

2009 Anne Arundel Youth Soccer Association Rules

Version 1.0 (12/23/2008)

The Anne Arundel Youth Soccer Association (AAYSA) follows the laws of the game as outlined in the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) *Soccer Rules Book*. This is available at www.nfhs.com. The league also follows ALL Anne Arundel County Department of Recreation & Parks *Organized Sports Manual* with the addendums and clarifications documented below. AAYSA does not follow FIFA or other league/association rules. These rules apply not only to all spring and fall “regular season” games but also to the AAYSA-sponsored Arundel Cup tournament.

Throughout this document, references are made to “coaches”; this includes **both** head coaches and assistant coaches (unless otherwise indicated.)

1. TOBACCO-FREE POLICY

- a. A person may not use any form of tobacco in a restroom, at a spectator or concession area, dog park, aquatic facility, or playground in any County park, or within 100 yards of an organized activity at a County park. “Organized activity” means an event that has a defined time for starting and ending and is in a designated or permitted area of a County park. “Park” includes recreational facilities. “Tobacco” includes but is not limited to cigarettes, cigars, snuff, pipes, and chewing tobacco.
- b. Any person who violates the tobacco-free rule will be requested, by a Recreation & Parks staff member, to cease the use of tobacco and will be given a verbal warning. If the person refuses to cease, staff authorized by the Director of Recreation and Parks may request that the person leave the park.

2. PARTICIPATION AND ELIGIBILITY

- a. Girls may play in the boys' program, but boys may not compete in the girls' program.
- b. The age group a player can participate in is based on his/her birth date. The following birth date ranges are in effect for the **Spring 2009** season:

Age Group	From	To
U18	08/01/1990	07/31/1994
U14	08/01/1994	07/31/1995
U13	08/01/1995	07/31/1996
U12	08/01/1996	07/31/1997
U11	08/01/1997	07/31/1998
U10	08/01/1998	07/31/1999
U9	08/01/1999	07/31/2000
U8	08/01/2000	11/01/2001

- c. The following birth date ranges are in effect for the **Fall 2009** season:

Age Group	From	To
U18	08/01/1991	07/31/1995
U14	08/01/1995	07/31/1996
U13	08/01/1996	07/31/1997
U12	08/01/1997	07/31/1998
U11	08/01/1998	07/31/1999
U10	08/01/1999	07/31/2000
U9	08/01/2000	07/31/2001

* Note: Players must be 8 years old before they are allowed to participate in games in the fall season. No exceptions to this rule will be entertained. However, players who turn 8 during the fall season are allowed to practice with their teammates up until they turn 8 and then play in games once they actually are 8.

- d. Public, private, parochial, and/or home-schooled high school students who play (participate and/or are on the roster) on a fall high school soccer team are not eligible to play on an AAYSA team in the fall season. HS students who play on a fall HS team ARE permitted to participate in the spring AAYSA season. In addition, students who are no longer in high school but still fit in the U18 age group ARE permitted to play on an AAYSA U18 team so long as they do not participate on a college team.
- e. Players may only be on the roster of one team playing within the AAYSA during a season. Players ARE permitted to be on the roster of an AAYSA team and a “travel” (WAGS, BBSL, NCSL, etc.) in the same season.

3. LEVELS OF PLAY

Divisions will be established, by skill level, to accommodate all teams participating.

- a. **DIVISION 1** is highly competitive, composed of experienced and skilled players. Teams are usually selected by tryout or skill comparisons by the sponsoring Community organization. Coaches are required to play each player on the team at least 25% of the total game time.
- b. **DIVISION 2** is not as competitive as Division 1, yet participants are skilled and experienced. Coaches are required to play each player on the team at least 50% of the total game time.
- c. **DIVISION 3+** is primarily designed for recreational players and should be less competitive in nature. Most teams are fielded by random assignment of players rather than by a grading process. In the event that an organization fields more than one team per age/sex group in these levels, it is recommended that the organization attempt to level the teams by skill and avoid placement of two teams in the same division. Coaches are required to play each player on the team at least 50% of the total game time.

To address parent concerns about the costs of traveling to games at distant fields, AAYSA may also implement Regional Divisions in addition to “skills-based” divisions outlined above. The decision on whether this will be done in a given season will be made by the league board prior to the team division placement process and then approved by the organization commissioners. The only age groups that will be eligible for this organization will be those with enough teams registered to field at least two (2) skills-based divisions and three (3) regional divisions. The individual organizations grouped into these 3 divisions (North, Central, and South) will be determined via the same process as above.

