



AREA F LOWER DIVISION PROGRAM RULES 2025-2026

1 – SCOPE

These rules shall apply to 10U through 14U teams playing in the Area F Interplay Program, playoff season and to any secondary season 10U through 14U teams. These rules will not supersede AYSO Policies and Protocols, but cover those situations not addressed by AYSO Policies and Protocols, which shall prevail in case of conflict. The following rules are designed to achieve the highest degree of sportsmanship in keeping with the AYSO Philosophies, and to give all players, coaches and spectators the opportunity to participate in a wholesome environment.

2 – JURISDICTION

The Area Director (herein referred to as AD) shall have sole jurisdiction over the teams participating in the Area F Interplay Program and the Area F playoffs subject to the provisions of these rules, in any disciplinary decision made pursuant to these rules and in the enforcement, recommendations made by any Due Process Review established under the provisions of paragraph 14.7 of these rules. During the secondary season, the Regional Commissioner (herein referred to as RC) shall have sole jurisdiction over their Region's teams subject to the provisions of these rules, in any disciplinary decision made pursuant to these rules and in the enforcement, recommendations made by any Due Process Review established under the provisions of paragraph 14.7 of these rules. The RC has the option to request that the AD and Area take the lead on situations where it is in the best interest of all parties involved.

3 – COORDINATION

The AD or their designee shall coordinate the Area F Interplay Program or Area F playoffs. During the core season or Area playoff pool play, each Region shall oversee their fields; Regions shall oversee single elimination for the core season, Area shall oversee single elimination for the Area F playoffs. Address all misconduct reports to the AD, RC and the Area Referee Administrator.

4 – TEAMS AND PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

The AD and RC working together will advance teams, which meet the highest level of sportsmanship and character, to Area 1F playoff season and Section playoffs.

- 4.1** Each RC is responsible for insuring the eligibility of their players from their Region. A fully completed AYSO roster must include player jersey number and BIRTH DATE, and must be submitted to the AD or their designee by the Area F lower division meeting. The RC's signature on the AYSO roster confirms the eligibility of each player. A player may ONLY move up one age/year in eligibility for the primary or secondary season.

All team rosters will be verified through AYSO for eligibility requirements specified under Paragraphs 4.2 through 4.4 below.

- 4.2** The effective date of age determination for registration shall be the player's age as of December 31 looking ahead of the Membership Year. Example: For MY2025 the division the child will be placed in will be determined based on their age on December 31, 2025.

1. 10 years of age and under
2. 12 years of age and under
3. 14 years of age and under

- 4.3** Players must be registered in an AYSO Program as of October 15, 2025.

- 4.4** All players must have played in at least one-half of the games with their respective team during the AYSO Fall 2025 season. The ONLY exception is if an injury or illness prevented them from playing the minimum number of games.

- 4.5** For playoffs and tournaments, failure to provide proof of eligibility when requested or falsify eligibility of players will result in the team's expulsion from the playoffs or tournament and forfeiture of all games played and all remaining scheduled games. 8 points will be awarded to the opponent in a forfeited game for area playoffs.

- 4.6** Coaches shall not allow players to practice or play without a hardcopy or digital copy of the Medical/Player Release Forms in their possession at all practices and games. If a player is caught practicing/playing without a Medical/Player Release Form present, the coach will be suspended for one game. Multiple infractions could possibly result in suspension for rest of the season.

5 – COACHES

Coaches participating in the Area F fall program, Section playoffs and /or post season Select/Tournaments must have previously completed AYSO's Safe Haven, Sterling Background Check, Live Scan, SafeSport, Sudden Cardiac Arrest, AYSO CDC Concussion Awareness training and be age specific Coach certified.

6 – CONDUCT

- 6.1** The RC shall be held responsible for the conduct of his/her coaches who in turn shall be

responsible for the conduct of his players and spectators. **PERSISTENT INTERFERENCE WITH THE GAME FROM THE SIDELINES MAY BE CAUSE FOR TERMINATION OF THE GAME AND/OR THE SUSPENSION OF SPECTATORS FROM FUTURE GAMES.**

- 6.2** The privilege of participating in the Section 1 Playoffs is not automatic, but by invitation. The AD will advance teams, which demonstrate the highest level of sportsmanship and character. The AD views the definition of a team as players, coaches and spectators.

