

AYSO Section League Program And Gaming Circuit for Section 14

Guidelines for AYSO player participation in a more
challenging program format within AYSO Section 14

Beginning Fall 2011

Section 14 League Play Program Guidelines Table of Contents

- 1. Introduction and Purpose**
- 2. Application of AYSO Philosophies**
- 3. Guidelines and Procedures**
- 4. Organization**
- 5. Finances**
- 6. Player Eligibility**
- 7. Program Structure**
- 8. Team Formation**
- 9. Player Selection Procedures**
- 10. Rosters and ID Cards**
- 11. Vacancy Policy**
- 12. Coaches and Referees**
- 13. Regional Support**
- 14. Scheduling & Standings**
- 15. Officiating**
- 16. Fields**
- 17. Paid Trainers**
- 18. Misconduct, Discipline and Dispute Resolution**
- 19. Relationship of EXTRA to All-Star and Secondary Play**
- 20. Uniforms**
- 21. Practice/Training**
- 22. Player Substitution**
- 23. Duration of Match**

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1. Introduction and Purpose

The purpose of this program is to provide AYSO players who desire participation in a challenging soccer environment with a solution that will satisfy their needs and will provide the following benefits to the players:

- a) A challenging program for more advanced players
- b) Guaranteed two quarter play requirement
- c) Positive coaching
- d) Accommodation to both soccer only and multi-sport athletes
- e) A challenging soccer experience at a cost that is substantially less than a FYSA sanctioned club program
- f) Player retention will have the additional benefit of volunteer retention

2) Application of AYSO Philosophies

The AYSO Section 14 League Play Program must comply with the Six Philosophies of AYSO as follows:

EVERYONE PLAYS – Our programs' goal is for kids to play soccer – so we mandate that every player on every team must play at least two quarters of every game.

BALANCED TEAMS – Each year we form new teams as evenly balanced as possible – because it is fair and more fun when teams of equal ability play. In Section 14, the Section League Play program teams will achieve balancing through the bracketing of teams into competitive brackets within their respective division. See item 7 – Program Structure.

OPEN REGISTRATION – Our program is open to all children who want to register and play soccer. Interest and enthusiasm are the only criteria for playing. In Section 14 the Section League Play Program requires that any registered player is eligible to apply for an age appropriate team.

POSITIVE COACHING – Encouragement of player effort provides for greater enjoyment by the players and ultimately leads to better-skilled and better-motivate players.

GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP – We strive to create a positive based on mutual respect rather than a win-at-all-costs attitude, and our program is designed to instill good sportsmanship in all facets of AYSO. All players, parents, coaches and other AYSO volunteers in the Section League Play program are expected to adhere to a high standard of conduct and sportsmanship.

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT – We believe that all players should be able to develop their soccer skills and knowledge to the best of their abilities, both individually and as members of a team, in order to maximize their enjoyment of the game.

3) Guidelines and Procedures

This program will comply with AYSO Rules & Regulations, Bylaws and National Policies and AYSO Section 14 League Play Program Guidelines. Participating Areas and Regions must hold a current financial standing with Section 14 and AYSO's National Office. Bracketing of teams as a competitive team balancing methodology will be utilized, which was not addressed in the national guidelines.

Each participating Area Director in the Section is responsible for overseeing/verifying that the Section 14 League Play program requirements are met as they pertain to player eligibility, coach eligibility, team formation, field support and referee support by those Regions within their Area that elect to participate in the Section 14 League Play program.

4) Organization

In Section 14 the Section League Play Program will operate in a concurrent mode. Players participating in the Section 14 League Play program will be eligible to participate in the standard primary program and thus will be eligible for participation in the State Games and National Games programs.

The future intent of the Section League Play Program in Section 14 is for participating Regions and Areas to operate in a side-by-side mode, thus allowing more participants in a region, with the consent of their Area Director. At that time, Section and Area Director's approval to operate in the concurrent mode shall be granted in those situations where a Region's standard primary program might be harmed by the side-by-side structure. An example might be a Region with a very small number of players and teams in a given division.

The Section League Play program will be operated and administered by Section 14 and the Areas and Regions participating in the program. The program will have its own gaming circuit.

A fall "league" season is anticipated in Fall 2011 whereby teams may compete in Section League Play as approved by their Regional Commissioner (RC) or by their RC and Area Director (AD) as per Section 14 Rules & Regulations. The purpose of the fall season is to allow those players who chose to compete in other sports to do so while those players who desire a year-round soccer experience may continue to play at a competitive level.