4. **PLACEMENT OF TEAMS**

- a. Placement is primarily based on the standings from the previous fall season, which are carried forward from the previous season during the team registration process. In Division 1, the two lowest placing teams are typically moved down to Division 2. The two highest Division 2 teams are typically moved up to Division 1. All other divisions will be handled in the same manner, i.e. the bottom two teams of Division 2 will be assigned to Division 3, etc. Requests for exceptions to this policy must be justified in writing at the time of team registration.

Note: The yearly addition or loss of teams in an age group can affect placement in such a way as to make it unreasonable and contradictory to the intent of the rule to place certain teams according to the above procedures. In addition, roster changes of the teams in an age group can also affect its division placement. A change in the coaching staff of a team (with no change to its roster) does NOT constitute a new team, but a 50% or more change in the roster of a team (player additions and deletions) does. The league board and commissioners will make reasonable team placements where the former league and team structure has changed.

- b. To assure that each team has 10 scheduled games in the fall season, all divisions will be created with 6 teams in them except for the lowest division in each age group (which will have at least 6 but no more than 11 teams in it.) However, the league board and commissioners can make exceptions to this 6-team division rule as needed and appropriate based on the teams registered. In these cases, the commissioners must also agree that in doing so they may end up with unbalanced game schedules. The number of teams registered in each age group will determine division sizes in the spring season.
- c. **Carded Players** (Team players from “select” teams): If a team is playing with player(s) that also play on select teams (for example, WAGS, BBSL, or NCSL) in the same season, the following division placement rules are in effect:
 1. For all 7v7 and 9v9 age groups (U9 thru U11 and GU18, plus U12 starting in fall 2009), 1 carded player would force the team into division 1 or 2 depending upon the previous fall season record. 2 or more carded players would force the team into division 1.
 2. For all 11v11 age groups (U13 and U14 and BU18, plus U12 for spring 2009), 1 or 2 carded players would force the team into division 1 or 2 depending upon the

previous fall season record. 3 or more carded players would force the team into division 1.

Note: No special exemptions or allowances will be made to these rules based on the position played by the carded player (i.e. goal keeper), whether the carded player is “playing up” or in his/her correct age group, or whether the carded player is a girl playing on a boy’s team. However, the league board has the authority to make other exceptions to the rules above (and interpret these rules) depending on the individual circumstances.

5. **PLAYER DOCUMENTATION**

- a. All players must be properly rostered before participating in any game. Each coach must have a copy of the official team roster available for inspection by the other coach. If a valid roster is not produced when requested, the team and/or coach may be subject to disciplinary action. A player who is not on the official roster may not play in a league game. A coach, who permits a non-rostered individual to participate in a game, will forfeit that game and may be subject to further disciplinary action.
- b. Roster changes or additions will be allowed for the purpose of balancing team strengths, realigning team imbalances, and for other good and valid reasons. For the fall season, an updated team roster and signed contracts for the affected players must be submitted to the county no later than 5:00pm on the Wednesday prior to the fourth weekend of the season. (For the fall 2009 season, by **Wednesday, 9/23.**)
- c. A roster may be challenged on the field, but the continuation of the game is not dependent on the removal of an ineligible player. Referees are not involved in player eligibility unless the player in question has been disqualified and the official is aware of such disqualification. In such a case, the referee will ask the player, (or disqualified coach), to leave before continuing play.
- b. Roster maximums consist of the following number of players:
 - a. twelve (12) players for 7 vs. 7
 - b. fifteen (15) players for 9 vs. 9
 - c. eighteen (18) players for 11 vs. 11.

Any number players over these amounts will require a written waiver by the first game of the season. In the spring season, this over-sized roster waiver request should be submitted to the league board, and in the fall season it should be submitted to the Anne Arundel County Sports Supervisor.

6. **REGISTRATION AND FEES:**

- a. Fees must be paid at the time of the team placement meeting.
- b. Teams that are dropped after the placement meeting are subject to a fine of \$300 per team in addition to the forfeiture of all team registration fees.

- c. Teams may be added after the placement meeting only in exceptional circumstances as approved by the league board.

7. STANDINGS AND CHAMPIONSHIPS (Fall Season Only)

Note: Since scores are not recorded for the spring season, the following section applies to the fall season only.