7 - FIELD OF PLAY RESPONSIBILITIES

- 7.1** Both teams scheduled to play the first game of the day are responsible for pickup and set-up of the equipment (goals, flags and nets) from the designated location. Both teams scheduled to play the last game of the day are responsible for takedown of the fields, **cleanup and pickup of the entire playing area**, and returning the field equipment to the designated locations. Each team is responsible for bringing their own trash bags, picking up their own trash and depositing their trash in dumpsters located at the site or taking it home. Failure to put away goal posts, nets, and flags and clean up playing area will result in suspension from future play to the offending team, coaches and players.
- 7.2** Any **vandalism to the playing area or to residential areas immediately around the playing area** could result in the loss of the fields to the Area and cancellation of the remainder of the season. **No dogs, smoking, vapes, e-cigs, artificial noisemakers, drones or any flying apparatus are allowed anywhere in sight or in hearing distance of the playing area. Columbia is a public park where dogs are allowed, however, we do not want dogs near the field as the dog might get scared or excited and injure a player or referee. Please leave them at home or at least away from the field. Coaches are responsible for the spectators on the sidelines.**

8 - TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES

- 8.1** A minimum of five players for 10U and seven players for 12U, and 14U shall constitute a team.
- 8.2** The home team shall change jerseys or wear pennies when there is a color conflict to uniforms. The home team is the first team listed on the schedule.
- 8.3** Teams shall remain on designated sides of the field for the entire duration of the game. The home team will take the North or West side of the field depending on the field layout.
- 8.4** Each team is allowed only two (2) certified, trained and registered coaches and they shall remain on their own side of the field, no further than 10 yards on either side of the halfway line. Coaches and substitute players must stay one (1) yard from the touchline.
- 8.5** Only coaches and players are allowed on the field of play. Spectators are to remain between the

penalty areas and at least three (3) yards from the Touchline. Spectators are not to be near the goals on either side of the field.

8.6 Properly completed game cards shall be presented to the referee prior to the start of the game. Game cards are to be filled out completely listing all players present or absent in **NUMERICAL ORDER**, and including an explanation for those absent players.

8.7 The results of the games will be uploaded onto the Area Website by the following weekend for playoffs.

9 - REFEREE/REFEREE REPORTS

9.1 All games shall be officiated using the Diagonal System.

9.2 All referees shall be of the highest caliber available. They are to be of appropriate age and ability, a minimum age of 16 years and be at least 3 years a senior to the participating teams.

9.3 Each Region will assign referees for pool play for the division they host. The AREA REFEREE ADMINISTRATOR shall assign referees for the Quarter Finals, Semi-Finals and Final games.

9.4 Referees shall submit a detailed report within 24 hours to the AD or his designee on all red card (send offs) offenses and any abusive conduct on the part of the players, coaches or spectators. A copy of the report shall also be submitted to the Area Referee Administrator within 24 hours for review and evaluation, the results of which shall be reported to the AD.

10 – GAMES

10.1 Duration of games - All games will be two (2) halves as listed below running clock through the quarters, pool play only :

1. 14U - 35-minute halves
2. 12U - 30-minute halves
3. 10U - 25-minute halves

10.2 In Playoffs, pool games may end in ties. Quarter Final, Semi-Final, and Final games must have a winner. If at the end of regulated time the score is tied, there will be two five - minute COMPLETED overtime periods. If in the event teams are tied following the complete overtime periods, the winner will be determined by kicks from the mark, in accordance with FIFA LAWS of the games.

10.3 Games shall be played as scheduled. THERE IS NO GRACE PERIOD DURING POOL PLAY. During playoffs, a 10-minute grace period will be given. Failure of a team to be ready to play at game time shall constitute forfeiture, giving the opposing team 8 points.

10.4 In the event games are postponed due to weather conditions or any other unforeseen

circumstances, the games will be played on the following scheduled day or as posted on the Area 1F Website.

