their decisions should be accepted without question

**C. PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Coaches should ensure that parents of players understand the following responsibilities. Parents should:

- Treat the referee, coaches, players from your team and players from the opposing team with respect
- Ensure that there are at least two responsible adults on site if players are being dropped off for practices or games. The parent should remain on site if only one other adult is available.
- Ensure that their player is not left at a field alone or with just one adult after a game or practice.
- Ensure the safety of their player by being the ultimate decision-maker on whether their child plays or practices when injury, illness, weather or other safety issues are cause for concern.
- Supervise their player around soccer goals or other equipment to ensure player safety.
- Model behavior appropriate to a youth sports environment

**COACHES, PLEASE ASK YOUR FANS/PARENTS  
TO FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES FOR SIDELINE BEHAVIOR**

<b>FAN CODE OF CONDUCT</b>	<b>For the safety and enjoyment of everyone we ask that you refrain from:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We appreciate your attendance at our youth event.</li> <li>• Our participants need your positive support and encouragement.</li> <li>• Please show kindness and respect in your words and actions toward coaches, players, officials, and fans.</li> <li>• Please encourage those around you to be kind and respectful.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yelling at officials, coaches, fans, or players</li> <li>• Commenting on referee calls</li> <li>• Verbally abusing referees</li> <li>• Profanity</li> <li>• Name calling</li> <li>• Violent behavior</li> <li>• Coaching from the sidelines</li> </ul>

**D. HOST TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Marking the field, assuring presence of goals, nets, and corner flags.
- Goal anchors are mandatory and games will not be played unless goals are properly anchored.

**E. ROSTER SIZE AND NUMBER OF PLAYERS ON THE FIELD**

**U15/U19** Maximum: 22 players on roster.

For U15, AYSA strongly recommends rosters of no more than 18 players.

Individual AYSA clubs may set smaller roster maximums at any age group.

Maximum: 11 players on the field, one of whom must be the goalkeeper.

Minimum: 7 players on the field to start the game, one of whom must be the goalkeeper.

**U12** Maximum: 18 players on roster.

AYSA strongly recommends rosters of no more than 16 players.

Individual AYSA clubs may set smaller roster maximums at any age group.

Maximum: 9 players on the field, one of whom must be the goalkeeper.

Minimum: 6 players on the field to start the game, one of whom must be the goalkeeper.

## **F. OFFICIAL TEAM ROSTERS**

- Official team rosters will be issued to each team coach.
- Coaches will have the official team roster at every game, and will make the roster available to the referee prior to game time. Players not listed on the roster may not participate in a legal game.
- If a coach does not have the official roster available for the game, the coach, with permission of the referee and the opposing coach, may forfeit the game and play it as a scrimmage. The game would be recorded as a 3-0 win for the opposing team.
- There will be no make-up opportunities when teams do not play, or forfeit games due to missing roster.
- Some teams are also registered as “Rec Plus” teams and will have player passes. These passes are only to be used for MYSAsanctioned tournaments. These will not work for rec league games.

### **2021 Birth Year Guidelines:**

U12	2009-2011
U15	2006-2008
U19	2002-2005

## **G. ROSTERED ADULTS**

- Adults will only be listed on the official roster once they have completed all of their coach requirements.
- Adults not listed on the official roster will not be allowed on the team sideline. If there is no adult listed on the official roster present to coach the team, the referee will not allow the game to begin. If the game is in process and no adult listed on the roster is available to coach, the game will end immediately and the referee will provide a game report to the Executive Director to determine the result.

## **H. PLAYING FOR MORE THAN ONE TEAM**

- AYSA registered players of the same club may play up to the next age level an unlimited number of times.
- Players may never play down an age level, nor may they play for another team at the same age level.
- The player playing up must have the permission of his/her registered team coach.
- Coaches must write in the “play-up” players name and birthdate on the official roster for each game.

## **I. GAME CANCELLATIONS: WEATHER RELATED**

Game cancellations due to weather or field conditions will not be determined until 3:30 P.M. each day. For coaches, game cancellations will be announced on the AYSA Hotline (see below). For players and parents, game cancellations will be posted on the AYSA website after 3:30 PM. Please inform parents and players to check the website on days of doubtful weather. The website address is [www.arrowheadsoccer.com](http://www.arrowheadsoccer.com). Be sure to check after 3:30 and to refresh the site to ensure you are getting up to date information. Because technology can be inconsistent, we strongly recommend that coaches contact team families when games are cancelled. Determining weather related cancellations from a central location, two-four hours prior to game time is a very inexact science. The weather can change quickly during summer evenings, so games may be cancelled at the field by the referee.

