

Aces House League – Coaches' Quick Reference Sheet

The Arlington Aces soccer program encompasses the House and Travel leagues. The House league is a recreational program for players grade K-8 and emphasizes basic skill development, sporting behavior, and fun.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Community Centers: Your first point of contact for soccer related questions.

- Camelot Park – Kevin Keister (kkeister@ahpd.org, 847.577.3052)
- Frontier Park – Nick Wirth (nwirth@ahpd.org, 847.577.3016)
- Pioneer/Heritage Park – Tom Divello (tdivello@ahpd.org, 847.506.2734)
- Recreation Park – Katie Newport (knewport@ahpd.org, 847.577.3046)

AHPD Athletics Office: If you need to reschedule a game, have referee questions, or need information about Aces training, contact the AHPD Athletics Office.

- Athletic Supervisor – Matt Healy (mhealy@ahpd.org)
- Rick Geatti – Head of Referees (rgeatti@gmail.com)
- Lisa Rudnicki – Aces Administrator for Soccer (acesafs@gmail.com)

REGISTRATION AND HOW TEAMS ARE FORMED

Fall season teams stay together in the spring. Players who register for spring season are added to existing teams based on available space. The AHPD's priority is to create neighborhood teams with an even number of players on each team. We allow one mutual friend request per player and cannot accommodate multiple or circular requests.

Parents who miss the registration deadline should contact their community center supervisor who will add their child either to a team that needs players or to a wait list if teams are full. **Coaches cannot add players to their rosters.** Roster sizes:

- Kindergarten (3v3 on two fields simultaneously, no goalies): 9-12 players
- First (5v5): 8-10 players
- Second through Fourth grade (7v7): 10-12 players
- Fifth/sixth grade (9v9): 12-14 players
- Seventh/eighth grade (11v11): 14-16 players

PRACTICES

Starting after the coaches' meeting, you should have one hour-long weekly practice.

- You will receive a field request email. If you want to practice on a soccer field, complete and return the form. If you would like to practice in open park space, you do not need a reservation, but be aware that park space is "first come, first served" and that some areas are reserved for other sports. **Do not practice in or near the outfield of a baseball diamond in the spring.** The baseball fields are reserved during baseball season, and it is not safe to share them.

- If you practice on a soccer field, check the “weekly conflicts” list in the Coaches Corner of the Aces section on the AHPD website to see if your practice field has been reserved for a game. Games trump practices. If there is a game scheduled during your practice, please move to open space at the same park or to another available field.

The Aces program has a variety of clinics and camps available year round. You may find these programs online, in the AHPD program guide, or by contacting Lisa Rudnicki at acesafs@gmail.com for more detailed information.

GUIDELINES FOR COACHING

Meet with parents before the season begins. Pass out game schedules and flyers from your packet. Explain league rules of play and conduct, your coaching philosophy, and your goals for the season.

Come to practices and games prepared with warm-ups, drills, games, rosters, and clear goals. Keep your team organized on and off the field.

Use clear, specific, and age appropriate language when coaching. Keep your comments positive and constructive: less “Don’t stop!” and more “Keep running!” Try not to over coach. Your players will pay more attention to your actions and tone than to your words. Control your emotions and model sporting behavior.

Have players practice their weaknesses. Begin with basic skills games and gradually increase the level of difficulty during practices. Your players will improve at different rates, so be alert to individual needs and be flexible. Work one-on-one with players on both ends of the spectrum.

Encourage players to compete against their own past performance rather than against other players. Set realistic individual and team goals and let everyone play. Unless players are sitting because of injuries, everyone should play half of a game and no one should play more than 3/4ths of a game until everyone has played 3/4ths of a game.

Guidelines for different age groups:

- **Ages 5-8:** Players are very self-conscious, have a limited attention span, and need constant movement. Select games that keep everyone moving with lots of touches on the ball rather than standing in lines. Use small grids for 3v3 or 5v5 games. Emphasize fun over competition.
- **Ages 8-12:** Players are more physically and emotionally balanced than in other age groups. They have a strong sense of team loyalty, are competitive, and learn skills eagerly. Practice all techniques: dribbling, passing, receiving, shielding, tackling, and finishing. Introduce team play and strategy. Vary your game grids and competitive groups, 3v3, 4v2, 5v5.
- **Ages 12-14:** These players are entering puberty. Expect physical changes and emotional unrest, which can be challenging to players learning new skills. Work more intensely on techniques than at 10-12 years, but be prepared to work individually with players who are struggling. At this age, kids like to form social groups. Watch out for cliques and channel your players’ socializing into creating tactical unity for team play.