It is the stated intent of this program to begin operations on a smaller scale the first year; only one or two brackets in a division (TBD) and to expand participation in future seasons. More than one team per Region, per age group, will be permitted.

Program Management

Areas within Section 14 shall determine the management structure of the program within their Area – either at the Region or the Area level.

The management structure at both the Area and Region level include a Section League Program Coordinator at the Area and Region level under the direction of the AD or RC.

5) Finances

The Section League Play program is a primary program, and therefore, Region funds may be used to support Section League Play activities, but only to the extent that they are consistent with the funds expended for the standard primary program. Any additional costs needed to run the Section League Play program must be borne solely by the Section League Play players and approved by the Regional Commissioner and Regional Board and in accordance with AYSO's Rules & Regulations, Bylaws and National Policies. Section League Play funds must be placed in the Area or Region's operating account segregated by separate NAP accounting codes from the standard primary program funds.

Financial reports, including budgets and other reports to be determined will be provided to the next higher executive member above the sponsoring entity. For example, reports for an Area-run program shall be provided to the Section Director. During the pilot phase reporting requirements will be set by the Section.

Regions that will be running side-by-side programs are encouraged to have a second bank account that would be funded by those teams so as not to drain the funds of the core program. This account would still be overseen and approved by the Regional Commissioner and Regional Board and in accordance with AYSO's Rules & Regulations, Bylaws and National Policies.

6) Region Participation Confirmation and Program Information

All regions must submit their participation confirmation form using attachment (1) not later than July 1st of the membership playing year.

The Team Registration fee for the Section League Play is as follows:

- \$150 for U10 teams
- \$180 for U12 teams
- \$225 for U14 and U16 teams
- \$270 for U19 teams

Team Registration fees are due by August 1st. Upon receipt of payment a team is recognized as an official Section League Play participant.

7) Player Eligibility

Each Regional Commissioner of a Region electing to participate in the Section League Play program is responsible for his/her Region's compliance with established player eligibility requirements. Player eligibility, as pertains to age requirements to participate in a specific gender/age bracket, is defined in the AYSO National Rules & Regulations.

Eligible players must have registered with AYSO and have participated in a scheduled regional team player tryout session conducted as per the approved format. The AYSO National Office player database shall be the source of determining all players' current registration status, the creation of team rosters and ID cards. There is no requirement that Section League Play players have previously played or registered as AYSO players

Gender/age bracket placement of players shall be based on their age as of July 31 of the current membership year. .

8) Program Structure

The AYSO Section League Play Program in Section 14 will be organized around every 2 year divisions: U10, U12, U14, U16, and U19. Participation will dictate which divisions, if not all, are implemented in year one.

All teams will be bracketed based on the age of the oldest player on a team's roster. Also, with consent of the AD and the SD, smaller Regions may be permitted to combine to create teams if such combinations create opportunities for players to play and fosters competition.

Section League Play Program teams in Section 14 will be balanced through the bracketing of teams into competitive brackets within their respective divisions. For example, "A" teams will be slotted in "A" brackets and "B" teams will be slotted in "B" brackets. As the program expands team bracketing may be expanded to three or more levels of brackets as needed.

Bracketing will be determined by a Section 14 competition committee, made up of both Region and Area volunteers, appointed by the Section Director based on input from the ADs.

Otherwise, same as AYSO Section League Play guidelines and suggested best practices.

9) Team Size/Formation

Game formats will be for divisions as follows:

- U-10 – 7v7 with maximum roster of 10 players
- U-12 – 9v9 with maximum roster of 12 players
- U-14 – 11v11 with maximum roster of 15 players
- U-16 – 11 v 11 with maximum roster of 15 players
- U-19 11 v 11 with maximum roster of 18 players

Area and Regional participation will dictate which age groups are implemented in the first year and beyond.

Guest players are not allowed in the Section League Play program.

At no time is inter-regional recruitment of players allowed without the prior approval of each of the RCs and AD concerned. Recruitment without prior approval may result in sanctions by the AD, who shall convene as a disciplinary board in such instances.

10) Player Selection Procedures

For each Section League Play team, a player selection committee within each Region should be formed consisting of one or two impartial evaluators, i.e. Region Coach or Player Trainer and/or Division Coach Coordinator along with the selected Coach and Assistant Coach. Understanding that each Region has already adopted and is carrying out their own individual selection process, Region "best practice guidelines" shall be observed to see that each player is provided an equal opportunity.