- a. Each regular season game is worth three (3) points, awarded to the winning team or one (1) point per team in case of a tie. The number of points earned, except when an unequal number of games have been played will determine divisional standings and placements. In that case, percentage of points earned out of the **total possible** points, which could have been earned will determine final placement. **Total of points shall determine standings, not head to head or number of wins.**
- b. In the event of a tie between two or more teams (as determined by points or percentage above) the teams will be declared co-champions.
- c. Within each Age Group and Division, the first place team will receive 1 Team trophy. Each player on the roster will also receive an individual trophy. In case of ties (see above), trophies will be awarded to both teams.

8. GAMES

- a. The HOME TEAM coach (head or assistant) is responsible for contacting the visiting team coaches at least two days prior to the game to confirm the game schedule, opponent, team uniform colors, and directions to the field.
- b. In the fall season, both the home and away team coaches are responsible for reporting the game score and referee count to their commissioner for entry into the league database by **midnight on the Tuesday following the game date** (or approximately 144 hours of the scheduled game time.) Failure to enter this information on time will result in the game being recorded as a forfeit by both teams. In the spring season, the home and away team coaches are only responsible for reporting the referee count to their commissioners for entry into the league database.
- c. If an error in the recorded game score and/or referee count is identified, it must be brought to the attention of the league board. The change will only be made after verifying the correction with both coaches and with the official(s) at the game. No corrections to game scores will be made after the Friday following the last game of the season.
- d. The final outcome of a game can not be challenged or protested based upon whether scores should have been allowed, penalties should or should not have been awarded, or for similar reasons. However, the league board will review challenges based on rules interpretation issues. Any challenge should be submitted by the coach to his/her organization's commissioner for distribution to the league board within 72 hours of the game time.

- e. The organization that is directly responsible for the field must ensure that the field is marked with an approved athletic field marking material, that corner markers are placed, nets are installed, and that the field is properly mowed and ready for safe play.
- f. If the game officials deem the field unsafe for play, the game will be canceled; alternate arrangements may be made at the discretion of the two coaches and the league board. Unless the entire schedule is canceled, the game officials have full powers to play or cancel games. If a field has been closed due to weather, teams MAY NOT play the game without the designated officials. The league board at their discretion will only conduct game rescheduling.
- g. A head or assistant coach who is at least 18 years old must be present at each league game. The coaches from both teams (heads or assistants) should meet with the referee(s) prior to the start of the game to verify length and number of periods, ball size, as well as age group and local ground rules. The coaches will be reminded of their responsibility to control their players, all coaches, and spectators before, during, and after the game.
- h. All players will be inspected by game officials prior to the start of play for adherence to the following safety and uniform rules.
 - a. No jewelry (including watches, neck chains, bracelets, and earrings) may be worn.
 - b. All team members, except the goalkeeper, must wear shirts, shorts, and socks, which are uniform and distinct from the opponents' uniforms.
 - c. The goalkeeper must wear a shirt, shorts, and socks, which are distinct from both the opponents' and his/her own team's uniforms.
 - d. Both socks must be the same color, and single-color tie-dye is allowed.
 - e. A soft cap may be worn during cold weather.
 - f. Players wearing braces or other oral appliances must wear protective, commercially available mouthpieces specifically designed for such purposes to cover those appliances. Appliances on the top and/or bottom teeth must be covered.
 - g. Players wearing glasses must have their glasses secured to the head in an appropriate manner using soft material.
 - h. Only soft hair control devices are allowed.
 - i. Face paint and sprayed on hair color is allowed so long as it is not considered offensive or objectionable by the officials.

A referee has the duty to exclude a player from participation until he or she conforms to the safety standards.

- i. A player must be removed from the field if he/she is bleeding. Any wound must be adequately bandaged in order to prevent further exposure of blood before the player may return to a game. Any clothing or equipment contaminated with blood must be replaced. Players may participate in games wearing a cast, but it must be sufficiently protected (with bubble-wrap or other padding) so as to not injure another player. The player must also have an original doctor's note (to be shown to the officials before the start of the game) that indicates, "Athletic participation in soccer is allowed."

