

P O R T L A N D Y O U T H S O C C E R
A S S O C I A T I O N



CLUB GUIDE

May 2013

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I. Welcome to Portland Youth Soccer!

Portland Youth Soccer Association (PYSA) is an association of 19 clubs serving Portland area youth from 5 to 19 years old. We have a number of fun filled programs for your family to participate in this fall and spring. Please take a few minutes to read through this guide to familiarize yourself with our programs and services.

In addition, you may visit our website www.portlandyouthsoccer.com. to find information on schedules, field locations, tournaments, coach education courses, referee training and many other programs and services provided by PYSA. Please contact us if you have any questions about youth soccer in Portland at executivedirector@portlandyouthsoccer.com.

Have a Safe and Fun Soccer Season!

A. Our History

PYSA is a non-profit organization formed in 1983 through the City of Portland Parks and Recreation as a collection of independent soccer clubs. In 1997, PYSA separated from Portland Parks and joined the Oregon Sports Services complex. PYSA still maintains a strong partnership relationship with Portland Parks.

We are comprised of 20 member clubs and serve approximately 11,000 youth players, 2,000 adult volunteers and 250 youth and adult referees. We cover the largest district in Oregon with about 15% of all players statewide.

A Board of Directors and a large volunteer base of club board members, coaches and parent volunteers support PYSA. PYSA manages league play in the fall and spring, summer soccer camps, coaching development clinics, referee training, field allocation to clubs, support of volunteer club administrators and outreach efforts.

B. Our Mission

To provide the youth of Portland area communities with the opportunity to experience the joy and thrill of soccer in a player centered environment. The main focus is on FUN and DEVELOPMENT with age appropriate training & coaching where all players are given the opportunity to compete. We strive for our players to develop good sportsmanship skills, individual and team skills, self-esteem, leadership and life skills. In short, PYSA strives to provide an enjoyable, developmental, and appropriate soccer environment for all players, coaches, and parents.

C. Our Goals

- Provide opportunities for youth to play and have fun.
- Teach soccer skills and understanding of the game.
- Teach the rules of soccer.
- Foster sporting conduct and team play.
- Promote the game of soccer in our community.
- Organize and facilitate inter-club play for youth players.
- Provide positive and instructive coaching.
- Provide certified referees.
- Provide safe and drug-free practice and game environments.
- Ensure that everyone plays at least 50% of every recreational game.
- Form recreational teams that include all levels of skills and abilities.

- Inform players of opportunities for more competitive, classic play.
- Allow all youth to participate.

D. Our Member Clubs

PYSA member clubs are generally organized by elementary school boundaries. Players are encouraged (but not required) to register with the club that serves the areas within these boundaries. This includes private schools within the public school boundaries. Clubs can only promote to those schools, neighborhoods and communities within these boundaries.

Club members include coaches, parents and club administrators, all of who strive to provide a positive experience for the players and referees within their club.

A list of our current member clubs follows.

Recreational Clubs:

- Bridlemile Soccer Club
- Foothills Soccer Club
- Forest Heights Soccer Club
- Hillside Soccer Club
- Hollywood Soccer Club
- Holy Redeemer Soccer Club
- Irvington Soccer Club
- Jackson Soccer Club
- Laurelhurst Soccer Club
- Mt. Tabor Soccer Club
- Northeast United Soccer Club
- North Portland Soccer Club
- Rose City Soccer Club
- Skyline Soccer Club
- Southeast Soccer Club
- Vista Soccer Club
- West Sylvan Soccer Club

Classic Clubs:

- Bridlemile Soccer Club
- Northeast United Soccer Club
- Portland City United Soccer Club

High School CoEd

- High School CoEd Recreation

E. Volunteering

PYSA organization depends, with the exception of its office staff, entirely on volunteers for its management and operations. Without dedicated volunteers, the club would not exist. As such, we are always in need of parents and non-parents alike to assist in whatever way they feel capable. Below are some of the areas that are critical to the success of our soccer programs.

Board Members

Serve on a club board to help facilitate the management and operation of your club. Clubs are encouraged to have from 12 – 15 board members to lighten the workload for everyone and to provide stability and continuity as volunteers leave.

Coaches

Head coaches and assistant coaches are always in demand. Coaches must complete a short information form, background check form, and have a sincere interest in helping youth develop as players and people. Training is available so you do not need prior soccer experience.

Referees

Youth and adult referees are needed to insure that games will be properly officiated. Referees must be at least 14 years old. Training is provided and referees are paid.

II. The Soccer Seasons

PYSA supports two seasons of soccer. The first is our traditional fall season, which begins with games in September through early November. The second is a spring season, with games running from March through May. We also offer summer clinics via the Portland Timbers, coaching clinics, and referee education for all member clubs as described below.

A. Fall League

This is our primary season for Kindergarten – 8th grade players and teams. Player's register through their local club and the club will form teams which are entered into the PYSA Fall League. The fall league runs from mid-August to mid-November.

Teams may begin practices the week of August 15th. Clubs are responsible for assigning teams to practice fields. Coaches are responsible for conducting safe, positive and instructive practices.

B. High School Co-ed Fall League

This is our primary season for high school players who are not playing for their high school teams. Players register through the High School Co-ed Club and then the club will form teams in divisions: freshman/sophomore, junior/senior. Teams will be formed on the Eastside and Westside of Portland. The high school league runs from the end of August through the mid-November.

C. Fall League Game Dates

Games are typically held on Saturdays with Sunday games as needed. Below is typical beginning and end dates associated with the fall season.

