



Welcome New Coaches!

Welcome to AYSO Region 33 Encino! Thank you for volunteering. Your primary role is to create a fun, safe environment, teach basic skills, build confidence and teamwork, and represent AYSO values.

You are not expected to be a soccer expert. Attitude, effort, and connection with kids matter most.

What players need: encouragement, patience, organization, and positivity.

This handbook is designed to give you a quick and basic overview of what to expect in your first season as an AYSO Region 33 coach. Please reach out to our coaching administrators if you have any questions or concerns, we are all here to help each other succeed.

AYSO's 6 Core Philosophies

- Everyone Plays (¾ playing time rule)
- Balanced Teams
- Open Registration
- Positive Coaching
- Good Sportsmanship
- Player Development (improvement > winning)

What to Expect Your First Season as a New Coach The first weeks can feel chaotic—kids chasing the ball in packs, short attention spans. That's normal! Keep practices moving, use games instead of drills, and celebrate effort. Arrive early, learn names, and end with high-fives.

Age-Specific Guidance

- **U5 (Schoolyard):** Pure fun and movement. No positions.
- **U6:** Introduce basic dribbling/kicking with short instructions.
- **U7/U8:** Light structure—teach “spread out” and simple passing.

Basic Rules (Simplified) No heading. No offside rule. Gentle restarts. U8 games: two 20-minute halves.

Player Placement & Positions Rotate everyone! Aggressive kids → forward; patient kids → defense; fast/technical → midfield. Rotate goalkeeper every game.

Sample 45–60 Minute Practice Plan 10 min warm-up (fun movement) → 15 min skill (dribbling/passing) → 20 min small-sided games → 10 min scrimmage → 5 min wrap-up (highlight effort).

Positive Coaching Phrases “Great effort!” “Nice try!” “You got this!”

Volunteers, Referees & Conduct Everyone is a volunteer. Respect referees. Zero tolerance for arguing or abuse.

Blind spot many new coaches miss: Weeks can go by quickly and so can opportunities for volunteer points. Recruit a team parent early to help track points early them and avoid last-minute stress.

Sign up for our referee course as a supplemental enhancement to help with your understanding of the game.

Parents' & Spectators' Code of Conduct Your behavior on the sidelines shapes the experience.

- Cheer positively for both teams (“Great try!”).
- **No sideline coaching or refereeing** — Let coaches coach and referees referee. Yelling instructions confuses players. Remember: “Players play, coaches coach, parents cheer.”
- Stay behind the sideline (at least one yard back).
- No arguing with anyone. Zero tolerance for negative or abusive behavior. NEVER speak negatively towards another teams players.
- Support fair playing time.

If you see an issue, speak privately and respectfully to the coach or commissioner after the game. Thank you for modeling the sportsmanship we want our kids to learn.

Safety & Inclusion: Protecting Every Player Safety and belonging come first.

Heat Safety (Encino can get warm) Hydrate 24 hours ahead. Frequent water breaks. Shorten activities or add shade when it’s hot. Watch for dizziness, nausea, or cramps—move the player to shade and seek help if needed.

Concussion Awareness Remove any player with a head impact or symptoms (headache, dizziness, confusion, nausea). No same-day return. Parents must provide doctor’s clearance. All coaches complete CDC Concussion training.

Allergy Awareness Know players’ allergies. No sharing snacks/water. Team parent can help with safe snacks. Carry basic first aid.

Welcoming All Players – Neurodiverse & Less-Skilled Kids Every child belongs. For neurodiverse players or those building confidence:

- Use short, clear instructions and demonstrations.
- Offer movement breaks or smaller groups when needed.
- Praise effort and specific strengths.
- Ask parents privately what helps their child.
- Rotate positions and use small-sided games so everyone touches the ball and feels successful.

Blind spot: Less-confident kids disengage when stronger players dominate. Small groups and positive focus keep everyone involved and smiling.

Game Day Checklist Arrive early. Set lineup/sub plan night before. Thank the referee. Post-game handshake. Keep it fun.

Team Parents & Family Volunteering Recruit a team parent early for snacks, reminders, photos, and tracking volunteer points. Start volunteer shifts early in the season.

Resources AYSO U6/U8 manuals, Challenger Sports Coaches (U6), region website, and OTHER regional coaches! We are all here for each other. Ask experienced coaches for their thoughts if you feel a little lost.

Final Note: If the kids are smiling and engaged, you're doing it right.
