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Information contained in this handbook is subject to change pending approval by AYSO National.
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Concord AYSO Region 305

AYSO is a national non-profit organization, established in 1964, to teach the game of soccer and develop positive character traits in children through their participation in a quality sports program. Our local Region administers this program strictly through the efforts of volunteers. In order to provide the quality program our kids deserve, we need YOU!

AYSO is divided into 13 Sections across the United States. Concord AYSO is part of Section 2 that covers the states of Oregon, Washington, northern California, and most of Nevada (except Las Vegas). Section 2 is divided into nine areas, which are comprised of regions. In highly populated areas, regional boundaries will “touch” while in other parts of the country there may be several hundreds of miles between regions. Area 2D comprises Davis, Antelope, Sacramento/Rio Linda, Madison/Capay Valley, and Winters. Area 2C comprises cities in Alameda, Contra Costa, Napa, and Solano counties. Area 2C has regions in Concord, American Canyon, Clayton, Delta (Rio Vista), Pleasant Hill, Richmond, Stockton, and Walnut Creek.

Vision Statement:

To provide world class youth soccer programs that enriches children’s lives.

AYSO Mission Statement:

The American Youth Soccer Organization's mission is to develop and deliver quality youth soccer programs where everyone builds positive character through participation in a fun, family environment based on the six AYSO philosophies:

Everyone Plays	Our goal is for kids to play soccer. So we mandate that every player on every team must play at least half of every game and no one plays the entire game until everyone has played at least 3 quarters.
Balanced Teams	At the start of each Fall season, we set up teams as evenly balanced as possible - because it's more fun when teams of equal ability play.
Positive Coaching	The way to make winning kids is by building them up, not down. We train and encourage our coaches to make the extra effort to understand and offer positive help to our players, rather than negative criticism.
Open Registration	Our programs are open to all children between the ages of 4 and 18 who want to register and play soccer. Interest and enthusiasm are the only criteria for playing.
Good Sportsmanship	We desire to create a positive environment based on mutual respect, rather than a win-at-all-costs attitude. All our programs must be designed to instill good sportsmanship in every facet of AYSO.
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.

General Information

Basic Fall Season

This portion of the soccer year is scheduled to begin with practices starting on or after August 1 (depending on the coach's availability). Fall season games begin after Labor Day in September and continue through October, sometimes into the first weekend of November. U10 through U14 teams participate in a regional tournament the weekend after the last game.

Age Divisions/Eligibility

Age will be determined as of July 31. The following is a guideline. Placement will depend upon date of birth. The "U" stands for "Under", i.e., "Under age 6"

U06G and U06B – Kindergarten and First Grade Girls and Boys

U08G and U08B – First and Second Grade Girls and Boys

U10G and U10B – Third and Fourth Grade Girls and Boys

U12G and U12B – Fifth and Sixth Grade Girls and Boys

U14G and U14B – Seventh and Eighth Grade Girls and Boys

U16G and U16B – Ninth and Tenth Grade Girls and Boys

U19G and U19B – Eleventh and Twelfth Grade Girls and Boys

Registration Fee

Registration fee includes AYSO fees, Accident Reimbursement Plan coverage, a uniform of shirt, shorts, and socks; a ball and participation trophy.

Returned Check Fee

There will be a \$15 returned check fee. A player whose registration was paid with a returned check will not be allowed to play until the check is cleared.

Refunds

Calculated using Postmark of Refund Request	Amount of Refund
On or before July 15 (and uniform returned)	100%
On or before August 1 (and uniform returned)	50%
After August 1 NO REFUNDS are available	0%

All requests for a refund must be submitted in writing and accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. Download the refund request form from parent's page at www.concordayso.org. Refund requests will be discussed at the next occurring monthly board meeting and handled accordingly.

Late Registration

Any registration received or postmarked after the last registration day is considered late and will not receive the early registration discount of \$25. Check will only be deposited if the child is placed on an available team. Applications are accepted until September 15, space permitting.

Soccer Accident Insurance

AYSO provides an accident reimbursement plan that covers each registered player and some adult volunteers for injury incurred while participating in an AYSO-sanctioned activity. This is an excess coverage plan only. It covers to the limits any medical bills not paid by the primary health insurance carrier and has a \$200 deductible. If an injury should occur, notify your coach or the Safety Director immediately. There is a primary and follow-up report that has to be submitted to the AYSO National Office, signed by your doctor, coach, Safety Director and/or Regional Commissioner before payment can be made.