### **AYSA Hotline**

The AYSA Office Hotline number is 624-1713. **This line is available to coaches and referees only.** On any day that games on any field are to be cancelled, there will be an announcement on the AYSA voicemail system after 3:30 PM. If you do not hear a cancellation message on the voicemail, assume your game will be played. Weather related cancellations will also be posted on the AYSA website. The website address is [www.arrowheadsoccer.com](http://www.arrowheadsoccer.com). Please discourage parents and players from using the hotline. We have three incoming phone lines at AYSA and the lines can fill quickly. Encourage your parents to check the website, or to wait for your call.

## Lightning

Referees are instructed to stop play if they see lightning. Referees should also stop play if they hear threatening thunder. Players, coaches, and spectators will be asked to leave the field and move to their vehicles. Generally, referees will suspend the game and ask players and coaches to remain at the site until it is determined whether the game can be safely restarted. Referees will restart play if it appears that the lightning passed over the area, and if at least fifteen minutes has passed since the last appearance of lightning. Referees will immediately cancel the game if the weather is too hazardous for players and coaches to remain in vehicles at the site. Coaches should never try to overrule a referee that has stopped play due to lightning or other weather hazards. Coaches should always inform the referee and remove their team from the field if they feel that the weather is hazardous.

## Heat and Water Breaks

Referees may impose water breaks, shorten or suspend games due to dangerously high heat. Teams with an inadequate number of substitutes may request and receive a two-minute running time water break in each half. This request must be made prior to the start of the game.

The following are recommended minimum guidelines when there is a possibility of dangerous high heat index:

Heat Index	Recommended Guidelines
Up to 89°	Normal Play
90° - 99°	Mandatory 2-minute water breaks per half with running time. Each half shortened by 5 minutes.
100° - 105°	Mandatory 2-minute water breaks per half with running time. Each half shortened by 10 minutes.
105°+	Suspend play.

## Other Safety Issues

Referees or local field coordinators may cancel games at the site if, in their opinion, field or weather conditions constitute a safety hazard or an extreme hazard to long-term field conditions.

**Games are considered complete if canceled after the first half of play has been completed.**

## J. GAME CANCELLATIONS INITIATED BY TEAM

In the event that a coach finds it necessary to cancel a game, proper notice is as follows:

1. Advise the AYSA office and opposing team coach of the game cancellation at least 2 business days before the game. Call the AYSA office or use the AYSA email address: [morgan@arrowheadsoccer.com](mailto:morgan@arrowheadsoccer.com) to cancel the game and referees.
2. Advise your Coordinator of the game cancellation. Clubs using the Arlington, Jean Duluth, and Rice Lake Park Fields should advise the AYSA office.

## K. GAME MAKE-UP PROCEDURE

Make up games are the responsibility of the coaches involved and are made in the following steps:

1. Home team coaches should check with the AYSA office for available field dates and times and then confirm with their local field coordinator. Clubs using the Arlington, Jean Duluth and Rice Lake Park fields should check with the AYSA office. AYSA staff can be reached by phone at 624-1713 or email [morgan@arrowheadsoccer.com](mailto:morgan@arrowheadsoccer.com).
2. Home team coach contacts opposing coach to confirm place, date, and time of the make-up game.
3. The home team coach calls AYSA to confirm the game so we can assign referees. Leave a message specifying the teams involved, date, time and location of the make-up game. The Referee Coordinator will assign a referee for the game or let the home team coach know that no referee is available. Please allow a minimum of 4 working days in order for the Referee Coordinator to assign a referee to a make-up game.

## **L. TEAM NO SHOWS**

If a team does not show up for a game, and does not give proper notice to postpone a game, they will forfeit that game. The "no show" team's parent club could be assessed a no show fee. Report no shows to the AYSA Executive Director within two days of occurrence.