It is encouraged that tryouts occur in the spring and should generally occur over a 2-to-4 week period with two practices per week scheduled to accommodate multi-sport athletes as best as possible. Consideration should be given to one of the two practices being a weekend practice.

11) Rosters and ID Cards

Preliminary rosters will be generated from eAYSO for teams participating in the Section League Play program and must be received by the Section League Coordinator at the Area level no later than four weeks prior to league commencement. Final rosters shall be required no later than two weeks prior to league commencement. Those rosters shall include:

- Region and division identification – age
- The Coach and Assistant Coach name, address, home and cell phone numbers, e-mail address, AYSO training level and Safe Haven Certification date.
- Team member AYSO ID numbers
- Team member jersey number, name, address, phone number, birth date and registration date.
- Team number, uniform color(s) and team name (if available).
- Signature of the RC verifying players and coaches and confirming appropriate team member and coach registration, plus coach training and certification.

Information on how to generate and print eAYSO rosters are included on Attachment 4.

Revisions to rosters may occur when a player drops from a team. At that point, the team will be allowed to add one (1) player. This player cannot be drafted from another AYSO team whose season is still in progress. The additional player must be approved by the RC and AD.

A revised eAYSO roster must be submitted to the appropriate authority prior to the new team member participating in a match.

Regions shall prepare ID cards for each participating Section League Play team member and for a maximum of two coaches per team available from the Section 14 website at www.aysosection14.org. The ID cards shall bear the name, recent photo of the respective player or coach and the signature of the RC. ID cards must be laminated.

Properly completed and laminated ID cards for all players and a maximum of two coaches, a team game card shall be presented to the referee by each team prior to the start of each Section League Play program match. The home team coach must present to the referee the game report, see attachment 3.

Coaches must wear ID cards visibly on their person during all games. Cards may be clipped on jackets or shirts, or worn on neck lanyards.

For each Section League Play program team, the coaches must have in their possession a team roster, ID cards and copies of AYSO Player Registration Forms (with Emergency Authorization) for each participating team member as well as their coach ID cards. These must be at all events (games, practices, scrimmages, parties etc.) in which the team participates.

12) Vacancy Policy

No Section League Play player may be transferred from one Section League Play team to another once the season has started, without the consent of the player, the player's parents, and the RC(s) and AD(s). Parental consent is not required if the player is of legal age.

13) Coaches and Referees

Coaches participating in Section League Play should be of the excellent quality. At a minimum, Section League Play coaches (head and assistant) must:

- Have a current Volunteer Application on file at the National Office;
- Be an AYSO trained coach as specified in these Guidelines;
- Be Safe Haven certified
- Be an active participant in the Region's standard primary program as an instructor, coach or referee mentor, or other volunteer service the Region determines adequate to fulfill this requirement;
- Be in good standing with the Region, Area, Section and AYSO;
- Be approved by the Region board; and
- Be evaluated and renewed each membership year.

Coaches desiring to coach at the age levels must have completed the following minimum training below:

- U10 – U-12 Coach
- U12 – U-12 Coach
- U14 – Intermediate Coach
- U16 – Advanced Coach
- U19 – Advanced Coach

It is strongly recommended that Section League Play program coaches are trained at least one level above the level he/she is intending to coach (except as set forth above, U-10 coaches **must** be certified at the U-12 level). It is also strongly recommended that coaches have continuing education each year as designed by the Region.

Those wanting to coach must fill in an application and submit it for approval. The Area Section League Play Coach Coordinator will conduct a mandatory Section League Play coach meeting prior to the start of the Section League Play season which each coach assigned to a Section League Play team must attend.

Concerning reciprocity, Areas and Regions are to follow the reciprocity agreement detailed on the AYSO Section 14 website and attached hereto as attachment 2.

14) Regional Support

AYSO Section League Play program guidelines and suggested best practices are in effect. On a team by team basis, the parents of participating players must contribute volunteer time back to either the Section League Play Program or the standard primary program. This requirement shall be determined by Regions as they see necessary to fulfill their needs.

15) Scheduling & Standings

The game schedule and standings for the Section League Play program shall be posted on the Region, Area, and Section Web sites and Region Web sites should have a link to their Section Web site.

All games shall be played as scheduled (date, time and venue).

In cases of games cancelled by adverse weather conditions (rain, poor air quality or act of God), the Region or Area will reschedule the game to be played either prior to the end of the pool play season or as soon after the end of pool play as can be arranged.

The applicable RCs will sign off on the use of fields and referees for these make up games. All game scores will be reported to the Regional Section League Play Program Coordinator, who in turn, will report them to the Area Section League Play Program Coordinator for stat compilation and posting.