Before your child is permitted to return to practice and/or games following an injury or serious illness, a participation release form must be signed by parents and doctor.

Sponsorship

We would like to acknowledge donations from all businesses who support our program. The Region welcomes sponsors who want to help our children. Sponsors will be listed in our regional roster book and on our regional website.

Roster Book

Each family has the opportunity to get one copy of the roster book. Roster books will be available for pick-up on picture day.

Team Pictures

Coaches and their teams should make arrangements to ensure that they will be at the field for picture-taking on the scheduled day at their assigned time. Further information will become available prior to picture-taking day.

There will be one scheduled picture-taking day on a Sunday in September and one scheduled makeup picture day to be determined by the photography company; teams not able to make either will need to make arrangements to reschedule directly with the photographer.

Awards

Every player will be awarded a participation trophy. Final corrections for the spelling for the trophy will be collected at the Roster Book table at picture day.

Attendance and Participation

Every player participant shall be entitled to play at least half of every game. Parents, late arrival for a game is disruptive to the team and must be avoided. Therefore, while a player arriving during the first quarter will play the above numbered quarters, any player arriving during the second or third quarter may result in the player participating in only one quarter.

Practice / Game

U06 practice/scrimmage consists of a 60-minute session on Saturdays: 35 minutes devoted to technical development and a 25-minute scrimmage. Coaches may hold another, optional, 60-minute (maximum) training session during the week. No scores or standings will be kept.

U08 typically have one weekday and one Saturday training session per week. Coaches may hold another, optional, training session during the week. Training sessions shall not exceed 60-minutes each.

U10 -U14 typically have two weekday and one Saturday training session per week. Training sessions shall not exceed 60-minutes each.

U16/19 typically have two weekday and one Saturday training session per week. Training sessions shall not exceed 90-minutes each.

Practice schedules are handed out by the coach at the team meeting and are available on line at www.concordayso.org.

U08 through U14 games begin in September after Labor Day, with U16/U19 games beginning the last week of August. Games are held on weekdays and Saturdays through September. After day-light savings, games will only be held on Saturdays.

Players should bring their own water bottles (no carbonated drinks). Remember that coaches are not babysitters or chauffeurs. Each child in the U6 to U8 divisions must have a parent or other responsible adult present at games and practices. In U10 division and up, if you need to leave the field, you must notify the coach prior to leaving and be back on the field before the end of practice to pick up your child. For safety and security reasons, do not ask your child to meet you at the parking lot.

Most fields have bathroom facilities, but for safety reason, children should not go to the bathrooms alone. The U06 fields located at First Lutheran do not have bathroom facilities.

Please help in leaving the fields as you would like to find them. Garbage receptacles are available at all fields.

Children under the age of 18 are NOT allowed to be near the goals during set-up and take-down. For safety, do not let children hang or climb on goals. This will help prevent possible injury and avoidable damage to the equipment.

During games and practices, please stay at least four (4) feet from the sideline.

Please help coaches set up goals before games and remove/store them after games.

Dogs are not permitted at AYSO practices and games, even on a leash. At public parks, it is required that dogs be kept at least 20 yards from the sidelines of the soccer field.

AYSO National policy states each player must play at least half a game and no player can play the entire game until all other players have played at least three (3) quarters.

The U06 and U08 divisions do not play with goalkeepers.

All games in the U06 and U08 divisions are played "in-house"; that is, all teams are from our Region and all games are played in Concord.

The majority of the U10 and U12 games are played "in-house", with some games being played against teams from other AYSO Regions.

The majority of U14, U16, and U19 games are played against teams from other AYSO Regions near Concord. These games may be played on fields as far away as American Canyon.

Per the coach, teams generally meet 30-45 minutes before kick-off time. This pre-game meeting enables the team to warm-up properly, go over the line-ups, and discuss the game strategy and

tactics. Please make sure your child is on time. If your child will not be able to make the game, please inform your coach immediately so that he/she can adjust the game line-up appropriately.

Players may play in more than one position during the course of the game. Players are encouraged to learn to play both offense and defense to develop all of their skills. It is up to the coach to give all players an opportunity to try different positions.