10.5 Failure to play a game as scheduled or refusing to continue to play a game that has already begun when so directed by the referee, AD or their designee, shall be subject to disciplinary action including exclusion of participation in postseason or remaining Playoff games.

10.6 Only the referee, AD or their designee may cancel a scheduled game.

10.7 Purposely starting a game with less than the correct number of players in the presence of substitutes to allow a particular late player entrance into the game upon their arrival is not in keeping with AYSO soccer philosophy **AND WILL NOT BE ALLOWED. THE GAME WILL START WHEN THE MINIMUM NUMBER OF PLAYERS ARE PRESENT.**

10.8 After the games schedule is published on, the Area 1 F website no changes will made except in case of field availability or conditions.

10.9 ALL GAMES ARE FINAL.

The outcome of games terminated by the referee due to control problems or the refusal of a team to continue to play when so directed by the referee, AD or their designee will be determined by a hearing of a Review Board convened by the AD. (See paragraph 15.7 for an explanation of the Review Board.)

10.10 ALL TEAMS MUST PLAY ALL THEIR SCHEDULED GAMES.

11 - EQUIPMENT

Player's equipment shall conform to AYSO Policies and Protocols and Regional Rules, and the following:

11.1 Shin guards are required to be worn at all practices and games. They shall be covered entirely by socks, shall be commercially manufactured, and shall be of such a size to afford adequate protection to the player.

11.2 Bicycle shorts are allowed if they are the same color as the uniform shorts.

11.3 Uniform jerseys shall have sleeves (no tank tops allowed!).

11.4 A player may wear headgear for added protection or as a reflection of their religious practice, and of a type approved by AYSO NSTC.

11.5 A player may wear no jewelry of any kind.

11.6 Players with casts or splints or soft splints are not allowed to practice or participate in any game.

11.7 Players may wear hard knee braces if they meet the requirements specified in Paragraph 11.10.

11.8 Players must continue to wear their uniforms, including jerseys, until they leave the parking area (unless soiled by blood that cannot be cleaned). A player who removes his/her jersey when celebrating a goal should be cautioned for unsporting behavior.

11.9 All player uniforms, including the goalkeeper, must have a traditional AYSO logo

11.10 Players may wear hard knee braces if they meet the following requirements:

1. Provide a signed letter from their doctor to the host Region's RC or their designee who will in turn forward a copy to the AD or their designee, which states that the player is required to wear a knee brace while playing soccer.
2. Provide a signed letter from their parents to the host Region's RC or their designee who will in turn forward a copy to the AD or their designee, which states that they are aware of their child's injury, that their child doctor's orders is required to wear a brace while playing soccer, and under these circumstances, give their permission for their child to play soccer.
3. Prior to the start of each game, player's wearing braces must receive an approval from the AD or the RC or their designee that the brace and its fasteners are adequately covered and padded. Approval will be noted on the game card.
4. The referee shall be responsible for ensuring that the brace continues to be safe during the game. If the brace should become unsafe by accident or due to the player's action, the player shall be removed from the game, substituted, and not allowed to reenter the game.

11.11 All uniforms shall comply with AYSO National Policies and Protocols. All players must have the same jersey, shorts and socks, with the exemption of the goalkeepers. Jerseys shall bear the AYSO logo on the left chest area with numbers on the front (optional) and the back. No other markings allowed except for a manufacturer's logo.

11.12 All players must wear a jersey with a different number and may not exchange it with another player. Goalkeeper jerseys and uniforms replaced because of bloodstains are exempted. (See Paragraph 13). Jerseys must not be removed until after the players have left the site.

11.13 In divisions 10U and 12U, heading of the ball will not be allowed. It will solely be the discretion of the referees to make the decision if the player attempted to head the ball or not.

12 - TOURNAMENT FORMAT

12.1 The Tournament uses a standard tournament format. Modifications may have been made due to the number of teams in each division. SEE THE APPROPRIATE SCHEDULE FOR DETAILED INFORMATION.