- j. Any team, which forfeits two consecutive games without notifying the sports supervisor or league board of any extenuating circumstances, will be dropped from the league for the remainder of the season. The team registration fee will not be refunded, and the team will be responsible for any and all referee or scheduling fees as appropriate. The results of all games played by the dropped team will be nullified, and standings of that division will reflect byes for games that were originally scheduled for the dropped team.
- k. A game shall be forfeited whenever one team fields fewer than seven (7) players for 11 vs. 11, six (6) players for 9 vs. 9, or fewer than five (5) for 7 vs. 7. The game will be recorded as a 1-0 decision. In the event that a game is terminated by the officials as the results of actions of either team, the League may declare a forfeit loss to one or both teams, regardless of whether the first half has been completed.
- l. Since the fall season is only 9 weeks long but includes 10 games in the season, each team will play a second game on either the 2nd or 3rd weekend of the season (a “double-header”). (Double-headers are not scheduled for the spring season.) In addition, for fall season age groups that have an odd number of teams in their lowest division, additional games will be scheduled on a weekend of the season to give them at least 10 games.
- m. No electronic or mechanical noise-makers (including whistles, horns, cow bells, air horns, etc.) are permitted at any game.
- n. All players are required to wear age and size appropriate shin guards that have not been modified from the original manufactured state and are worn in the manner the manufacturer intended. The shin guard needs to be worn no more than 2 inches above the ankle. This rule waves NFHS Rule 4 Player Equipment, Section 1 Required Equipment, Article 1 (that requires that beginning in 2008 fall season shin guards must meet the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) specifications) while still ensuring player safety without placing undue expense on the Anne Arundel community.
- o. Though AAYSA does not formally recognize any “slaughter” rules or policies, coaches should take reasonable steps to keep game scores in check in cases where teams are obviously mismatched. This is to preserve the role and standing of AAYSA as a recreational league and program in Anne Arundel County. These reasonable steps include (but are not limited to) flipping the team’s offense and defense, instituting a minimum number of passes before shooting, and shooting with the players “weak foot” only.

9. **OFFICIALS**

- a. IF REFEREES DO NOT ARRIVE by game time, the coaches (heads or assistants) are encouraged to use volunteer officials but they are not required to do so. This, in itself, is not ground for protesting a game. However, the coaches must notify their respective commissioners that the appropriate number of referees did not show up. If volunteer officials are used, the following rights and responsibilities should be followed:

1. The volunteer officials should follow the same code of conduct as would be expected from a “regular” referee. This includes refraining from coaching or cheering on their players while acting as the referee.
2. Likewise, these volunteer officials have the same responsibility to officiate the game to the best of their ability, following the rules outlined herein. However, since they would not have the equipment a normal referee would have, they are unable to issue yellow or red cards. Therefore, if the volunteer referees feel at any time during the game that the play is moving outside of their control, they have the right to end the game.

If game officials arrive after play has commenced, the game will be turned over to them at a stoppage of play. Elapsed time will NOT be repeated or replayed. The game will be continued or resumed from the point at which play was stopped.

- b. All season games will be played as scheduled, unless postponed for such reasons as adverse weather, darkness, or unplayable fields. Conflicts with a religious holiday or with school or scout-sponsored events are possible grounds for postponements or rescheduling of games. Affected teams must notify the sports supervisor and league board of their particular situation as soon as it is known, or no later than 2 weeks prior to the scheduled game date.
- c. The Department of Recreation & Parks or the league board may postpone or cancel the entire schedule for a game day based on inclement weather up to two hours before the first game that day. In the fall season, the first league-wide game cancellation of the season is automatically rescheduled on the same field for the weekend after the end of the regularly scheduled season (the make-up weekend). These make-up games are considered mandatory and are treated like any other game, so organizations must be aware of this contingency and be prepared to account for it. There is only one makeup weekend in the fall season, and no games are made up in the spring season.
- d. If an alternate field must be used, it is up to the organization that maintains the field to notify both teams of the change, and to adequately prepare the field for play in accordance with the league and Recreation & Parks department rules.
- e. If the entire schedule is NOT postponed by Recreation & Parks, the referees have authority, based on their judgment, to cancel any games based on the playability of the field. Teams are not to play games on canceled fields in the absence of the officially scheduled referees. Whether individually cancelled games will or will not be made up will be determined by the league board based on field and referee availability and other factors.
- f. Lightning/Thunder Policy – To ensure player and spectator safety, all activities must come to a stop and the playing field cleared at the first sound of thunder or sign of lightning. Play may resume after a 30 minutes delay after the last sound of thunder or sign of lightning. During the stoppage of play, the game clock continues to run, and the playing time is not made up when play resumes.

10. RULES OF PLAY

- a. **FIELD OF PLAY:** Reasonable variations in field dimensions are permitted; recommended field sizes are shown in the table below. **Unless it is impractical to do so, each team and their supporters shall be located on OPPOSITE sides of the field;** the referees are responsible for enforcing this policy. The home team has the choice of side. Team members and coaches are restricted to the coach's box. Parents and spectators are not allowed in this box. **No spectators may be positioned behind either end line, or from the end line to the top of the penalty box.** All spectators and players must stay **THREE YARDS** from the touchline and may not interfere with any replay or re-start.