Age Group	Number of Games	Start Date	End Date
U7 & U8	8	September 8 th	October 27 th
U9 & U10	8	September 8 th	November 3 rd
U11-U14	9	September 8 th	November 3 rd
U16	8	September 15 th	November 3 rd
High School	8	September 15 th	November 3 rd

D. Spring League

This is our secondary season for K – 8 and High School Co-ed teams is our spring league. Coaches will enter teams that played in the fall league through direct registration with PYSA, with new players may be added to spring teams. Teams from outside of PYSA are also allowed to register for spring soccer. The spring league runs from April – May and practices are not provided due to the limited amount of field space.

E. Coaching Education

PYSA provides courses throughout the summer for coaches interested in learning how to teach the game of soccer to their players. Courses include age-appropriate youth courses, goalkeeping clinics, and other special topics clinics. Training is provided through the PYSA Technical Director.

F. Referee Training

PYSA provides training for youth and adults interested in refereeing our youth games and those interested in earning extra income. USSF certification is required and qualifies referees for both our fall and spring league seasons. Referees must be at least 14 years of age and have taken our free on-field training.

III. Getting Ready: Practicing and Playing

A. Get Ready to Play

Game and Practice Schedules

Be sure to post schedules on your refrigerator or bulletin board. Your coach will notify you about practice times and locations prior to your first practice. Game schedules will be available through your coach 1 – 2 weeks prior to the first game and also will be posted on the PYSA website.

Teams should have a phone/email tree or set-up in order to quickly notify all parents of changes in practice or game times and/or locations.

Player Equipment

The following list is provided only as a guideline. Please check with your team coach to confirm how a player should be equipped for practices and games.

Equipment	Practices	Games
Soccer shoes	Yes	Yes
Shin guards	Yes	Yes
Water bottle	Yes	Yes
Uniform	No	Yes
Soccer ball	Yes	Yes
Jewelry, casts, etc	No	No

Field Locations

Most field locations are available on the PYSA website under the menu item “Fields”. Please be sure to find out how to get to your game field prior to game day.

Arrive on Time

Check with your coach. Most coaches like players to arrive 30 minutes prior to the start of a game and on time for practices. Notify the coach in advance whenever your child can’t attend a game or practice. If you can’t stay for the practice or game be sure to pick your child up on time as well. Please do not make the coach wait for you.

Restrooms

Most fields don’t have them, so prepare accordingly.

Remember to Leave the Parks and Fields Clean

Field usage is a privilege given to us by the Portland Parks and Portland Public Schools. Please show respect of playing fields by taking away all garbage when your game or practice is over. Garbage in – Garbage out.

Parking

Please remember that parking on public streets is shared with the local residents. It is important to be courteous and not block driveways, mailboxes, or any access to a private residence.

B. Required Rosters

At all games, a player roster must be signed by the coach acknowledging that only children registered with PYSA will be allowed to practice or play in games. A copy of your roster should be given to the referee prior to the start of the match.

C. Referees

PYSA referees are normally young adults who have played soccer but are new to refereeing. Please treat all referees with respect and patience. Parent volunteers will perform as referees for all U7 and U8 games. For U9 – U16 games, PYSA will assign a center referee to all league games. If for any reason a referee does not show up for a scheduled game, it is the responsibility of both coaches to select an adult to referee the game. If the game starts late for any reason, the time lost shall be deducted evenly from both halves so following games can start on time.

D. Insurance

Part of the member fee paid to PYSA by our member clubs entitles registered players to access to secondary medical insurance to cover some costs associated with injuries received during games or practices. Please notify your club officers and PYSA of any injuries requiring professional medical treatment. Parents should email PYSA at executivedirector@portlandyouthsoccer.com.

IV. For Our Players

A. Player's Code of Conduct

1. PYSA considers good conduct by players, parents and coaches to be an **extremely important** part of the soccer program. This code includes:
2. Treat opponents with respect.
3. Play hard but within the rules of the game of soccer.
4. Keep control of your emotions.
5. Respect the referee and accept their decisions without gesture or argument
6. Win without boasting, lose without excuses.
7. Remember it is a privilege to represent your soccer club and community.

B. Player's Rights

1. The right to decide when to participate in soccer.
2. The right to play at least 50% of each game (this may be conditional on a player being disciplined, sickness or injury).
3. The right to participate at a level that corresponds to each child's maturity and ability.
4. The right to be taught the fundamentals of soccer.
5. The right to participate in a safe and healthy environment.
6. The right to play as a child and enjoy participation in the sport.
7. The right to play in a safe non-abusive environment.

V. For Our Parents

A. Parent's Role

1. Provide transportation to and from all practices and games. Respect your coach's time: be punctual in arrival and pickup of your player.
2. When possible, stay and watch practices as well as games and lend players your support in a positive manner. Do not point out their mistakes or criticize – leave team and player management up to the coach. Support your child's efforts as well as their accomplishments.
3. If unable to attend the practice or game, teach children not to talk with or leave practices or games with strangers. Let your coach know if you are riding with someone else.
4. Ensure your player brings equipment to and from all soccer games and practices. Be sure to identify equipment with a pen or permanent marker.
5. Be available to kick the ball around with your child.

6. ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO BE A CHILD.