To allow flexibility in rescheduling games, the final standings will not be determined until after one week after the last regularly scheduled games have been completed. This will allow for an additional week and weekend as an opportunity to make up games previously cancelled. The final standings will take into consideration the number of games played

No team will be allowed to secure a place in positions 1 – 4 in the season standings as a result of not playing a scheduled game due the conditions described above. In such case(s), the AD will reschedule the match.

If either of the teams is not ready to play at the scheduled kick-off time, the referee may allow a grace period of up to ten (10) minutes before canceling the game. A team not ready to play at that time shall forfeit that game. If a team does not show for a scheduled game their opponent will be awarded a 1- 0 forfeit victory. The Area Section League Play Program Coordinator may impose other sanctions if the forfeiting team gains an advantage by the forfeit.

The two teams (2 coaches, technical director, and players) will occupy one side of the field. Spectators will only be allowed on the opposite side from the teams behind the spectator line.

Coaches of both teams are responsible for reporting game scores to the Area Section League Play Program Coordinator within 24 hours of match completion via e-mail to be provided. The Referee is responsible for returning the official game cards and the game reports to the Area Section League Play Coordinator at a designated place. All misconduct, including the cautions or send-off of players, coaches, or spectators or any other area of concern including unsafe conditions etc. shall be sent by the referee to the Area Section League Play Program Coordinator within twenty-four (24) hours.

If the Referee terminates a game before completion because of actions by players, coaches and/or spectators, the result of the game will be determined by the administration of the program.

If the game termination is due to actions by both teams, or if it is undetermined, the game shall be deemed a forfeit by both teams, and no points shall be recorded in the standings.

If a game is suspended prior to completion due to inclement weather or any other unforeseen circumstances, the game score will stand as recorded by the referee, provided one half or more of the regulation game time had been played at the time of suspension.

If less than one-half of the regulation game time had been played at the time of the game suspension, the game will be rescheduled and played in its entirety at a later date and time. If the game is not rescheduled for any reason, the game shall stand as a NOT-PLAYED game, irrespective of the score at the time of game suspension.

The format of play and determination of standings shall be based on the number of teams participating in a specific gender/age bracket and may include average points per game as a method of determining standings for brackets with an uneven number of teams and/or games played.

For standings in bracket play, points shall be awarded as follows:

Win 3 points **Tie** 1 point **Loss** 0 points

Tie breakers for standings at the conclusion of pool play shall be as follows:

- a) Head to Head play (outcome of the game involving the tied teams)
- b) Team with the lowest number of goals allowed
- c) Goal Differential: goals scored, less goals allowed, maximum differential of three (3) goals per game
- d) Team with highest number of goals scored, maximum of three (3) goals per game (counting no more than three goals more than their opponents in any game)
- e) Lowest point deductions for misconducts and send-offs
- f) Coin toss

Awards will be presented to each of the 2 top teams in each bracket and to the 2 top teams in each division's Section Cup.

16) Officiating

Participating regions must provide an adequate number of Referees who are capable of supporting the various age/gender brackets of teams participating in the Section League Play program. Regional Commissioners are to attest to compliance with the Area staff's concurrence.

All Section League Play program games shall be officiated using the Diagonal System of Control, i.e. one Referee and two assistant Referees. The Dual (two-man) System of Control is **not** allowed.

If available Regional Referee Administrators shall assign "neutral" Referees of appropriate skill and ability to all Section League Play program games assigned to their Region. Referees shall be a minimum of two years older than the oldest players in the division to which they have been assigned.

17) Fields

Regions must provide an adequate number of fields to support the program. Fields/equipment needs to be age appropriate. Participating Regions are responsible for properly preparing all fields used. Field set-up and take down is the responsibility of the hosting Region.

18) Paid Trainers

Paid coaches are not permitted under AYSO Policies; however, paid trainers will be permitted consistent with the existing AYSO National Policy Statement.

19) Misconduct, Discipline and Dispute Resolution

It is the responsibility of the Referee in Section League Play program games to submit a written Misconduct Report to the Area Section League Play Program Coordinator within 24 hours after the conclusion of the game at which the offense occurred.

There is no mandatory “cooling off” period for cautioned players. It is recommended that, at the coach’s request and with the referee’s permission, a cautioned player, or any player having difficulty controlling his emotions, may leave the field and reenter when appropriate. The team may play short for the period of time that the player is off of the field of play. The player may not be substituted for until the normal substitution time.