## **M. REFEREE NO SHOWS**

If two teams arrive for a game and no referee is present to officiate the game, opposing coaches should meet and decide whether to proceed with a volunteer referee. If no volunteer referee can be found, the game should be considered a cancellation and coaches should follow procedures for scheduling a make-up game. If the game is played, the outcome will be considered official.

Before canceling any game due to a referee no-show, please remember that the players have come to play and the field is available. Remember that most fields are scheduled near their capacity so the rescheduling of a game can be difficult. Please remember that, if coaches ask a volunteer to referee, they need to be sure to keep players and fans on their best behavior during the game.

## **N. PROTESTS**

Protest may only be made under the following circumstances:

1. A problem that cannot be resolved prior to the game. The referee and the opposing coach are advised that the game is being played under protest before the game.
2. Illegal behavior which may have significantly influenced the outcome of the game.

In either case, the protest must be noted on the referee's game card. A protest letter must be filed with the AYSA Executive Director within 48 hours of the game. Action on the protest will take place within 10 days. Protests pertaining to a referee's judgment call are not permitted.

## **O. SANCTIONS**

**Violations of AYSA rules, including incidents of unruly coaches or fans may result in the following sanctions:**

1. Removal of the offending person or persons from the area.
2. Suspension of the coach for a length of time to be determined by Executive Director.
3. Forfeiture of the game in progress.
4. Forfeiture of the team's schedule until assurances are made of improved conditions.
5. Cancellation of the remainder of the schedule.

Sanctions will be governed by the Coaches Code of Conduct or the AYSA Disciplinary Policy, included in this document.

## ARROWHEAD YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT



Arrowhead Youth Soccer wants to thank you for volunteering to coach a youth soccer team. All coaches that volunteer to coach an AYSA affiliated team, are expected to follow the Coaches Code of Conduct. By following the guidelines listed below, you will enrich the season for yourself, your team, and the families involved. These guidelines help ensure that games are fair, positive, and enjoyable experiences. A soccer game should be friendly and unifying – a spirited social and athletic occasion for players, coaches, referees and spectators.

To clarify expectations of coach conduct, we expect all coaches to conform to this code of conduct.

- Before, during and after the game, be an example of dignity, patience, and positive spirit.
- Before a game, introduce yourself to the opposing coach and to the referee.
- During the game, please remain in the coaches' area, a space that extends 10 yards on either side of the halfway line. Coaches should not cross the halfway line, and should stay 2 yards back from the touchline.
- During the game, you are responsible for the sportsmanship of your players. If one of your players is disrespectful, irresponsible, or overly aggressive, take the player out of the game at least long enough for him/her to calm down. If their conduct does not improve, do not allow them back on the field.
- During the game, you are also responsible for the conduct of the parents of your players and other spectators supporting your team. It is imperative to explain acceptable player and parent behavior in a preseason meeting. If you experience a game where fan behavior is not acceptable, your team should have a parent meeting to review acceptable behavior.
- Encourage fans to applaud and cheer for good plays by either team. Do not allow parents or other fans to yell at players of either team or the referee.
- During the game, do not address the referee at all. If you have a rules related question, discuss it with the referee calmly and patiently at half time or after the game. This should not be seen as an opportunity to question the referee's judgment, but can be an opportunity to educate yourself on the rules.
- If you have a complaint, or if you think the referee was unfair, biased, unfit, or incompetent, report your opinion to the AYSA Executive Director. If you feel a game is unsafe for your players due to the actions of the referee or the opposing team, you may pull your team off the field, effectively ending the game. Report this action and reasons why to the AYSA Executive Director at 624-1713.
- After the game, thank the referee and ask your players to do the same.

### **Please Remember...**

Referees – especially young and inexperienced ones – are like your players and yourself, in that they need time to develop. You can play an important role in helping them to improve by letting them concentrate on the game. You can help by encouraging them, and by accepting their inevitable, occasional mistakes.

Think about what you are doing during a game! Your example is powerful, for better or worse. If you insist on fair play, if you concentrate on your players' enjoyment of the game and their overall, long-term development, and if you support the referee, your players and their parents will notice. If you allow your players to play outside the rules, if you are overly concerned about results, or if you criticize the referee harshly, your players and their parents will also notice.