B. Parent's Code of Conduct

PYSA considers conduct by parents and spectators to be supportive and positive at all times. The following Code of Conduct for parents emphasizes the key areas that all parents and spectators are expected to abide by during all PYSA competitions:

1. Remember that children play organized sports for their own fun.
2. They are not there to entertain you; and they are not miniature professional athletes.
3. Be on your best behavior. Don't use profanities or harass player coaches or referees.
4. Applaud good plays by your own team AND the opposing team.
5. Show respect for your team's opponents. Without them there would be no game.
6. Never ridicule or scold a child for making a mistake during a competition or practice session.
7. Condemn the use of violence in all forms.
8. Respect the referee and do not criticize their decisions.
9. Encourage players to always play according to the rules.
10. Do not coach team players, including your own child, from the sidelines during the game.
11. Communicate with your coach and create a positive, supportive working relationship.
12. Avoid the use of fear and a win-at-all costs mentality – players just want to have fun.

VI. For Our Coaches

A. Some Thoughts Going Forward

You have taken this responsibility to coach a team this season, and we thank you. You are about to become one of the most important and influential people in a child's life other than possibly your own child. The next few weeks, seasons or years you have an opportunity to help shape a child's view on sports and life. How you handle winning, losing and conflict will have an enormous impact on shaping how they will handle the similar situations later in life. PYSA believes strongly that we can provide a competitive environment while still showing respect for the game and others no matter the outcome.

We thank you for taking the time to help coach your team, because only with your selfless volunteer effort is it possible that our youth community has an opportunity to play. PYSA and your community say "Thank You!"

B. Two Adult Rule

At least two adults must be present at all PYSA sponsored activities including team practices. All volunteers working with players must complete a Disclosure Form. No child should ever be alone with an adult. Bathroom breaks etc. should be with one or more adults and two or more children.

C. Coaches' Pledge

PYSA appreciates the time youth coaches take to provide a positive experience for the youth in our community. A coach is a teacher, a friend, and a role model. The following pledge outlines what is expected of all PYSA coaches:

1. I will treat all players, parents, opponents and referees with respect.
2. I will respect the interpretation of rules and judgment of the referees.

3. I will remember that I am a recreational youth sports coach and that the game is for children and not adults.
4. I will place the emotional and physical well being of my players ahead of a personal desire to win.
5. I will treat each player as an individual remembering that each player develops at different social, physical and mental rates.
6. I will be knowledgeable of the rules of soccer and will teach these rules to my players.
7. I will do my best to provide a safe playing environment for my players.
8. I will do my best to organize practices that are fun and challenging for all my players recognizing the value of play in a child's development.
9. I will provide a sports environment for my team that is free of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol and I will not use at all soccer events.
10. I will promise to review and practice first aid principles needed to treat injuries of my players.
11. My assistant coaches and I will lead by example by demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all players, parents and referees.
12. I will remind my team and fans to exhibit good sportsmanship at all times, both when winning and when losing.
13. I will ensure the conduct of the parents is such that it is in accordance with the sportsmanship guidelines of PYSA

Developed with assistance from the National Alliance for Youth Sports and the National Youth Sports Coaches Association.

VII. Our Rules

The following four sections - **Our Rules**, **The U7& U8 Game**, **The U9-U14 Game**, and **Soccer Around the World: Laws of the Game** - describe the particular and general rules, which govern play in our league. It is important for all participants – coaches, players, referees, and parents – to understand these rules to as to better understand and enjoy the game. Please take the necessary time to read over the rules that cover your play, and be prepared to play by them every time you take the pitch.

If you have any questions about how these rules apply, please contact your coach, member club management, or PYSA directly to get a clear explanation. We owe it to our children and our community that we provide a quality soccer experience at every age level.

A. Registered Players

All players and coaches participating in PYSA games, practices and events must be registered with the PYSA, through their local club.

B. Age

All players must play on a team that is proper for their grade in school. Children with a special need to play on a team younger than their grade must apply for - and be granted - a special waiver from PYSA. Players may play up no more than one year - **no exceptions**.

The age groupings are:

Age Group in the Fall	Grade in School	Age
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U7	First	6
U8	Second	7
U9	Third	8
U10	Fourth	9
U11	Fifth	10
U12	Sixth	11
U13	Seventh	12
U14	Eighth	13

C. Individual Playing Time

All players are entitled to play at least one half of each game for which they suit up. PYSA understands that failure to practice, disciplinary action, sickness, or injury might be cause for an individual to play less than the mandated playing time.

D. Equipment & Uniforms

All players on the field must wear soccer shoes and shin guards covered by socks. Acceptable soccer shoes include plastic molded cleats, standard length screw-in cleats, studded soccer shoes or soccer turf shoes (for hard, dry fields). The following shoes are specifically not permitted:

- All Tennis Shoes
- Baseball Shoes
- All Metal Studs
- Deep Cleated Mud Shoes
- All Metal Spike Shoes
- Basketball Shoes

All players on the field must be attired in matching jerseys, except goalkeepers, who must wear colors that distinguish them from all other players on the field. When, in the opinion of the referee, two teams are so similar in color or appearance as to cause confusion, the team designated as the home team will change uniforms.

E. Jewelry

No earrings, watches, rings, necklaces, bracelets, wristbands, casts, beads in the hair etc. may be worn during game play and should not be worn during practice. Hair bands must be elastic.

Other articles that, in the opinion of the referee, may endanger the player or other players are also not allowed. Taping over or taping down of jewelry shall not be a permitted alternative.

F. Nets & Markers

U9 – High School

Each teams is responsible for setting up one side of the field with nets and corner flags or cones.

U7 & U8

Each team is responsible for setting up one field with pop-up goals and cones to mark the field.

G. Team and Spectator Location

Teams and their spectators should sit together on the same of the field opposite the other team and their spectators. For example: Team A will sit with its spectators on one side of the field and Team B will sit with its spectators on the opposite side of the field. This is to make it easier for coaches to ensure that the spectators associated with their team are behaving in an appropriate manner.

