

WYSA Soccer Coaches Guidelines – U8

Westford Youth Soccer, WYSA, is a community organization created for the purpose of the promotion and enhancement of the game of soccer for the youth of Westford and to foster and promote the qualities of physical fitness, competitive spirit, team play, loyalty and good sportsmanship by providing soccer instruction and the opportunity to participate in team competition.

WYSA is a teaching and participation organization run by community members on a volunteer basis. To start each season, we set two goals for coaches to achieve. The first and most important is for the children to have FUN. The second is for the players to learn the game of soccer. We expect that players should develop in several areas, including:

- Individual basic soccer skills
- Team play concepts and cooperation
- Overall sportsmanship, as shown through respect and appreciation for teammates, opponents, referees and coaches

The Micro soccer program provides each player with frequent ball touches and minimizes the confusion of dealing with difficult rules and strategies required on a larger field. Emphasis should be placed on teaching and having fun, with NO emphasis on winning. The dedication and example set by you, the coach, is extremely important in achieving our goals. Your time as a volunteer is our greatest asset and it should not be wasted. You should structure and run your practice sessions so that each child is involved and “doing” regardless of ability. Develop and follow a realistic practice format and schedule with repetitive drills so your players know what to expect. The kids will work to the standards you set.

If practice is where your dedication is most demonstrated, it is during the games that your example means everything. It does little to preach the worthy goal of sportsmanship only to blow it all during the heat of the action. Sadly, we occasionally experience the ridiculous display of an otherwise reasonable adult loudly berating opposing players or coaches, or even his own players. Please don't let this be you this season. Please try to:

- Be enthusiastic and consistent in your praise
- Be encouraging and constructive in your criticism by avoiding the word “don't” and focusing on the desired behavior, technique or outcome.
- Be appreciative of the opponents' efforts

Equipment

Each player shall have a shirt of the same color as the players on the same team. The league provides team shirts. Shin-guards are mandatory and must be worn by all players on the field. The size 3 soccer ball will be used in U8 soccer. No jewelry shall be worn; this includes earrings – taping is not an acceptable remedy. Soft hair restraints may be worn.

Each team plays with three field- players and one goalkeeper. The goalkeeper should have a different color shirt or pinnie to designate status. The goalkeeper is allowed to use her hands only within the marked 5 yard box. The goalkeeper may not use her hands on intentional passes from her teammates or if a throw-in is sent to the keeper.

Format

The U8 age group plays on a 35 yard by 25 yard field containing a 5 yard goalie box and centerline marked. The goals will be 4 feet high and 6 feet wide. To score the ball must cross the goal line in its entirety. After a goal, the game will be re-started at the center of the field with defending players at the 5 yard line.

Each team will be engaged in two games simultaneously, with split squads on two adjacent fields.

- When the ball goes out of play by fully crossing a sideline, a throw-in is awarded. An illegal throw-in will not result in a loss of possession, instead a second throw is allowed when the referee stops play.
- When the ball goes out of play by fully crossing an end-line, last touched by the defending team, a corner kick is awarded.
- When the ball goes out of play by fully crossing an end-line, last touched by the attacking team, a goal kick is awarded. The attacking team must retreat to the centerline on a goal kick.

Playing Time

The game is played in 4 twelve minute quarters. Playing time should be equally distributed among the players. All players must play at least 50% of the game.

Substitutions are allowed before goal kicks, corner kicks, throw-ins and center-line kick-offs (after goals or the end of a quarter). Substitutions are recommended every 2-3 minutes. It is recommended that the goal-keeper remain in position for an entire quarter (except in cases of injury). The coach should try to use 8 different goal-keepers each game.

Goalkeeper

The goalkeeper may use her hands in the 5 yard goal area. The keeper may only throw the ball to a team-mate on her side of the centerline or a loss of possession results. There will be no intentional passes back to the keeper to handle the ball. The keeper wears a different color shirt or jacket.

Referees

The U8 age group plays with referees on the field. The authority of the referee starts upon entering the field. The referees used in this age group are young and generally just beginning their referee career. They will be doing their best to call a fair game. As a coach you are expected to help and teach them. Do not give them a hard time.

Fouls

Referees will call only flagrant fouls. No penalty kicks will be awarded in the U8 age level. If there is an infraction near the goal mouth, an indirect kick is awarded. Referees will call intentional use of the hands for players other than the goalkeeper in her area. The offside rule shall not be in effect. Players, however, should not “hang in front of the goal when the play is not nearby”.

Scoring

No score is kept by the referee nor recorded by the league