Coaches who do not follow the expectations described above will be disciplined or removed. If a coach is out of control, a referee may request the coach to leave before a game continues. If a coach is asked to leave a game, they will serve an automatic minimum mandatory one game suspension, following a review by the AYSA Executive Director.

# **ARROWHEAD YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION**

## **POLICY RELATING TO CONCUSSION AND CONCUSSED PLAYERS**

The Arrowhead Youth Soccer Association is adopting this policy as part of its obligation to provide a safe playing environment for its players.

Awareness of concussion and effects of concussion on players, especially youth players, has increased over the past decade. Medically, a concussion is a form of traumatic brain injury. Because it is a brain injury, a concussion is not a visible injury, such as a broken arm. It requires time to heal properly, involving both physical and mental rest. Consequences may include loss of coordination or memory, vision problems, learning issues and changes in emotions and behavior. A concussion may result from a direct blow to the head or from an indirect blow to the body that causes various forces to affect the brain within the skull. Signs and symptoms may appear immediately or may be noticed hours or days (or longer) later. There are a wide variety of symptoms which are possible. Loss of consciousness is not required to be diagnosed with a concussion. Adolescents require more time to recover from concussions than adults.

The US Center for Disease Control and Prevention has established the **HEADS UP: Concussion in Youth Sports** program and tool kit to provide training to coaches, athletes and parents regarding concussions. The Minnesota Legislature passed legislation (MN Statute 121A.37 and 121A.38) in 2011 regarding youth athletes, concussions and return to play.

### **Pre-Season Requirements**

Coaches and officials are required to take the free CDC online training course *Concussion Training for Coaches*, or participate in equivalent concussion training sponsored or endorsed by Arrowhead Youth Soccer before they may coach or officiate for the first time starting with the 2012 season and once every three years thereafter. The certificate of completion at the end of the online training is proof the course has been taken. Parents and athletes may take the course for their own information.

Parents, players, coaches and officials should print more information about the nature and risks of concussions at <https://www.arrowheadsoccer.com/headsup-concussion> and click on the appropriate link for fact sheets for parents, athletes and coaches/officials.

### **Season Requirements**

Coaches during practices and coaches or officials during games shall remove a player from active participation in the practice or game if the player exhibits the signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion or is suspected of sustaining a concussion (MN Statute 121A.37 (b)). The player is not allowed to return to play until cleared in writing by a provider trained in evaluation and management of concussions (MN Statute 121A.37(c)).

The coach shall inform the parent/legal guardian about the possible concussion and the event surrounding the possible concussion (e.g. collision, fall, etc.).

# ARROWHEAD YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION POLICIES

**Your local soccer club belongs to the Arrowhead Youth Soccer Association (AYSA). AYSA provides your clubs with scheduling, public relations, state and national affiliation, and administrative support.**

AYSA is a 501c3 private non-profit organization with approved bylaws and a Board of Directors. AYSA is affiliated with the Minnesota Youth Soccer Association and The United States Youth Soccer Association. AYSA serves approximately 32 clubs, and about 6,000 players. AYSA organizes soccer activities in the following manner:

## **Competitive Soccer:** Ages 11-19

Registration: Varies by club. Many clubs register in late fall or early winter. This option will likely include some midweek travel to the Twin Cities and may include one or more out-of-town weekend tournaments. Teams may hold tryouts soon after registration. Season begins in early May and runs through July.

## **Upper Division Recreational Soccer:** Ages 10-19

Season begins in late May. No tryouts. Generally, games are played two nights a week. Most games held within a 30-mile radius of downtown Duluth with occasional travel to Grand Rapids, Hibbing, or Biwabik. The season ends with playoffs during the last two weeks of July.

## **Lower Division Recreational Soccer:** Ages 5-13

Season begins August 1 and ends in late September or early October. No tryouts. Generally, games are played one or two nights a week. Most games held within a 30-mile radius of downtown Duluth with occasional travel to Grand Rapids area for U12/U14 teams.

## **Fall League:** Ages 12-15

Registration: Mid-August.

Season begins the Sunday after Labor Day. No tryouts. Generally, games are played on weekends. Most games held within a 30-mile radius of downtown Duluth with occasional travel to the Iron Range.