H. Blow Out Policy

In keeping with the recreational nature of our league, coaches are expected to prevent games from becoming extremely one sided. This means that when a team is ahead by 5 goals that team is expected to initiate methods that will make it more difficult to score. Methods might include:

- Adjust positions to give players the opportunity to play in different positions.
- Encourage players to shoot only from outside of the penalty box

If actions such as these do not limit scoring than the team that is losing the game may add a player or players to the field to even the game.

I. Laws of the Game

The rules of soccer are set forth in a document called the Laws of the Game. PYSA follows these rules except for modifications that have been made to account for the recreational spirit of our league and the age of our players (I.e. No Slide tackling).

J. Code of Conduct

The PYSA considers good conduct by coaches, parents and children to be an extremely important part of the soccer program. The referee is responsible for calling the game, but the coach is responsible for the behavior of his or her parents and team members.

K. Sideline Commentary

Neither the referee nor the children should be subjected to negative comments from anyone. Remember that referees have a difficult job and provide a valuable service that contributes to a successful soccer season. PYSA wants all soccer participants treated with respect.

1. Comments to Players: Parents and coaches must refrain from yelling at individual players. Remarks should be limited to positive, team oriented comments, such as “go blue”. Remember that the soccer game belongs to the players, not the coaches and parents.
2. • Comments to Referees: Parents, coaches and players must refrain from making any negative or mean-spirited comments to or about the referees or assistant referees. If there is a perceived problem, then submit a written PYSA Game Evaluation via the PYSA website describing the event. This report will be reviewed and as the submitter of the evaluation you may be called to present your information in person. Remember that the referee is often a young high school student trying to do his or her best and that it is difficult to see everything when you are actually out on the field doing the job.

L. The Impact of Misconduct

The use of cards by the referee is based upon the referee’s judgment with regard to the Laws of the Game. Cards are used to control the game to insure a fair contest.

CAUTION (yellow card): Any player receiving a yellow card must leave the field immediately before play resumes and may not reenter until his/her team's next substitution opportunity. Another player may replace the cautioned player. In PYSA games, the referee may caution coaches and spectators. Examples of yellow card violations include for players:

- Enters or leaves the field of play during the game without the referee's permission.
- Persistently infringes upon the Laws of the Game.
- Shows by words or actions, dissent from any decision by the referee.
- Is guilty of unsporting conduct

M. Ejection (Red Card):

Any player given a red card shall be disqualified from further play during the game AND shall receive a minimum subsequent one game suspension. No substitution may be made for a player receiving a red card. In PYSA games, Coaches and spectators may be given red cards as well. Coaches and spectators receiving a red card must leave the field surroundings (To an area that is not within ear shot of the field) immediately AND are prohibited from participating at the team's subsequent game. The person in question may formally appeal to PYSA by contacting the PYSA office at executivedirector@portlandyouthsoccer.com.

Examples of red card violations include:

- Is guilty of violent conduct.
- Is guilty of serious foul play.
- Uses foul or abusive language.
- Persists in misconduct after receiving a caution.

Any player, coach or spectator who refuses the referee's request for his/her name, or gives a false name, while the referee is gathering data to report an infringement shall have an additional 1 game suspension added to the penalty levied.

Any player, coach or spectator who assaults a referee (shoving, bumping etc.) will be suspended for life. Any player or coach damages the referees equipment (kicking the referee's bag or breaking the flags etc.) will be suspended for a minimum of one year. Violent assault against the referee (hitting, spitting on, etc.) will result in expulsion from PYSA participation for life. Please note if a physical assault takes place against a referee the proper authorities may be called by the referee.

VIII. The U7 & U8 Game

A. The Game

The U7 and U8 age groups play small-sided games, where the numbers of players on the field are greatly reduced from the traditional 11 v 11 games. The emphasis is on player development and enjoyment. Small-sided soccer is intended to better meet the developmental needs of younger children by allowing them more touches on the ball and fewer players to interact with on the playing field. Please also note there are no goal keepers during these games.

B. U7 & U8 Required Rosters

Must be signed by the coach – acknowledging that only children registered with PYSA will be allowed to practice or play in games.

The number of players on the field, the length of each game, field size and goal size is dependent on the age of the players:

Age	Game Played	Ball Size	Game Time	Goal Size	Field Size
U7	3 v 3	#3	40 minutes	Pop Up Goal	30 x 20 yds
U8	4 v 4	#4	40 minutes	Pop Up Goal	40 x 30 yds

Both U7 and U8 games are played on two equal playing fields (A and B) close to each other. Two teams face each other on each field and try to put the ball in the opponent's goal. At half time the HOME teams switch fields. The emphasis is on player development and no score is kept.

	Field A	Field B
1st Half	Home Team 1 vs. Visitor Team 1	Home Team 2 vs. Visitor Team 2
2 nd Half	Home Team 2 vs. Visitor Team 1	Home Team 1 vs. Visitor Team 2

Game time is divided into two equal halves, with a 5 minute break between.

C. The Team

Each team of 10 – 12 players is divided before play begins into small, evenly balanced squads of 5 to 6 players. The players should be divided differently each week so the same players are not always together. The coach leads one squad and the assistant coach leads the other. Each squad plays against a similarly constructed opponents' squad. For U7 and U8 there is no goalkeeper.

D. The Officials

Parent volunteers will perform the following functions:

- Referee: The HOME team and the VISITOR team must each provide one parent volunteers to referee one of the playing fields. Each parent should become familiar with the 3 v 3 or 4 v 4 soccer rules and the playing field. The primary concern of the referee is the safety of the players.

