

YMCA YOUTH SPORTS PHILOSOPHY

Over the past few years, the YMCA has noticed some alarming trends in youth sports programs: the pressure for more rigorous competition and higher achievement. These trends come from adult-oriented attitudes and the misconception that youth sports programs are scaled-down versions of professional sports. This is not only false, but also dangerous.

The YMCA stresses child-oriented attitudes by keeping winning in perspective, having fun, improving physical fitness, and working with the whole child. The YMCA wants the quality of play to improve in order to meet the needs of all participants whatever their ability and skills.

The YMCA accomplishes this by training adult volunteers in clinics and workshops. **The YMCA believes that the child is first and winning is second.**

The YMCA does not encourage the elimination of competition or winning. Winning is essential to enjoyable competition. However, it is the “striving to win” that yields the joy of sports.

The key for parents and coaches is to keep winning in perspective. It is this key that holds the YMCA Youth Sports program together. Competition will happen in youth sports without any external pressures. **It is important to keep competition at a level appropriate for the athlete.**

The YMCA would not be whole without its commitment to a Christian emphasis. The goal of the Youth Sports program is to help the child grow to his/her fullest potential in mind, body, and spirit: activity helps the body grow; thinking advances the mind; and belief makes our spirit grow.



The Mission of the YMCA of Austin is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.



YOUTH SOCCER LEAGUE RULES

(6-12 Yr Olds)

The YMCA Youth Soccer program will be divided into three age groups. These include: A Division - 6-8 yr olds, Division - 8-10yr olds, and Division C – 10-12yr olds.

NOTE The YMCA reserves the right to adjust age groups based on enrollment.

The leagues and games are played according to normal soccer rules and are run in such a manner that children can learn, develop, and reinforce soccer skills as well as enjoy playing the game with their teammates and coach.

AGE GROUPS: Players will determine their division of play by the age they are or will be turning during the season. Any player may play in an older division but no player may play in a division younger than their age.

AGE GROUP	PLAYER'S AGE
Division A	6-8 yr olds
Division B	8-10 yr olds
Division C	10-12 yr olds

NUMBER OF PLAYERS: The YMCA builds teams with no more than double the number of participants allowed on the field at once.

Division A	6 on the field (including the goalie)
Division B	7 on the field (including the goalie)
Division C	7 on the field (including the goalie)

** Team and on field numbers may be less based on league size.

GAME:	AGE GROUP	BALL	GAME DURATION
	A Division	size 4	4 quarters x 10 minutes
	B Division	size 4	2 halves x 20 minutes
	C Division	size 4	2 halves x 20 minutes

Throw-Ins: If the ball leaves the playing field along the sidelines, a throw in will be awarded in all Divisions. Players will be given one chance to perform a throw-in.

Free Kicks: Free kicks will be awarded to the opposing team if a player intentionally pushes, kicks, trips, or hits another player. Free kicks will also be awarded if a player commits a “dangerous” play, or obstructs an opponent. A referee may award a player a free penalty shot on the goal. Free kicks

will be defined as direct or indirect by the referee. Direct kicks may be shot directly into the goal, while indirect kicks must touch another player (may or may not be on the same team) before the ball goes into the goal. Corner kicks and goal kicks are to be treated as direct, while the kick-off should be treated as an indirect kick. **** For Division A, all kicks will be indirect, and there will be no penalty shots.**

Substitutions: Either team may substitute, after asking the referee's permission, when the ball stops for:

1. any goal kick or corner kick
2. after a goal has been scored
3. when a referee stops game for injury
4. after halftime or quarter (no permission needed)

Substitutions will also be allowed to the team in possession on a throw-in providing the referee gives permission.

Offside: The offside rule will be enforced in Division C.

A player is offside if he or she is nearer to the opponent's goal line than the ball at the time the ball is played unless:

1. The player is on his or her own half of the field.
2. There are two opponents nearer their goal line.
3. The ball was last touched or played by an opponent.
4. The ball is received directly from a goal kick, corner kick, throw-in, or drop by referee.

The offside rule will not be strictly enforced in Division A and B.

However, a player may not be positioned directly in front of the other team's goal behind the other team's defense, such as a designated scorer.

Protecting the

Goalkeeper: The referee will make every effort to protect the goalie in dangerous situations. No body contact is allowed with the goalie in the goal box. Players may not attempt to kick the ball when the goalie's hands are touching the ball in any manner. This rule will be strictly enforced.

Handball: The referee will judge the intent of the player when the ball comes in contact with the arm or hand. A penalty will be called when the player intentionally touches the ball, or accidentally redirects the ball to his team's advantage. Accidental contact with the ball is not necessarily a penalty.

Slide Tackles: In Division A, no slide tackles are allowed. The referee will penalize the infraction as a dangerous play (indirect kick). In Division B & C, any slide tackle from the back or side will be penalized as a dangerous play.



In addition, any player approaching another with the sole of the shoe higher than the ball will be penalized for a dangerous play.

Coaches on the

Field: One coach per team will be allowed on the field. **The coach is restricted to the defensive half of the field and outside the penalty box.** Assistant coaches are restricted to their side of the field. (Not behind or next to the goals.) The coach will try to minimize the distractions to not only their team but to the other team as well. Their main job is to instruct the kids and assist the referee in setting the correct positions for his or her team. The coaches are allowed to coach **NOT REFEREE** or show dissent toward the referee.

EVERY PLAYER WHO SHOWS UP TO PLAY MUST BE ALLOWED TO PLAY AT LEAST ONE HALF OF EACH GAME AND MUST BE ALLOWED TO START AT LEAST ONE HALF OF THE GAMES DURING THE SEASON.

Coaches should make every effort to play each child equally. If one team does not have the designated number of players at the beginning of the game, a 10 minute grace period will be allowed. The game will then be started with both teams playing with an **equal** number of players, and the amount of time lost will be deducted from the game time. **PLEASE SHOW UP AND BE PREPARED TO START AT THE GAME TIME!** This will prevent the later games from being delayed.

Goalkeeper Playing Time: In Division A, the same player may play no more than one quarter per game as goalkeeper. In Division B and C, the same player may play no more than one half per game as goalkeeper. This rule will be strictly enforced.

Size of the field and goal may be adjusted to the facility. In Division A games, there will be a break of 1 minute between quarters. In all groups, the half times will consist of 5 minutes.

****When the referee is ready to begin to play, you should start at that time.** The referee may ask the coach to find a volunteer parent to help watch the sidelines during play.

Please respect the referee and avoid unnecessary delays of the game so that everyone can enjoy being a part of the kids' soccer games.

SEVERE WEATHER:

- The YMCA will decide by 8:00am, the day of the game, if any cancellations are necessary.
- If severe weather occurs during play a decision will be made by the onsite referee in regards to game cancellations.
- If a cancellation does occur, games will be rescheduled for a later date (If at least half the game has been played, it will not be rescheduled).
- Any delays/cancellations can be found at www.austinyymca.org on the youth soccer page.



YOUTH SPORTS PLEDGE:

At the start of each game, all players, coaches, and referees will meet at the center circle to recite the Youth Sports Pledge and address any rule clarifications.

YOUTH SPORTS PLEDGE

**I PLEDGE TO PLAY THE GAME,
THE BEST THAT I CAN,
TO BE A TEAM PLAYER,
TO RESPECT MY OPPONENTS,
THE RULES AND OFFICIALS,
AND IMPROVE MYSELF IN MIND,
BODY, AND SPIRIT.**

Please remember that by volunteering to be a coach, you have chosen to be a role model for all participating children, and that you represent yourself and the YMCA at all games and practices throughout the year.