Practice Location and Attendance

As all of the coaches in AYSO are volunteers, practice times are scheduled at the coach's convenience during the week (Monday through Friday) and coordinated with the Region for field availability. Practice fields are located at Concord Community Park, El Dorado / Westwood Fields, First Lutheran Church, and Hillcrest Fields. Each player must arrange to arrive on time and be picked up on time. Shin guards are required at all practices and games. Soccer cleats are best suited for most fields and should be worn at practices. Soccer cleats, unlike baseball cleats, do not have a front toe cleat. It is recommended that each player bring an appropriate sized ball and water to practice.

Length of Season and Cancellation of Games

The regular season will begin on August 1 and run through early November. Inclement weather or poor field conditions may necessitate the canceling of games. Field closures due to rain are managed by the City of Concord Park Maintenance Department. For rain closures, call the Concord Rainline at 925-671-3479.

Team Assignments

The Registrar and the Regional Commissioner shall make team assignments with the use of the eAYSO team building program provided by AYSO National. Retention of players (buddies) on any team shall be limited to the head coach and assistant coach's child(ren). Except for the foregoing, there shall be no automatic retention of players from the previous season. Every attempt shall be made to balance the skill level of teams within each division. Once teams are formed, no transfer of any player from one team to another may be made without the approval of the Regional Commissioner, the coaches of both teams involved, and the parent or guardian of the player.

Equipment

Uniforms: A uniform consisting of shirt, shorts, and socks is provided for your child's use at the beginning of the season and is yours to keep when the season ends. You are responsible for taking care of the full uniform. Do not iron the jersey or shorts. Uniforms may be worn at practice and are required at all games. Players may not wear rings, watches, chains, necklaces, earrings, hard pony tail holders or barrettes, as these items may cause injury during play. Any and all earrings **MUST** be removed prior to practice or play. They cannot be covered with tape or band-aids. Medical bracelets may be worn, but must be covered with tape or a fabric wrist band to prevent injuries.

Shoes: Although not required, it is strongly suggested that players wear soccer shoes—the low-sided “football” style shoes with rubber or plastic molded cleats. Shoes with toe cleats are **not** allowed. Shoes should fit comfortably with athletic socks.

Shin Guards: It is only common sense to protect vulnerable shins. Shin guards can and do protect the player. They may be purchased at any local stores such as Big 5, Sports Authority, Sports Chalet, Sports Basement, Target, K-Mart, and Wal-Mart. New lightweight shin guards

provide freedom of movement without being heavy and cumbersome. **IT IS MANDATORY THAT ALL PLAYERS WEAR SHIN GUARDS AT ALL PRACTICES AND GAMES.**

Ball: A player needs to practice with a ball to develop skill and coordination. U06 and U08 divisions use: Size “3”; U10 and U12 divisions use: Size “4”; U14, U16, and U19 divisions use: Size “5”. As part of the registration fee, each player is given an appropriately sized ball for their age. Any time spent with the ball makes for a better player and active parent participation is greatly encouraged. It is strongly recommended that the player’s phone number be put on the ball for identification.

Water: Each player should bring water for himself/herself to each practice and game. It is recommended that before, during, and after any sporting activity that players drink water or other sports drinks, which will re-hydrate the body.

Your Role as Parents

Support your child by giving encouragement and showing an interest in his/her team. It is important to your child that you be enthusiastic and supportive. However, let your child set his/her own goals and play the games for himself/herself. Parents should be careful not to impose their own standards and goals on their child.

Parents must strive to be positive and serve as role models for their children. They should show good sportsmanship at all times toward the coach, referees, opponents, and teammates. The key concept is respect for each other. Treat others as you would want to be treated. Encourage your child’s efforts and point out the good things they do well. As long as children give their best, they deserve to be made to feel like winners. Please, do not compare your child with other players. This may create hard feelings and resentment among players and parents.

Please let the coach, COACH. Most of the coaches are parents who have volunteered their time and have attended coaching clinics to help make your child’s experience an enjoyable and rewarding one.

As a parent, you can help your child’s coach by introducing yourself and thanking them for their interest in coaching a team. Support the coach’s request that your child be on time for practices and games. If you cannot stay for the entire practice session, inform the coach and make sure to pick up your child promptly at the end of practice. Be positive with your comments and remember that a coach has a reason for his selection of player positions and should try to have a child play all positions. Don’t criticize the coach because you think your child should play a different position. Offer help at practices.