Players must wear the proper equipment and play in a fair and safe manner.

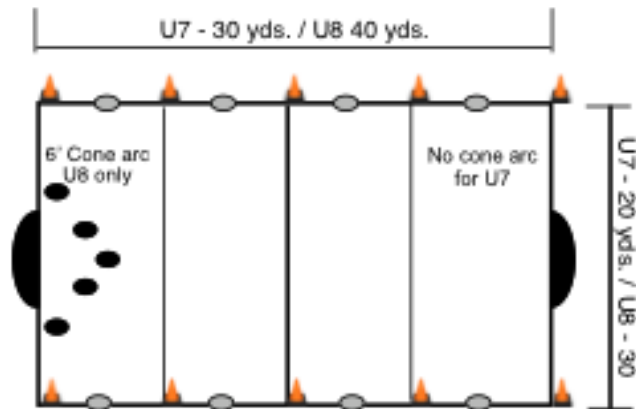
Although most fouls are unintentional, mistakes should be corrected (gently) for everyone's safety. Referees may not coach while refereeing.

- Timekeeper: The HOME team must provide a timekeeper to start and keep the games on time. Each half lasts 20 minutes with a 5 minute halftime break. During each half the clock runs continuously and is not stopped for breaks in the action (ball out of play, injury, etc).

E. The U7 Field

For U7 games the field is 30 x 20 yards. Each team is responsible for setting up one field with portable goals with nets and cones. Each field should be set-up with cones. Ideally, tall cones should be used to mark the corners with flat cones between to mark the sidelines and goal lines.

For reference, please see the diagram below.



F. The U8 Field

For U8 games the field is 40 x 30 yards. Each team is responsible for setting up one field with portable goals with nets and cones. Ideally, tall cones should be used to mark the corners, with flat cones between to mark the sidelines and goal lines. A 3-yard arc should be set-up in front of each goal, with flat cones, by tipping the portable goal forward and placing cones around the outside of the goal.

G. Modified Laws for U7 and U8 Teams

PYSA follows the Laws of the Game except for modifications that have been made to account for the recreational spirit of our league and the age of our players. The following modifications apply to all U7 and U8 games:

Method of Scoring

A goal is scored when the whole of the ball crosses the goal line into the goal. A goal may not be scored directly from a throw-in, kick-off, free kick. A goal can be scored from a corner kick.

Kick-Off

Officially begins the game at each half and restarts play after a goal is scored. The ball must go forward and cannot be touched again by the kicker until it is touched by another player. Opponents must be on or behind the quarter field line in their half of the field when the ball is kicked.

Goal Kick

Taken by any defending player to restart the game when the ball goes out of play past the goal line and was last touched by an attacking player. The goal kick may be taken anywhere on the quarter field line. All opposing players must stand on or behind the half line until the ball is kicked.

Corner Kick

Taken by any attacking player to restart the game when the ball goes out of play past the goal line and was last touched by a defending player. The kick is taken in the corner area on the side of the field where the ball went out of play. Opponents must be 10 or more yards away.

Throw-In

A throw-in is taken to restart the game after the ball goes past the touch line (sideline). The throw is taken by any member of the team that did not touch the ball last. This should be within one yard of where the ball went out of play. **The thrower must face the field and throw the ball with equal strength with both hands, in one continuous motion from the back of his or her head and over the top of his or her head while both feet remain on the ground.**

When the ball is released the thrower must have some part of both feet on the ground and behind the touch line. If the throw-in is taken improperly, the referee may briefly explain the proper technique to the player, give the player a second chance and/or award a throw-in to the other team.

NOTE: The player taking a kick off, goal kick, corner kick, or throw-in may not play the ball a second time until it is touched by another player.

Drop Ball

A ball may be dropped by the referee/parent between two players (one from each team) to restart the game after play was stopped for a no penalty situation (after an injury or if the referee did not see which team put the ball out of bounds). The ball is dropped where it was last in play or at the nearest point outside the quarter field area. The ball must touch the ground before being kicked.

Fouls and Misconduct

Players are not allowed to kick, trip, jump at, charge, obstruct, hold, push, or strike an opposing player. The basic rule is “play the ball, not the player”. Players also may not strike, carry or propel the ball with their hand or arm. The key judgment for the handball foul is whether the contact was “hand to ball” (foul) or “ball to hand” (no foul). Slide tackling is not allowed in recreational play.

The player committing any foul is penalized by the award of an indirect free kick to the opposing team. The kick is taken at the place where the foul occurred, unless it is between the quarter line and the goal line, in which case the kick is taken on the quarter line at a point nearest the foul. In both U7 and U8 games, all penalties are indirect, i.e., another player must touch the ball before a goal can be scored and there are no penalty kicks at all. All opponents must be at least 6 yards away from the ball at the time the kick is taken.

Off-side

Offside will not be enforced in U7 and U8 games, but referees should instruct players and prevent flagrant “cherry-picking”. The referee is the sole judge of whether a player is seeking to gain an advantage by purposefully being in an offside position.

Substitutions

Player substitutions may be made whenever the ball is put out of play, i.e. throw-in, goal kick, after a goal is scored, for an injury, etc. Players should be rested regularly while remembering the 50% playing time rule.

3-Yard Arc – U8 games only

A 3-yard arc should be set-up in front of each goal. No offensive or defensive player is allowed to touch the ball within this area. If a defensive player touches the ball within this area the offensive team will receive an indirect free kick at their quarter line. If an offensive player touches the ball within this area the defensive team will receive a goal kick. If the ball comes to a stop within this arc the defensive team will receive a goal kick.