GAMES

Rules of Conduct: To ensure a positive experience for all participants, please observe the following:

- Have your team ready to play at the designated game time. Game cancellations are determined by the AHPD or the referees. Coaches cannot call off a game.
- Goal lines must be kept clear of coaches and spectators.
- Teams and spectators in grades K-2 should sit on opposing sidelines. Teams in grades 3-8 should sit on one sideline. Spectators should sit on the opposing sideline across from their team's bench.
- Both teams should line up and shake hands or "high five" at the end of every game. There should be no unsporting comments or contact.
- Coaches, spectators, and reserve players are not allowed on the field of play during a game without the expressed permission of the referee. If one of your players is injured, wait until the referee signals to you before stepping onto the field.

Rules of play: Please refer to the online House League Manual for a more complete list of game rules.

- **Deliberate heading is NOT permitted in K-4th gr.** Restart is an indirect free kick for the opposing team.
- **New – Build Out Line.** In grades K-4, goalkeepers are not allowed to punt and, when the keeper has possession of the ball, the opposing team must back up past the Build Out Line (midway between the penalty area and the halfway line) until the keeper puts the ball into play.
- **Uniform:** Players should wear their reversible jerseys to every game (**Home wears White, away wears Blue.**) Shin guards are required for all games and practices. Soccer shoes are recommended, but not required. Goalkeepers must wear a jersey that is neither white nor blue. Players may not wear jewelry, hard-brimmed hats, or non-prescription glasses. Prescription glasses must be secured with a snug eyeglasses band.
- **Game roster:** Teams must field the minimum number of players or forfeit. If a team does not meet the minimum, coaches may elect to have a practice game, but referees **may not** officiate. Coaches may not borrow players from another team if they are short-handed for a game. Playing non-registered players is grounds for forfeiture. Uninjured players in good standing must play at least half of a game. If you have a player who regularly misses practices or misbehaves and intend to play him or her less than half of a game, you must first discuss this with your Center Supervisor and the player's parents.
- **Substitutions** are unlimited but must be made with referee consent at the following times:
 - Prior to your throw-in, or the other team's throw-in **if** they are subbing players.
 - Prior to either team's goal kick.
 - After either team has scored a goal.
 - After an injury on either team, when the referee stops play.
 - At half-time, or quarter.
- Goalies may possess a ball in their hands for up to 6 seconds. Any longer than 6 seconds will result in an indirect free kick for the opposing team. When the goalie possesses the ball, players should make every effort to avoid contact, particularly at younger ages. Referees may whistle play dead to avoid injurious contact. Deliberate contact with the goalie may result in ejection and/or suspension.
- In grades 5-8, games will not stop for injured players until the next referee whistle unless the referee deems the injury serious enough to warrant immediate care. A player who receives an injury that requires a stoppage of play must be substituted.
- If one team reaches a 4 goal advantage, the opposing team may add one player to the field. If a team reaches a 6 goal advantage, a 2nd player may be added; for an 8 goal advantage, a 3rd player may be

added; for a 10 goal advantage, a 4th player may be added. If the team with extra players scores and lowers the goal differential, it must remove the appropriate number of extra players.

REFEREES

Please remember that, just as your players are learning to play the game, our referees are learning to referee the game. They do not and should not see the game from your perspective. Sometimes referees make mistakes on calls. Sometimes coaches make mistakes when critiquing referee calls. Regardless, communication between coaches and referees should be respectful. If you have questions or comments, please contact Rick Geatti.

If referees do not show up for a game, the game should be played with two opposing coaches refereeing together. Contact Matt Healy after your game to report that you played a game without officials.

Let your parents know that they should not communicate with referees. If they have concerns about a referee, they should tell you so that you may pass appropriate information along to Rick Geatti or Matt Healy.

WEATHER CANCELLATIONS

In the case of inclement weather or poor field conditions, the AHPD may close fields. Field closures are posted on the AHPD website and hotline 847.577.3003 ext. 5700, and coaches are notified by email. If bad weather is forecast, keep an eye on the website. If a practice or game is cancelled, contact your team immediately.

If the AHPD does not close your field, come to your scheduled game ready to play. At this point, only the referee has the authority to cancel a game. If your field has a Thor Guard alarm, it will sound one long tone for lightning within a ten mile radius and three short tones for "all clear" when lightning has not been detected for 15 minutes. If the field does not have a Thor Guard alarm, the referee will stop the game when he or she sees lightning. The game will be postponed until no lightning is observed for 20 minutes. If a game is still postponed within 20 minutes of its scheduled finish, the referee will call the game over.

GAME RESCHEDULING

If you will not have the minimum players required to play a game, contact the other team to find several dates and a range of times for a new game. Plan for warm-up/half-time and allow for some flexibility. For instance, a 60-minute game requires 80 minutes of field time so it's best to find at least a 2 hour window that works for both teams.

- Email Matt Healy to check field availability on the agreed upon dates and time ranges. **Include your age group, both team names, the original game date, time, and location, and new dates and time ranges, or send a completed Game Change Request Form.**
- When Matt replies with an available field, contact the other team to confirm the new date and time.
- **When the other team confirms back, email Matt to reserve the field. If you skip this step, you will not have a reserved field or referees.**
- When Matt confirms your reservation, email the other team with the new date, time, and location.