Remember that coaches volunteer their time and energy to instruct and help your child; they need/deserve your cooperation and support. If you feel that you can do better, please make it known to a board member or the coach administrator and we will see that you have your opportunity to coach in the future. If a minor question arises during a game or practice, discuss it with your child’s coach in a positive manner before or after the game or practice.

Criticism of coaches, referees, players, and parents will not be tolerated. Repetitive instances can lead to dismissal from program participation.

Referees

AYSO referees are volunteers and are entitled to the highest respect from coaches, players, and spectators. The referee's mistakes—and there will be mistakes—shall be accepted without complaint. Many of the referees have no children playing in our Region and all of them gladly give their time to help us. Please show them the respect they deserve—they are volunteers. Express your appreciation for their commitment to our soccer program. The Region is always in need of referees. If you are interested, contact the Regional Referee Administrator.

Game Day Refreshments: Generally, each family is assigned a specific game to bring refreshments, as coordinated by the team parent(s). Coaches and referees appreciate being offered refreshments, so please bring a little extra.

Sideline Etiquette

AYSO soccer encourages positive self-esteem, discipline, personal responsibility, teamwork, acceptance of and learning from disappointment and success, as well as, perseverance. It is an enjoyable game to watch as well as it is to play. We believe that quality soccer can and should be developed; and that it can and should be fun. Therefore, the emphasis of our program is not on who wins, but how the players and teams develop, and most importantly, did they have fun in doing so? We want all participants to reach their full, age-appropriate potential and to enjoy themselves in the process. As spectators, we must realize that the players are trying their very best and deserve our very best in the way of support and encouragement. Negative comments have no place on the field or on the sidelines—in order to ensure a safe, fair, and fun environment for our children, AYSO has a “ZERO TOLERANCE” policy towards negative and unsporting behavior on or near the soccer fields. We need to recognize that the effort of each player is 100% well intended and to encourage each player to maintain that effort. It is also important to recognize all good play being demonstrated—regardless of which team the player is on.

Allow the coach to be the sole source of coaching during the match, communicating tactical or technical adjustments to the players. As a coach, be sure that your coaching during the match is limited to positive, instructional and/or encouraging comments (P.I.E.). Giving play-by-play instructions to all players thwarts their ability to put into effect the lessons you have stressed in practices and disallows them the opportunity to think on their feet.

The area off the field that the coaches occupy is called the “technical area” and is on your own team's side, no closer than one yard from the touchline, and up to ten yards from either side of the halfway line. The “technical area” is limited to the head coach and one assistant coach for that team. Not only are these to be the only persons occupying the “technical area,” they are the only persons who may coach (give tactical or technical information) during the course of the match.

Sportsmanship

An important aspect of the AYSO program is Sportsmanship. Our children need to experience:

1. The fun of hard fought but fair competition,
2. Winning graciously,

3. Losing graciously,
4. Improving one's abilities through practice,
5. Learning the social skills involved in being a member of a team, and
6. Acknowledging good play by teammates as well as opponents.

One of the ways in which our children can learn and continue to have these experiences is by our demonstration of good sideline behavior. Our children learn by watching and imitating our conduct. Keep a positive outlook and demonstrate it by supporting the coaches, players, and referees—in spite of any mistakes they may make during the course of a match.

Volunteering

The success of AYSO comes from the idea of 100% volunteers. Volunteers will receive Section, Area, and Regional support/training through clinics, workshops, and guidelines in order to build their confidence and expertise in the particular task for which they have volunteered. Some of the many positions needed every season to make the program run successfully are coaches, referees, assistant referees, team parents, picture coordinators, field maintenance, and board members. ***The Region reserves the right to reject the registration of any participant whose parent refuses to volunteer his or her services.***

The following is a list of opportunities for you to consider. All volunteers will receive instructions for selected jobs. Remember: **No Previous Experience is Necessary and it's free!**

Coach: One of the most rewarding opportunities. First-time AYSO coaches must attend coach training. This training is held locally and takes approximately two (2) hours for U08, three (3) for U10, and five (5) for U12. Training for U14 and above is offered locally as well as at Golden Gate Camp held annually at a near-by college campus, determined by AYSO National. In 2009, AYSO National adopted guidelines requiring all coaches to be certified at the appropriate level of instruction. Concord AYSO complies to best of our ability.

Assistant Coach: Assists the team coach during practices. You will learn a lot about soccer and coaching and enjoy working with the players. Assistant coaches are not required to attend coach training, but it is highly recommended.