IX. The U9 – U14 Game

A. The Game

Soccer is one of the most popular games in the world. The game of soccer is played on a level field (the “pitch”) with goals at each end. The size of the field and goals vary depending on the age of the players. Two teams face each other and try to put the ball in the opponent’s goal. The team with the most goals at the end of the game wins. Soccer is a very active game with few rules, plenty of running and action, and fun for everyone on the field. Youth soccer is currently the second highest youth participation sport in America because it is fast-paced and kids of all ages, sizes and abilities can play.

Much of the fun in soccer is due to the transition from offense to defense because play is constant and continues when the team loses possession of the ball. The field is large enough to allow the ball to be played for some time before the ball can go out of play and stop the action.

The clock runs continuously, and once the game is started, coaches must let the players play and make the decisions on the field. Time outs are not permitted with the exception of injuries.

NOTE: The referee will not stop play at the request of a coach or parent. There are no time outs in soccer.

A game begins with a coin toss. The team winning the toss may select which end of the field they wish to attack (kick-off). The ball must start at the center spot within the circle in the middle of the field. The player taking the kick-off must move the ball forward and cannot touch the ball again until another player has touched it.

The number of players on the field and the length of each game are dependent on the age of the players:

Age	Game Played	Ball Size	Game Time	Goal Size (Feet)	Best Field Size (Yards)
U9	6 v 6	#4	50 minutes	6 x 18	55 x 40
U10	6 v 6	#4	50 minutes	6 x 18	55 x 40
U11	8 v 8	#4	60 minutes	8 x 24	70 x 50
U12	8 v 8	#4	60 minutes	8 x 24	70 x 50
U13	11 v 11	#5	70 minutes	8 x 24	110 x 70
U14	11 v 11	#5	70 minutes	8 x 24	110 x 70

Game time is divided into two equal halves, with a 5-minute break in between.

B. The Team

Each team consists of 6 to 11 players depending on the age of the team. Each team is comprised of a goalkeeper, defenders, midfielders and forwards. All positions are equally important. All players must develop offensive and defensive skills and every player have the potential to be a scorer. There is no such thing as a fixed space or position in soccer. Players may interchange positions during the game.

Goalkeeper: Is the team's last line of defense and has the primary responsibility to prevent the opponent's ball from entering the goal for a score. The goalkeeper is the only player allowed to touch or pickup the ball with their hands, and may only do so when the ball is within the goalkeeper's own penalty area. The goalkeeper has 6 seconds to play the ball once he/she has control of the ball. The goalkeeper may not touch the ball with his/her hands again until the ball is touched by another player outside the penalty area.

Defenders: Defenders have the responsibility to win the ball from opponents or prevent the opponents from creating a shooting opportunity. Defensive players also play a key role in offensive play by moving the ball up the field after winning the ball or receiving the ball from the goalkeeper.

Midfielders: Midfielders are the link between the defensive players and the forwards. They are generally "all purpose" players who have good endurance and can play both offense and defense. Midfielders are important because the team that dominates the midfield is likely to control the game.

Forwards: Forwards stay nearest the opponent's goal and are primarily offensive players whose main responsibility is to score goals and pressure defenders.

C. The Field

A soccer field's dimensions depend on the age of the players and the space available at the time the field was developed. Generally speaking, the older the player the larger the field. Fields will be marked to designate areas of play including:

- Touch Line or Side Line
- Goal Line
- Goal Area
- Penalty Area

- Center Circle
- Penalty Spot

D. Field Set-up

Each team is required to set-up and take down one net and mark the corners with flags or cones.

E. Referees

The referee is in complete charge of the soccer game. The safety of the players is the referee's primary concern. They are responsible for keeping time, enforcing the Laws of the Game and PYSA rules, stopping and restarting the game, cautioning or banishing offenders (including coaches and spectators) and ending the game if necessary. All decisions by the referee are final!

F. Assistant Referees

The referee is assisted by two Assistant Referees (a parent volunteer from each team) who are only responsible for indicating only when the ball is out of play. Assistant referees are impartial game officials and must not coach or direct players on their team. Center referees can overrule an assistant referee at any time.

G. Modified FIFA Laws for U9 – U14 Teams

PYSA follows the Laws of the Game except for modification that have been made to account for the recreational spirit of our league and the age of our players. The following modifications apply to all U9 – U14 games:

Slide Tackling

Slide tackling is allowed under FIFA Law, however for PYSA sponsored events slide tackling is not allowed at any time. This includes playing the ball while on the ground when another player is within playing distance of the ball. The referee will award an indirect free kick for this infraction.

FIFA Law 3 - Substitution Procedure

Any number of players may be substituted at one time in a PYSA game with the prior consent of the referee. Substitutions may only be done at a dead-ball situation (throw-in, free-kick, goal kick, etc.) The referee may refuse to allow the team not taking the kick or throw-in to substitute if the team taking the kick or throw-in is clearly interested in restarting the game quickly and there is an advantage in doing so

FIFA Law 12 - Charging the Goalkeeper

The following rule applies to all competition under the jurisdiction of the PYSA:

1. No player shall make physical contact with the goalkeeper, or attempt to play the ball once the goalkeeper has control of the ball in any manner and to any degree whatsoever within the penalty area (note: "control of the ball" is defined as contact between any parts of the goalkeeper and the ball).
2. Intentional charging of a goalkeeper is defined as "violent conduct" and shall result in the ejection of the guilty party.

FIFA Law 16 – Goal Kicks

For U9 play only, the goal kick may be taken from any point inside the penalty area (vs. the goal area) and is in play when it leaves the penalty area. Opponents must be 10 yards from the kicker. The kicker may not play the ball a second time until it is touched by another player.