The coaches are expected to help in the enforcement of this margin.

The organization supplying the field will be required to designate by paint the coach's box, which extends 10 YARDS each side of the half and THREE YARDS from the touchline.

- b. **THE BALL:** The HOME TEAM must provide one suitable game ball of the appropriate size. These sizes are shown in the table on the following page.
- c. **GAME OFFICIALS:** The number of referees scheduled for each age group is shown in the table below. For U11 thru U14 and U18B, if only one referee shows for a game, the game will be played and volunteer line judges may be used. The referee will assign other duties, as he/she deems necessary. The referee will declare the game a forfeit if a team does not appear for a scheduled game within 15 minutes after the official start time. Time will be subtracted from game time.

If a game official determines that a coach unreasonably prolongs a discussion with the referees, or refuses to leave the field when requested by the official, the game may then be forfeited. A referee may terminate the game in the event of a grave disorder. However, the game will not be ruled a forfeit until the referee's written report is reviewed by the sports supervisor.

- e. **DURATION OF THE GAME:** The referee will keep the official game clock. Duration of games and lengths of periods are shown in the table below. Games are considered complete if half the game has been completed. The clock will be stopped for on-field medical treatment, or when otherwise ordered by a referee. No coach may call time out to "coach" the team.

The following information applies to the **Spring 2009** season:

	AGE	PERIODS	PERIOD LENGTH	FIELD SIZE	BALL SIZE	# REFS.
7 vs. 7	U8	Two (2) halves	25 minutes	60 x 40 yds.	4	1
	U9					
	U10					
9 vs. 9	U11			80 x 50 yds.		5
11 vs.11	U12			110 x 60 yds.		
	U13					
	U14					
	Boys U18	80 x 50 yds.	1			
7 vs. 7	Girls U18					

The following information applies to the **Fall 2009** season:

	AGE	PERIODS	PERIOD LENGTH	FIELD SIZE	BALL SIZE	# REFS.
7 vs. 7	U9	Two (2) halves	25 minutes	60 x 40 yds.	4	1
	U10			80 x 50 yds.		
9 vs. 9	U11		30 minutes	110 x 60 yds.	5	2
	U12					
11 vs.11	U13					
	U14					
	Boys U18		25 minutes	80 x 50 yds.	1	
7 vs. 7	Girls U18					

f. Special Rules for Girls U18:

1. No offside rule
2. The goalkeeper may not punt the ball past midfield. In the event the goalie punts the ball past the midfield line, the opposing team receives an indirect free kick at the point the ball passed the midfield line.

- g. **SLIDE TACKLES:** To ensure safe play, slide tackles are prohibited for all 7v7 and 9v9 age groups, but are allowed for all 11v11 age groups. (For the spring 2009 season, 11v11 includes U12, U13, U14, and BU18, while for Fall 2009 this includes U13, U14, and BU18.) Slide tackles performed by 7v7 or 9v9 age groups will be treated as a foul and may result in a direct kick or (if judged to be egregious enough) a yellow or red card.

11. FOULS AND MISCONDUCT:

- a. Coaches may be cautioned or disqualified for failure to maintain reasonable and proper control over the behavior and actions of his/her team and their spectators (including parents, relatives, friends, etc.)
- b. Individual spectators may also be ordered by the referee to leave the area in the event of disruptive behavior.
- c. Parents and spectators must be aware that the coach is responsible for their actions on the sideline, BEFORE, DURING, and AFTER THE GAME, and that the coach (head or assistant) can be cautioned (yellow card), ejected and removed from the field (red card), or even banned from future games because of misbehavior of others. It should be understood that it is entirely inappropriate from team staff, parents, or spectators to make loud, abusive, derogatory, or threatening comments to the referees, members of the opposing team, their team staff, or their spectators.
- d. COACH YELLOW/RED CARDS - No “soft yellow” cards will be given to any coach. If a coach receives a yellow card, the next card will be a HARD Red card. The coach is removed from that game and suspended for the next two (2) games. The coach will not participate in any game. The coach must completely leave the park/school, and may not be on the sidelines, the parking lot, or have any communications with the team during the game. If caught at the field by either the officials or the opposing team coaches, the sports supervisor or league board may impose additional disciplinary action as appropriate.

Receipt of a DIRECT Red card is an automatic TWO game suspension from the next two games his/her team plays, and further penalties may be imposed.

- e. Receipt of a second red card to a coach within a single season will be ground for a one-year suspension.