12.2 The Tournament starts with a "round robin" format to determine seeding in single elimination games i.e.: Quarter-finals, Semi-finals

12.3 For all Pool play, points will be awarded as follows:

- 6 points for a win
- 3 points for a tie + points for goals with a maximum of 6 points
1 point for each goal scored, maximum of 3 goals
- 1 point for a shutout
- 10 points maximum possible for each game
- 8 points for forfeiture
- -2 points for each send-off (red card)

12.4 All games will count fully in determining the winner of each pool. If there is a tie in points at the end of the pool play, within a pool or out of a pool the winner will be determined by using the following tiebreakers in the order in which they are listed:

Winners of ties in standings will be determined as follows:

- Head-to-head competition
- Most number of wins
- Goal differential (goals scored to 3 per game less total goals allowed; highest differential advances)
- Goals allowed
- Least number of sportsmanship point deductions (1 point per misconduct, 1 point per spectator incident)
- Kicks from the Penalty Mark

13 - SUBSTITUTION

In all games, the quarterly substitution with $\frac{3}{4}$ play shall be invoked in all age groups. If the teams have more players than normal, every player will play $\frac{1}{2}$ game with no player staying in for a full game until everyone has played at least $\frac{3}{4}$.

14 - INJURIES/BLEEDING

Coaches shall report immediately to their respective Region RC and his Safety Director of any injury that occurs during a game involving any AYSO participant. Any player who is bleeding must be immediately removed from the game and is not allowed to reenter the game until the bleeding has stopped and the wound is completely covered. Any part of the uniform that contains blood must be replaced before the player will be allowed to reenter the game. Substitutions for the bleeding player shall be handled in the same manner as any other injury would be handled.

15 - DISCIPLINARY ACTION

All participants (players, coaches and spectators) are subject to FIFA rules as modified by AYSO

Rules, Regulations and Policies, Section One Rules and these Area F Rules regarding the disciplinary actions set forth below.

15.1 Should a player, coach or spectator be sent from the field (verbally or by a red card)

BEFORE OR DURING a game, they will be suspended from the remainder of that game and the next subsequent game actually played. Should a player, coach or spectator be sent from the field for a second time during the Area playoffs, they will be suspended from the remainder of that game and two subsequent games actually played. Should a player, coach or spectator be sent from the field for a third time during the Area playoffs, they will be suspended from the remainder of that game and three subsequent games actually played.

15.2 If a player, coach or spectator is sent from the field (verbally or by a red card)

FOLLOWING a game, they will be suspended for the next two subsequent games actually played. Should a player, coach or spectator be sent from the field following a game for a second time during the Area playoffs, they will be suspended from their next three subsequent games actually played. Should a player, coach or spectator be sent from the field following a game for a third time during the Area playoffs, they will be suspended from their next four subsequent games actually played.

15.3 If a player, coach or spectator has a game, or multi-game, suspension remaining at the end of the Region's season, that player, coach or spectator must sit out any actually played Region or Area playoff games, post-season games and/or tournament games until the game(s) suspension(s) has (have) been completed. If a player, coach or spectator has a game, or multi-game, suspension remaining from a Section playoff game, post-season game and/or tournament game, that player, coach or spectator must sit out the next actually played playoff game(s), post-season game(s) and/or tournament game(s) until the game(s) suspension has (have) been completed.

15.4 After a player, coach or spectator is sent from the field, the referee MAY SUSPEND the game until that person has COMPLETELY left the area (out of sight and sound). The suspended player, coach or spectator is NOT ALLOWED to return to the field after the game is finished, nor is that person allowed to be present at the team's next played game or games depending on the length of their suspension (do not come to the field - stay at home!).

Suspended players not accompanied by a parent will remain with their team, but separated from teammates, remain completely quiet and not participate in any post game activities (celebrations, handshakes, etc.). The enforcement of these requirements will be the responsibility of the coach.

15.5 Players, coaches and spectators who are suspended pursuant to the automatic penalties set forth in paragraphs 15.1 or 15.2 are not permitted to attend any AYSO games during the period of the suspension. During Area F playoffs players, coaches and spectators who are suspended by the AD pursuant to the provisions of paragraphs 15.6, 15.7 or 15.8 below are not permitted to attend any AYSO game or other AYSO event during the term of such suspension. Should a suspended player, coach or spectator violated the "out of sight and

sound" requirement during or after the game for which they were suspended, or during any part of the time they were suspended, a minimum of **one additional game of "out of sight and sound" shall be added to the discipline requirement.** In addition, during the Area F playoffs at the discretion of the referee or AD, should the player, coach or spectator continue to violate the "out of sight and sound" requirement, the game may be suspended and after a reasonable time, terminated.

