



COACHING 8U



OUR 8U (“UNDER 8”) DIVISION IS FOR CHILDREN BORN IN 2016. MOST PLAYERS WILL BE OLDER 6 YEAR OLDS OR YOUNGER 7 YEAR OLDS DURING THE FALL SEASON, A MIX OF FIRST AND SECOND GRADERS. THERE ARE SEPARATE BOYS AND GIRLS 8U DIVISIONS. FOR ABOUT 1 IN 4 PLAYERS: THIS IS THEIR FIRST EXPERIENCE PLAYING SOCCER.

KIDS THIS AGE:

- ⚽ Beginning to appreciate the sense of belonging on a team
- ⚽ Self-esteem is important; respond well to **positive instruction and encouragement** (P.I.E.) – modulate your voice but no yelling in anger
- ⚽ Have **lots of energy!** Will struggle to sit still and may engage in horseplay (esp. boys)
- ⚽ Improving agility, balance, body control

MANAGING A PRACTICE:

- ⚽ You will need to plan **one weeknight practice**
- ⚽ Practice is **one hour** between 5pm-8pm
- ⚽ Choose the location from among many fields available; you may share the field w/ another team
- ⚽ Parents are to ensure their child has their own **size 3 ball**, a water bottle, shinguards and shoes or cleats (also: no jewelry)
- ⚽ **Make a plan** – warmup, pair up for basic technical activities (passing, throw-ins, etc.), build up to small sided matches (2v2, 3v3), full-team **scrimmage**
- ⚽ Bring something new each week – get ideas for age-appropriate activities on our website [here](#)
- ⚽ Repeat the kids’ favorite activities and remind them throughout the season how they are getting better
- ⚽ Say, Show, Do, Review + **No laps, lines or lectures!**
- ⚽ Maximize the time they have their **feet on the ball**
- ⚽ **Development points:** being first to the ball, dribbling/ball control, **passing, throw-ins, not ‘bunching up’**, shots on goal, retaining possession, pressure on defense
- ⚽ Take frequent water breaks
- ⚽ Most importantly, **have fun!** It’s the #1 reason kids play AYSO soccer
- ⚽ Anytime you take the field with the kids, be sure to have a physical copy of each player’s **medical waiver**
- ⚽ Your call on **inclement weather**, but leave the field immediately if you hear thunder or see lightning; only return 30+ mins after last thunderclap

YOUR REQUIRED TRAINING:

- ⚽ No soccer experience necessary
- ⚽ Can be done **online** from the comfort of your couch 😊
- ⚽ Must complete: 8U coaches training, Safe Haven, Concussion Awareness and Sudden Cardiac Arrest – all on ‘AYSO’; Safesport requires a separate login
- ⚽ Background check and training paid for by AYSO
- ⚽ Full details for registration, certification and training can be found on our website [here](#)

GAME TIME:

- ⚽ Games are scheduled for **1 hour on Sat morning**
- ⚽ We play **5v5 with no goalies**
- ⚽ **4 quarters, 10 mins each** + 2 min qtr breaks + 5 min halftime break; kickoffs only at 1st qtr & after halftime
- ⚽ Make a **lineup** before the game: **Everyone Plays** at least two quarters; offense and defense
- ⚽ Connect with the opposing coaches before the start of the game
- ⚽ If no **referee** is provided by AYSO, one or two coaches should be ready to stand in as referee(s)
- ⚽ Help create an environment where the referee is respected & no one should be challenging calls
- ⚽ **Let them play!** (“Play until the whistle!”)
- ⚽ Endline out of bounds = **goal kick** or **corner kick**; Sideline out of bounds = **throw-in** (2 chances)
- ⚽ If the score gets lopsided quickly, turn focus to passing, but most of all, **keep things positive!**
- ⚽ Coaches coach, Parents cheer! (See [Parent Pledge](#))
- ⚽ **Good Sportsmanship:** shake hands, thank the ref
- ⚽ Coach is the last one to leave the field

KEY DATES (SPRING 2024 SEASON):

- ⚽ Rosters assigned, first contact w/ parents: Mar 23-27
- ⚽ Schedules posted: no later than Wed Mar 27
- ⚽ Practices can start: Mon April 8
- ⚽ First game of the season: Sat April 13; No games Memorial Day weekend; Last game of season: Sat June 1