The referee must also report any behavior by coaches and/or spectators on or off the field that seriously interferes with the game and/or proper standards of conduct.

The penalty for a player, coach and/or spectator sent-off (Red Card) from the field for any reason in an Section League Play program game shall be a minimum one (1) game suspension. Such suspension shall be served in the first game (not scrimmage) that is played following the game of the incident. The suspension for violent conduct or serious foul play shall be a minimum of two (2) games and the length of any suspension may be increased and other disciplinary measures applied if deemed warranted by the Section Director in conjunction with the Area Section League Play Program Coordinator(s).

If the player sent off is a minor (under 18 years of age) he/she must leave the field in the company of his/her parent(s) or guardian(s). Otherwise, the player may remain in the proximity of the field, under adult supervision by a Safe Haven certified adult.

Should violators of the penalties set forth in this section refuse to immediately leave the field when requested to do so by the referee, the game shall be suspended until the situation has been resolved. If it is not resolved, in what the referee considers a reasonable amount of time, the game shall be terminated and the incident reported to the Area Section League Play Program Coordinator.

A team member serving a suspension must attend the team’s next scheduled game as a spectator, but may not be in uniform and may not participate in any manner. Any other person affiliated with a team who is serving a suspension may not be present at the game (including pre and post game activities) or participate in any manner.

In the event a suspended player or coach participates in a match for whom he/she has been suspended, the game shall be recorded as a forfeit in favor of the opposing team. For each such event, the original suspension must be served at the next game played by the team, an additional one game suspension must be served at the following game, and the coach of such team must serve a one game suspension.

Send-Off's (Red Cards) and/or Cautions (Yellow Cards) given in Section League Play games are not subject to appeal.

The Area Section League Play Program Coordinator and the AD, with the assistance of the Area Referee Administrator(s) and the Area Coaching Administrator(s), together with the respective RCs, shall review all inter-regional disciplinary issues not resolved at the regional level. Any disciplinary action taken must be communicated within 96 hrs of the game in which the incident occurred. Disciplinary hearings may be called if deemed necessary by the Section League Play Administrator, or if requested in writing.

The Area Section League Play Program Coordinator will publish a weekly Misconduct Report Summary – distribution to the AD, Area/Regional Referee Administrators, Regional Section League Play Program Coordinators and Regional Commissioners. This report will list all cautions, send offs, and information on other reports submitted by referees and shall also list those suspensions that are to be served (by age division, player name, coach name, date and location).

These guidelines shall serve as the governing document for the Section League Play Program conducted in this Region/Area.

20) Relationship of Section League Play to State Games and National Games

Players and teams participating in the Section League Play Program in Section 14 will participate in a post season playoff experience such as a Section Cup. Section League Play Program players in Section 14 will participate in the standard primary program and will be eligible for participation in both Florida State Games and AYSO National Games play, and may participate in other post season tournament opportunities as approved by the RC or the RC with the consent of the AD.

21) Uniforms

All uniforms and equipment will be in accordance with AYSO National Rules and Regulations.

Section League Play program teams shall be provided with uniforms similar to those provided to other primary program teams. Region general funds are not be expended for any additional player uniforms, warm-ups, backpacks, additional field usage needs, etc.

The Home team in a match is responsible for wearing uniform jerseys (or scrimmage vests) that clearly distinguish them from the other team. In case of color conflicts, the Home team is required to change colors. The Referee is the final authority on the safety of any player's uniform and equipment.

22) Practice/Training

Teams are **NOT** permitted to begin practice or engage in any training activity prior to August 1st for the Fall program. Once formed, only team members on the official roster are permitted to participate in team training.

Training will cease upon completion of the Section Cup in May.

23) Player Substitution

U10 – U19 games shall have a substitution opportunity midway through each half, at half time and in the event of injury. In the event of injury, and if the player leaves the field of play due to injury, a team may elect to play down until which time the player can return with the approval of the referee, or the team can elect to substitute for the injured player. Should the team elect to substitute, the player entering the match for the injured player shall not be charged for one of his/her two quarters of playing time.

23) Duration of the Match

The duration of the match for the respective age groups for Section League Play shall be as follows:

U10 – 25 minute halves = 50 minutes (5 minute halftime)

U12 – 30 minute halves = 60 minutes (5 minute halftime)

U14 – 30 minute halves = 60 minutes (5 minute halftime)

U16 – 35 minute halves = 70 minutes (5 minute halftime)

U19 – 40 minute halves = 80 minutes (10 minute halftime)