Referee: One of the most rewarding opportunities. First-time AYSO referees must attend referee training. Upon successful completion of Referee Training, a uniform will be provided by the Region. Contact the Regional Referee Administrator if you're interested. You will learn the rules of soccer and how to conduct the game, and have an opportunity to participate in the game with the players. AYSO National requires that all U10 through U19 games have a qualified referee for the game to be played. No qualified referee, no game.

Assistant Referee: Assists the referee, calling the ball in and out of play, and offside. A Referee Training Class must be completed. Upon successful completion of Referee Training, a uniform will be provided by the Region at no cost to you.

Team Linesperson: This person would, after brief instruction from the referee, signal the referee from the sideline with a flag if the whole of the ball crosses the touchline. This person is

needed if there are not enough referees or assistant referees available for the game.

Team Parent: Administrative assistant to the coach. The Team Parent is the primary communicator between the coach and the parents. Oversees and coordinates other parents in several areas: refreshments, parties, newspaper articles, banner making, telephoning information, and anything else that pertains to the specific team. Team Parent Meeting provides pertinent information necessary to perform duties. Coaches greatly appreciate a committed volunteer to fill this position.

Assistant Team Parent: Assists the Team Parent in his/her duties.

Child Protection Policy

1. Concord AYSO Region 305 is committed to the protection of all its children from all forms of abuse and neglect while participating in the program. It promotes the awareness and prevention of child abuse in the community at large.
2. Concord AYSO Region 305 has a Child Protection Advocate, who is be responsible for overseeing the child protection program in accordance with AYSO guidelines. He or she shall be a member of the Regional Board and will act as the main resource on child protection issues and shall be the Region's liaison with the Coordinator of Child Protection Advocacy at the AYSO Education Department.
3. Concord AYSO Region 305 requires all volunteers to complete, date, and sign the appropriate volunteer application form and its authorization to AYSO to perform applicant screening. All volunteers shall be screened at a level appropriate to the level of risk.
4. Concord AYSO Region 305 shall have the right to revoke the participation of any individual who lies or knowingly misrepresents information on the application form, or who violates the principles of these child protection policies. AYSO shall have the right to revoke both the registration and certification of any volunteer who falsifies information, is found guilty of child abuse, or fails to fill in and return the volunteer application form.
5. The complaint, grievance, and appeal process shall be as described in the Regional guidelines, with the addition of appeal to AYSO if it is the screening agency. The names and identities of the claimant and the defendant shall be protected at all times during the proceedings. The claimant need not be present to give evidence at any ensuing hearing, thus avoiding victimizing the child a second time.
6. A volunteer accused of abuse will be asked to resign voluntarily. If the volunteer refuses, the board will move to suspend the volunteer until the matter has been resolved. Regardless of civil or criminal guilt for the alleged child abuse, the continued presence of the volunteer in the program will damage the reputation of the Region, even during the investigation and pretrial phase.
7. A volunteer accused of child abuse but subsequently cleared may apply for reinstatement in the Region. However, reinstatement is not a right, and reinstated volunteers are not guaranteed to return to their former positions.

Secondary Play – Select

Concord AYSO participates in the Area Select season of play. It is open to U10 through U19 age divisions. Players are asked to play by the Select coach after the last tournament game of the regular fall season. The Select season runs from December 1 through March, ending with a Select tournament. Teams typically go on to play in tournaments located in Pleasant Hill, Concord, Carson City, and Davis. These tournaments run through the end of May.

VIP Program

The VIP Program carries the AYSO philosophy of “Everyone Plays” to a new height, including all children. The mission of the AYSO VIP Program is to provide a quality soccer experience for children whose physical or mental challenges make it difficult to successfully participate on mainstream AYSO teams. In the American Youth Soccer Organization, these kids are Very Important Players (VIP). AYSO recognizes that all children need to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance, and offers that acceptance through its VIP soccer program. The VIP Division offers an opportunity for players and parents alike to participate in a supportive environment, to be a part of a team, to learn about the game of soccer, to make new friends, and most of all, to have FUN!

Wherever you live, there are potential VIP players in our schools and our community. With your help, these kids can have the benefits of sports participation in our VIP soccer program. As you read about the AYSO VIP Program, if you think of someone who might meet the criteria of a VIP player, please share this information with them. If you or they have any questions about this very exciting and rewarding part of our program, just call the AYSO Hotline at 685-AYSO (2976).