## **Little NetBusters:** Ages 3-4

Registration information is in the February Newsletter and on the AYSA website. The program runs evenings during June in Duluth and August in both Duluth and Cloquet. Sessions consist of age appropriate soccer activities supervised by trained coaches. AYSA also provides a winter session of Little NetBusters.

## US YOUTH SOCCER RECREATIONAL SOCCER POLICY

Coaches are responsible for upholding and communicating the mission and spirit of recreational soccer.

What is recreational soccer? Recreational soccer allows youth to:

Participate in a fun, physical activity	Develop friendships
Develop team building and problem solving skills	Participate in affordable team activities

United States Youth Soccer (USYSA) defines recreational soccer as a program in which:

- The use of tryouts, invitations, recruiting, or any like process to roster players selectively to any team on the basis of talent or ability is prohibited.
- Affiliate members must accept as participant any and all eligible youths (subject to reasonable terms of registration). Note: AYSA and all AYSA affiliated clubs are USYSA affiliate members.
- A system of rostering players is employed for the purpose of creating a fair or balanced distribution of playing talent among all teams participating.
- **Each player plays at least ½ of each game except for reasons of injury, illness, or discipline.**

## **KIDSAFE: Promoting the health and safety of AYSA players**

Kidsafe is a program of US Youth Soccer and the Minnesota Youth Soccer Association. Please use the following KIDSAFE guidelines for all AYSA activities.

### **Coaches**

- Coaches should never be alone with a player. Always have another adult or player with you.
- Don't allow yourself to become a "baby sitter." Parents have the responsibility to be timely with their player.
- Proper conduct with players is essential. Setting a good example provides both soccer and life learning experiences for both parents and players.
- Establish a "buddy system" for players in unfamiliar environments. This applies to training, home/away match sites and tournaments. Players should not be left "on their own" in unfamiliar surroundings.
- Coaches should always keep clear boundaries between adults and players.

### **Parents: Coaches should encourage parents to...**

- Have an open dialogue with your children – let them know you respect and believe them.
- Don't use your coach/team as a babysitter; be accountable to ensure your player is taken to and picked up for training and games without relying on the coach.
- Help your coach be safe. Be there, but don't interfere.
- Be aware of surroundings and people around your children.
- Talk to your child about the responsibility to behave and then look in the mirror and talk to yourself about the responsibility to behave.
- Don't compromise your child's safety.
- Keep clear boundaries between adults and players.

### **Players: Coaches should encourage players to...**

- Trust your instincts – if it doesn't feel right, leave.
- Use the "buddy system" in unfamiliar environments.
- It's okay to tell your parents of uncomfortable situations with adults, regardless of who the adult is – Darkness to Light concept.
- Hold your parents responsible and accountable to ensure you're picked up from practice and other events on time!
- Respect the game and everyone involved in it.
- It is okay to say "no."
- Keep clear boundaries between adults and players.

# ARROWHEAD YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION

## ADDITIONAL POLICIES

### **Non-Discrimination and Participation**

The AYSA is committed to non-discrimination on the basis of disability in the operation of its recreational activities. The AYSA supports providing persons with disabilities the opportunity to participate in and benefit from AYSA-related activities. All inquiries concerning such participation should be directed to the AYSA Executive Director. Such inquiries are handled on an individual basis. The AYSA may exclude an individual from participation if his or her participation would result in a direct threat to the health or safety of others or as otherwise permitted by applicable law.

The Arrowhead Youth Soccer Association (AYSA) opens its membership to all soccer organizations and all soccer players, coaches, trainers, managers, administrators and officials without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or national origin.

### **Harassment**

The AYSA is committed to promoting a recreational environment that is free from harassment. Accordingly, harassment is strictly prohibited. Any member of or participant in the AYSA or its activities, including players, coaches, referees, officials, administrators, and others affiliated with the AYSA, who is found to have acted in violation of this policy will be subject to appropriate corrective action, which may include exclusion from participation in the AYSA or its activities.

“Harassment” includes verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of their race, creed, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, membership or activity in a local commission, any other protected class status defined by local, state or federal laws. Harassment may consist of epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, threatening or intimidating acts, as well as written or graphic material.