- 15.6** AYSO and Area F disapprove of any form of abusive language, which is intended or designed to embarrass, ridicule or demean others under any circumstances including on the basis of race, religion, gender or national origin. Players, coaches or spectators who resort to this behavior will be sent from the field (receive a red card). This applies from the time the person arrives until the person leaves the playing campus, which includes the parking area.
- 15.7** In addition to the automatic penalties imposed in paragraphs 15.1, 15.2 and 15.4, persons sent from the field (receive a red card) for conduct contrary to AYSO philosophy occurring before, during or after a game may be suspended or expelled from further AYSO participation for an additional period of time pursuant to the provisions in this paragraph. In such circumstances, the game referees shall prepare an incident report and shall submit such report to the AD and ARA for Area F playoffs offenses.

The AD shall review the report and determine in his/her sole discretion whether sanctions in addition to those provided in paragraphs 15.1, 15.2 and/or 15.4 shall be imposed on such person. Prior to imposing such sanctions, the AD may, at their option, determine to convene a Due Process Review Board as described herein. In such cases where the AD determines to impose additional sanctions on the affected person without convening a Due Process Review Board, the affected person may also request that a Due Process Review Board be convened.

If a Due Process Review Board is convened, the Due Process Review Board shall be made up of three or more neutral area volunteers appointed by the AD for Area F playoffs offenses. The date of the hearing will be set by the AD after considering the availability of the hearing board members, the game referee(s) and other witnesses. The Due Process Review Board will review all evidence related to the incident, although the referee(s) report and event information will be the primary evidence used by the Due Process Review Board. Based on its review of the information submitted, the Due Process Review Board shall recommend to the AD any additional discipline that they feel is appropriate as a result of the incident. The AD for Area F playoffs or RC for secondary season play, however, has the sole discretion to make the final decision regarding any such additional disciplinary action. In all cases, persons subject to the provisions of this paragraph shall be suspended from further AYSO participation until the AD has rendered a final decision (with or without a Due Process Review Board) AND the person has satisfied all obligations imposed by the AD.

15.8 ANY PERSON WHO ASSAULTS OR THREATENS (EITHER DIRECTLY OR

INDIRECTLY, PHYSICALLY OR VERBALLY) ANY OFFICIAL (REFEREE OR ADMINISTRATOR) WILL BE IMMEDIATELY EXPELLED FROM FURTHER AYSO PARTICIPATION FOR A MINIMUM OF THE REST OF THE SEASON AND MAY BE SUBJECT TO PERMANENT EXPULSION FROM FURTHER AYSO PARTICIPATION PURSUANT TO THE PROCEDURES SET FORTH IN PARAGRAPH 14.6 ABOVE.

16 ANY PERSON WHO ENGAGES IN OR ATTEMPTS TO ENGAGE IN VIOLENT CONDUCT WILL BE IMMEDIATELY EXPELLED FROM FURTHER AYSO PARTICIPATION FOR A MINIMUM OF THE REST OF THE SEASON AND MAY BE SUBJECT TO PERMANENT EXPULSION FROM FURTHER AYSO PARTICIPATION PURSUANT TO THE PROCEDURES SET FORTH IN PARAGRAPH 14.6 ABOVE- RULES/RULINGS

16.1 NO PROTESTS WILL BE ALLOWED. All decisions in judgment made by the referee are final.

16.2 Rulings shall be the responsibility of the AD for Area F playoffs, RC for the secondary season play or their designee and shall be final. These rules do not supersede AYSO Policies and Protocols, but to cover those situations not addressed by AYSO Policies and Protocols, which shall prevail in case of conflict.

17 - POST SEASON TEAM FORMATION

In addition to these rules, Area 1F Select/Tournament Team Guidelines also apply to any post-season lower division team formed from an Area 1F region (or regions) to participate in AYSO secondary programs. The RC shall provide the Area with a copy of a tournament roster if requested by the AD.