X. Soccer Around the World: FIFA Laws of the Game

The rules of soccer (called the Laws of the Game) are quite simple, because soccer is a simple game. Behind the Laws is a very straightforward philosophy of “fair play” often called the “spirit of the game”. It is assumed that the game itself is more important than any particular match, player, coach, referee, or fan. Participants who don’t “play fair” are simply subject to disciplinary action to insure that the game is played fairly.

Within this spirit of fair play, there are 17 laws. The following is a summary of selected laws that would apply to all games. PYSA follows the Laws of the Game except for certain modifications that have been made to reflect the recreational spirit of our clubs and league. These modifications are outlined above in the following sections of this guide:

- Modified Laws for U7 & U8, and
- Modified Laws for U9 – U14

A. Law 3 - The Number of Players

B. Law 5 - The Referee

A match is played by two teams, each consisting of not more than eleven players, one of whom is the goalkeeper. A match may not start if either team consists of fewer than seven players. Sets the number of substitutions at 3 to 7 with no re-entry allowed. This rule is almost universally modified to allow unlimited substitutions with unlimited re-entry. Regardless of what substitution rules are used, the process is the same:

- The sub must be ready to enter before the ball goes out of play.
- The sub must ask (and get) permission from the referee.
- The exiting player must completely exit the field before the sub can enter

ADVANTAGE RULE: The referee is also allowed to apply advantage to any call. This means that if the referee determines that stopping play would take away an advantage from the offended team, he can choose to not stop play (this does not mean that the referee is not calling the foul; it just means he is choosing not to stop play). If the anticipated advantage does not develop, the referee is allowed to stop play and award the free kick for the infraction, so long as the ball has not yet gone out of play.

C. Law 9 - Ball In and Out of Play

The ball is out of play when:

It has wholly crossed the goal line or touch line whether on the ground or in the air

Play has been stopped by the referee

The ball is in play at all other times including when:

It rebounds from a goalpost, crossbar or corner flag post and remains in the field of play

It rebound from either the referee or an assistant referee when they are on the field of play

D. Law 10 - Method of Scoring

A goal is awarded when the entire ball passes over the goal line, between the goal posts, under the crossbar, and no infringement has occurred, e.g., handled into the goal by an attacker, or thrown directly into goal from a throw-in. The keeper catching the ball and carrying it across the goal line while falling is a goal. No other method of scoring is authorized.

E. Law 11 - Offside

Offside is very simple law, but is almost universally misunderstood. The intent of this law is to penalize the player who tries to camp near the opponent's goal to try to capitalize on easy scoring chances. The law is NOT intended to make up for poor defense.

A player is in an offside position if the player is ahead of the ball, and ahead of the second-to-last opponent in his or her attacking half of the field. It is not an infraction to be in an offside position.

A player is offside if he or she is in an offside position at the moment the ball is played forward to the player and the player is involved in active play by:

- interfering with play
- interfering with an opponent
- gains an advantage by being in that position

There is no offside offense when a player receives the ball directly from:

- a goal kick
- a throw-in
- a corner kick

It should be obvious that offside must be re-judged every time the ball is played. A player may be in an offside position and never interfere with play (so there is no offside, even if a goal results), or a player may momentarily return to an onside position just as the ball is played to her (so there is no offside), or the ball may go to another area of the field where the attacker was not in an offside position (so there is no offside). Also, a player passing to himself is never offside. A player coming back to an onside position to receive the ball is still offside, provided he was in an offside position when the ball was played.

F. Law 12 - Fouls and Misconduct

Law 12 is rightfully considered the heart of the Laws. It defines both the letter of the Law and the spirit of the game. Law 12 is also exhaustive: if it is not listed here, it is not an infringement. For example, it is legal for players to play the ball with their head (or chest or knee etc.), because Law 12 only forbids playing the ball with hand or arm.

Law 12 describes two different kinds of infringements:

- Fouls - punishable by some sort of free kick (see Law 13)
- Misconduct - punishable by a yellow or red card.

Fouls are further subdivided into:

- Penal fouls - are physical in nature and are punishable by a direct free or penalties kick
- Technical fouls – are non-physical fouls and are punishable by an indirect free kick

Direct Free Kick

A direct kick is awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any of the following six offenses in a manner considered by the referee to be careless, reckless or using excessive force:

- kicks or attempts to kick an opponent
- trips or attempts to trip an opponent
- jumps at an opponent (note: refers to cleats-up foot-first jump at an opponent regardless of the position of the ball – if there is contact, there is a foul)

- charges an opponent (note: a fair charge is shoulder-to-shoulder, non-violent, both players have at least one foot on the ground and the ball is within playing distance)
- strikes or attempts to strike an opponent
- pushes an opponent

A direct free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if a player commits any one of the following four offenses:

- tackles an opponent to gain possession of the ball, making contact with the opponent before touching the ball
- holds an opponent
- spits at an opponent
- handles the ball deliberately - except for the goalkeeper within his or her own penalty area (note: possibly the most misunderstood foul – the Law requires that it be deliberate and not incidental – a good rule of thumb is to determine if the hand went to the ball (a handball) or if the ball played the hand (incidental))

A direct free kick is taken from where the offense occurred. A penalty kick is awarded if any of the above ten offenses is committed by a player inside his or her own penalty area, irrespective of the position of the ball, provided it is in play.