### **Sexual Harassment**

The AYSA is committed to promoting a recreational environment that is free from sexual harassment. Such behavior includes inappropriate remarks of a sexual nature. Any member, or participant in the AYSA or its activities, including players, coaches, referees, officials, and others affiliated with the AYSA, who is found to have acted in violation of this policy will be subject to appropriate corrective action, which may include exclusion from participation in the AYSA. Any member who feels he or she is being subject to sexual harassment should feel free to object to the behavior, although it is not necessary for the member to handle it alone. The member or individual should report any such occurrences to the AYSA office.

### **Gender Identity Policy**

Every AYSA player should have equal opportunity to reach their full potential and thrive in youth soccer. Transgender, non-binary, and gender nonconforming (trans/non-binary, GNC) youth should have the same access to AYSA activities as other participants.

AYSA players may participate on teams and in leagues that align with their gender identity, even if that identity differs from the sex listed on the player’s birth certificate. Where an AYSA player has a trans/non-binary/GNC identity AYSA will work in partnership with the player and family to ensure participation and facility usage that is affirming and safe.

A trans/non-binary/GNC student athlete student may use a common use name or gender pronouns that are inconsistent with registration records or identity documents. Coaches, administrators, and officials will make every

reasonable effort to honor a player's common use name and gender pronouns, and ensure that those are honored by teammates, opponents, fans, and volunteers.

If a player's choice of gender-based team or league is challenged, AYSA will assemble an eligibility committee which will include at least one AYSA board member, coach, and experts in transgender health and wellness, and/or gender affirming advocates familiar with the issues affecting LGBTQ+ youth.

The eligibility committee will follow US Soccer policy, which states: The United States Soccer Federation (USSF) opens its membership to all soccer organizations and all soccer players, coaches, trainers, managers, administrators and officials "without discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or national origin."

For the purposes of registration on gender-based amateur teams, a player may register with the gender team with which the player identifies, and confirmation sufficient for guaranteeing access shall be satisfied by documentation or evidence that shows the stated gender is sincerely held, and part of a person's core identity. Documentation satisfying the herein stated standard includes, but is not limited to, government-issued documentation or documentation prepared by a health care provider, counselor, or other qualified professional not related to the player. All documentation will remain confidential within the committee. The committee's decision will be final as pertains to AYSA, unless overturned by the Minnesota Youth Soccer Association or US Soccer.

#### **Risk Management Policy: Club or Team Websites**

In order to ensure the safety and privacy of all players registered to play in the Arrowhead Youth Soccer Program, websites for clubs or teams associated/registered with Arrowhead Youth Soccer will not include any information that:

- Associates player pictures with that player's name.
- Provides addresses, ages, or phone numbers of players.
- Provides business or home telephone numbers or business addresses of player's parents or guardians.
- Provides team practice schedules.

#### **Disciplinary Policy**

The Disciplinary Committee shall be established to review serious incidents of unsportsmanlike or prohibited behavior by players, coaches, referees, fans or AYSA and club officials. Such behavior may include, but not be limited to the following:

- More than two (2) red cards issued to the same player during a season.
- More than four (4) red cards issued to the same team during a season.
- Any behavior prohibited by the Minnesota Youth Soccer Association including assault, harassment, racial violence, sexual harassment, sexual violence, taunting, showboating, drug or alcohol use, gambling and inappropriate language.

Committee Membership: The Disciplinary Committee shall consist of the following members of the AYSA:

- |                |                  |
|----------------|------------------|
| - President    | - Vice President |
| - Secretary    | - Treasurer      |
| - Summer Chair | - Fall Chair     |

The Executive Director and Assistant Director shall attend meetings of the committee but shall not have a vote in the proceedings. Committee members may direct questions, including a request for recommendations, to these staff members.

### Procedures

Any member of AYSA, including club coordinators, coaches, players, referees, or other club officials may bring complaints to the Disciplinary Committee. Complaints shall be made in writing and directed to the AYSA Executive Director within 5 days of the incident that provoked the complaint. USSF certified referees will follow USSF guidelines and bring complaints within 48 hours of the incident. The committee has the right to refuse to hear any complaints deemed frivolous by a majority of members.

The President shall convene a meeting of the Disciplinary Committee to hear a complaint within seven (7) days of its receipt. Three members of the committee shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of reviewing complaints and/or imposing sanctions. The Disciplinary Committee shall act in an expeditious manner in reviewing a complaint.