SPORTSMANSHIP EVALUATION CRITERIA

CRITERIA Points	0 or 1	2	3	4	5
Description	Very Poor	Below Normal	Normal	Good	Excellent
Conduct of Players	Ejection(s) for violent or extreme dangerous play. Lack of sportsmanship, poor attitude and no discipline. Frequent negative comments, displays poor attitude. No graciousness at all in winning or losing.	Ejection(s) for offenses such as persistent infringement or handball to prevent a goal. Some lack of sportsmanship, some negative attitude. Occasional Negative comments and display of poor attitude. Little graciousness in winning or losing. Flaunts win or blames loss on referee.	Caution only resulting from offenses such as delay of game or other non-violent infractions. Shows good attitude, teamwork and fair play throughout most of the game. Some positive and negative comments. Accepts winning and losing.	No ejections. No more than a single caution and then for a non-violent foul. Mostly positive attitude, teamwork and fair play throughout game. Mostly positive comments and encouragement. Mostly accepts winning or losing graciously.	No cautions or ejections. Shows exemplary attitude, teamwork and fair play throughout entire game. Always accepts winning or losing graciously.
Conduct of Coaches	Frequent dissent Extreme lopsided scoring. Fails to know and abide by rules. No attempt to prevent lopsided score. Poor sportsmanship. Frequent negative comments, displays poor attitude Coach persistently is outside of the Technical Area, whether marked or unmarked. No graciousness at all in winning or losing.	Some dissent towards refs. Displays of poor sportsmanship. Occasional negative comments and display of poor attitude. Little attempt to prevent lopsided score. Coach sometimes outside of the Technical Area, whether marked or unmarked. Little graciousness in winning or losing. Flaunts win or blames loss on referee.	Little dissent towards refs. Knows and abides by most rules. Shows good attitude, teamwork and fair play throughout most of the game. Some positive and negative comments. Some attempt to prevent lopsided score. Coach occasionally is outside of the Technical Area, whether marked or unmarked. Accepts winning and losing.	Very little dissent with mostly gracious acceptance of ref's decision. Knows and abides by almost all rules. Encourages fair play. Mostly positive comments and encouragement. Applauds good play. Tries to avoid running up score. Coach rarely is outside of the Technical Area, whether marked or unmarked. Mostly accepts winning or losing graciously.	No dissent, gracious acceptance of ref's decision. Knows and abides by rules. Coach actively encourages safe, fun, and fair soccer. Actively and successfully avoids running up score or embarrassing opponents. Coach is never outside of the Technical Area, whether marked or unmarked. All comments expressed are positive, instructive and encouraging. Always accepts winning or losing graciously.

Conduct of Spectators	All spectators express repeated disagreement toward members of the Referee team, spectators continually interfere with Assistant Referee(s) after being requested to move, spectators intentionally decline not to move to their designated side of the field or move to the opponents side of the field during the match.	Some spectators express repeated disagreement toward members of the Referee team, some spectators continually interfere with Assistant Referee(s) after being requested to move, some spectators intentionally decline not to move to their designated side of the field or move to the opponents side of the field during the match.	Few spectators express repeated disagreement toward members of the Referee team, few spectators continually interfere with Assistant Referee(s) after being requested to move, few spectators intentionally decline not to move to their designated side of the field or move to the opponents side of the field during the match.	Very few spectators express repeated disagreement toward members of the Referee team, spectators rarely interfere with Assistant Referee(s). Spectators willingly move when asked.	No spectators expressing repeated disagreement toward members of the Referee team, no spectators interfere with Assistant Referee(s). Spectators willingly move when asked.
Appearance	No players in proper uniform with proper equipment.	Few players in proper uniform with proper equipment.	Some players in proper uniform with proper equipment.	Most players in proper uniform with proper equipment.	All players in proper uniform with proper equipment.
Courtesy Towards Referees	Frequent dissent	Some dissent towards refs.	Little dissent towards refs.	Very little dissent with mostly gracious acceptance of ref's decision.	No dissent, gracious acceptance of ref's decision.

AYSO AREA F 2025/2026 PROGRAM RULES

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