Indirect Free Kick

An indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team if a goalkeeper, inside his own penalty area, commits any of the following five offenses:

- takes more than six seconds after controlling the ball with his or her hands before releasing it from his or her possession
- touches the ball again with his or her hands after it has been released from his or her possession and has not touched any other player
- touches the ball with his or her hands after it has been deliberately kicked to him or her by a teammate
- touches the ball with his or her hands after he or she has received it directly from a throw-in taken by a teammate
- wastes time

An indirect free kick is also awarded to the opposing team if a player, in the opinion of the referee:

- plays in a dangerous manner (note: a high kick is only dangerous if another player is within playing distance – a player who attempts to head a waist high ball may be called for dangerous play for putting themselves in a dangerous situation)
- impedes the progress of an opponent (note: interpreted as playing the man and not the ball – attempting to prevent an opponent from playing the ball without putting yourself in a position to play the ball)
- prevents the goalkeeper from releasing the ball from his or her hands
- commits any other offense, not previously mentioned in Law 12, for which play is stopped to caution or dismiss a player

An indirect free kick is taken from where the offense occurred.

MISCONDUCT – Cautionable Offenses – Yellow Card

A player is cautioned and shown the yellow card if he or she commits any of the following seven offenses:

- is guilty of unsporting behavior (note: these are violations of the spirits of the game – examples are any of the first six penal fouls (kicks, trips, pushes, jumps, charges, strikes) committed in a reckless manner, any penal foul to break up an opponent’s attack, deliberately handling the ball to score a goal, verbal distraction of an opponent and interfering with an opponent’s throw-in)
- shows dissent by word or action (note: this is defined as showing disagreement, by word or gesture, with any decision of the referee – coaches are responsible for the conduct of their team’s fans)
- persistently infringes the Laws of the Game (note: this is continuous infringement of the laws not at a level serious enough for any one incident to warrant a caution)
- delays the restart of play (note: sending the ball away to prevent the opponent from taking a quick kick or throw)
- fails to respect the required distance when play is restarted with a corner kick or free kick (note: refers to a player not retiring 10 yards to allow the kick to be made)
- enters or re-enters the field of play without the referees permission
- deliberately leaves the field of play without the referees permission

MISCONDUCT – Sending-Off Offenses – Red Card

A player is sent off and shown the red card if he or she commits any of the following seven offenses:

- is guilty of serious foul play
- is guilty of violent conduct
- spits at an opponent or any other person
- denies the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by deliberately handling the ball (does not apply to goalkeeper within his or her own penalty area)
- denies an obvious goal-scoring opportunity to an opponent moving towards the player’s goal by an offense punishable by a free kick or a penalty kick
- uses offensive, or insulting or abusive language and/or gestures
- receives a second caution in the same match

G. Law 13 - Free Kicks

Free kicks are either direct or indirect. A goal can be scored from a direct free kick. A goal can only be scored from an indirect free kick if it touches another player before it enters the goal.

The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves (unless it is taken from inside a team’s own defensive penalty area, in which case it must exit the penalty area). The kicker may not touch the ball again until another player has touched it.

The free kick is taken from the spot of the offense. For an indirect free kick inside a team’s attacking goal area, the free kick is located on the 6-yard line closest to where the offense occurred. For a direct free kick inside a team’s attacking penalty area, the kick is taken from the penalty spot (see law 14).

All opposing players must retire 10 yards from the spot of the free kick, unless they are on their own goal line and between the goal posts. If the free kick is inside a team’s defensive penalty area, the opponents must retire 10 yards and be outside the penalty area.

The referee will signal an indirect free kick by holding one arm straight up until the ball is touched by another player.

H. Law 14 - Penalty Kick

A direct free kick awarded to a team inside their attacking penalty area is taken from the penalty spot. All players, except the goalkeeper and the person taking the kick, must be outside the penalty area, outside the penalty arc, and behind the ball.

The goalkeeper must remain on the goal line until the ball is played (he may move laterally, but not forward). The ball is in play as soon as it is kicked and moves forward. The kicker may not play the ball again until another player has touched it. A goal may be scored directly from a penalty kick.

The kicker may not try to fool the goalkeeper. Any violation by the kicker or his team will prevent a goal from being awarded; if a goal was scored, the kick shall be re-taken. Any violation by the goalkeeper or his team will not prevent a goal being awarded; if a goal was not scored, the kick shall be re-taken.

I. Law 15 - Throw-in

A throw-in is awarded:

- when the whole of the ball passes over the touch line, either on the ground or in the air
- from the point where it crossed the touch line
- to the opponents of the player who last touched the ball

Procedure – at the moment of delivering the ball, the thrower:

- faces the field of play
- has part of each foot either on the touch line or on the ground outside the touch line
- uses both hands
- delivers the ball from behind and over his head

The thrower may not touch the ball again until it has touched another player. The ball is in play as soon as it enters the field of play. A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw-in.

J. Law 16 - Goal Kick

When the ball goes out of play over the goal line and is last touched by an attacker, the defending team is awarded a goal kick.

The goal kick may be taken from any point inside the goal area and is in play when it leaves the penalty area (whole ball over whole line).

Opponents must be outside the penalty area. The kicker may not play the ball a second time until it is touched by another player.

A goal can be scored directly from a goal kick.

K. Law 17 - Corner Kick

When the ball goes out of play over the goal line and is last touched by a member of the defending team, the attacking team is awarded a corner kick.

The corner kick may be taken from any point inside the nearest corner arc, and is in play when it is kicked and moves. The corner flag or corner marker may not be moved.

Opponents must be 10 yards away from the ball. The kicker may not play the ball a second time until touched by another player.

A goal can be scored directly from a corner kick.

ACRONYMS Definitions

FIFA