After setting a date for a hearing, the following affected persons, at a minimum, shall be notified and invited to it:

The club coordinator of any teams, coaches or players named in the complaint.

The coach of any teams named in the complaint.

The person(s) bringing the complaint.

Any individuals named in the complaint. If a player is named, then the AYSA shall notify the player's parents or guardians.

The affected persons may be notified verbally, but a written notification shall be sent as well.

In addition to the above persons, the President may invite other persons as witnesses. Witnesses may include, but not be limited to, center referees or assistant referees, coaches, players, fans, or club officials. The person or team named in the complaint may also invite witnesses. A scheduled meeting shall be held if, at a minimum, a quorum of the committee, the individuals named in the complaint, and the person bringing the complaint are in attendance. If, in the opinion of 3 committee members, a reasonable attempt has been made to schedule a meeting convenient to the person named in the complaint, the scheduled meeting can proceed, and all findings will be considered valid. Within five (5) days after the Disciplinary Committee has rendered a decision, its findings shall be sent to the affected persons.

### Sanctions

Violations of these rules may result in the imposition of any of the following sanctions: verbal or written warning, game(s) suspension, partial or full season suspension, temporary or permanent banishment.

### Appeals

A decision of the Disciplinary Committee may be appealed if AYSA does not follow the procedures outlined herein AND this results in important information from being considered in the Disciplinary Committee's decision. Appeals should be made in writing to the President of the AYSA within three days of receipt of the Disciplinary Committee's decision. Appeals will be taken up by the Disciplinary Committee within 5 days of receipt of the appeal. During an appeal, the Board shall only consider the report of the Disciplinary Committee and the new information on which the appeal is based.

### Mediation

The person bringing the complaint and the person named in the complaint may, if both parties agree, enter into non-binding mediation with the Executive Director and one Committee member prior to a scheduled committee meeting. Mediation must be completed within the seven (7) day window for scheduling the hearing. Sanctions imposed or other action taken as a result of this process requires the approval by majority vote of committee member, as well as both parties.

# Concussion Information for Coaches

## THE FACTS

- A concussion is a **brain injury**
- All concussions are **serious**
- Recognition and proper management of concussions when they **first occur** can help prevent further injury or even death
- Concussions can occur **without** loss of consciousness
- Concussions can occur **in any sport**

**WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?** A concussion is an injury that changes how the cells in the brain normally work. A concussion is caused by a blow to the head or body that causes the brain to move rapidly inside the skull. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious. Concussions can also result from a fall or from players colliding with each other or with obstacles, such as a goalpost.

## RECOGNIZING A POSSIBLE CONCUSSION

To help recognize a concussion, you should watch for the following two things among your athletes:

1. A forceful blow to the head or body that results in rapid movement of the head. AND,
2. Any change in the athlete’s behavior, thinking, or physical functioning.

## SIGNS OBSERVED BY COACHING STAFF

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets sports plays
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can’t recall events prior to hit or fall
- Can’t recall events after hit or fall

## SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETE

- Headache or “pressure” in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light and/or noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not “feel right”

## WHAT SHOULD A COACH DO WHEN A CONCUSSION IS SUSPECTED?

**1. Remove the athlete from play.** Look for the signs and symptoms of a concussion if your athlete has experienced a bump or blow to the head. Athletes who experience signs or symptoms of concussion should not be allowed to return to play. When in doubt, keep the athlete out of play.

**2. Ensure that the athlete is evaluated right away by an appropriate health care professional.** Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Health care professionals have a number of methods that they can use to assess the severity of concussions. As a coach, recording the following information can help health care professionals in assessing the athlete after the injury.

- Cause of the injury and force of the hit or blow to the head
- Any loss of consciousness (passed out/ knocked out) and if so, for how long
- Any memory loss or seizures immediately following the injury
- Number of previous concussions (if any)

**3. Inform the athlete’s parents or guardians about the possible concussion and give them the fact sheet on concussion** Make sure they know that the athlete should be seen by a health care professional experienced in evaluating for concussion.

**4. Allow the athlete to return to play only with permission from a health care professional with experience in evaluating for concussion.** A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first can slow recovery or increase the likelihood of having long-term problems. Prevent common long-term problems by delaying the athlete’s return to the activity until the player receives appropriate medical evaluation and approval for return to play.