



Arlington Aces House League Coaches' Manual

Welcome to the Arlington Aces! Whether you have been volunteering for years or are new this season, thank you for your time and energy.

Everyone involved in this program; coaches, referees, parents, and AHPD staff, should strive to uphold the basic tenets included in the “**Statement of Philosophy**”. As adults, we are role models for the young people in our community and are responsible for leading by example on and off the soccer field.

If you have questions about the program or need assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us, and have a great season!

Contact Information

- **Kevin Wollnik, Recreation Supervisor, 847.506.7133 or kwollnik@ahpd.org**
- **Weather hotline: 847.577.3003, extension 5**, or check the Aces homepage at ahpd.org.

AHPD Youth Sports Program Objectives

The Park District has identified the following objectives that the youth sports programs will strive to achieve:

- Programs will be designed to promote positive learning experiences that enhance athletes to develop physically, psychologically and socially.
- Programs will emphasize fun, developing new skills, fair play and sportsmanship.
- Programs will be conducted with the utmost safety of the participants and spectators in mind.
- Programs will be designed to promote positive self-esteem and self-confidence of the participants.
- Programs will be comprehensive in nature and offer a spectrum of ability levels that match resources available. In the event that resources or facilities are limited, priority emphasis will be placed on accommodating the needs and interest of the greater majority of the users.

Programs will first serve the need of the Arlington Heights Park District residents before branching out to non-residents. Non-residents are encouraged and invited to participate if openings still exist after the residents have been served. Some of the youth sports programs provided involve competition either as a team or on an individual level. It is the desire of the Park Board of Commissioners to keep the intensity of the competition at a recreational level, which stresses fun, learning and the concept that everyone plays.

Game Conduct and General Information

- Be ready to play on time. Referees start games promptly at game time whether teams are ready to play or not.
- At least one coach must be present per field throughout the game. If a coach receives a red card, leaves the field, and there is not another coach present to take his or her place, the coach-less team forfeits.
- If no referee shows up for a scheduled game, two opposing coaches should referee the game and email Nick Wirth, Athletic Supervisor, at nwirth@ahpd.org.
- No one may sit or stand behind the goal line. Coaches may not coach on the sideline adjacent to the penalty area.
- In grades K-4, spectators sit with their teams on opposite sides of the field behind the dashed restraining line. Coaches and players sit between the double fields, and teams should set up their benches on opposite sides of the Halfway Line. Coaches may only coach from their bench's side of the field.

- In grades 5/6 and 7/8, players and coaches sit on one side of the field and parents and spectators sit on the opposite side of the field, opposite their team bench. Players, coaches, and spectators must remain a minimum of five yards from the center line and ten feet from the side line.
- Both teams should line up and bump elbows at the conclusion of the game. Any acts of unsporting conduct at this time will be dealt with harshly by the AHPD. This applies to players, coaches, and spectators.
- Game will be conducted under USSF and AASC rules.
- No coach, player, or spectator may enter the field of play during the game without the permission of the referee: the penalty is a yellow card. If a player is injured, the referee will whistle a suspension of play when appropriate and wave the injured player's coach onto the field.
- In all divisions, when an injury leads to a stoppage in play and a coach tends to a player on the field, the injured player must come off the field. If a referee checks an injured player and feels he or she may continue playing, the player may later re-enter the game. If the player leaves the field with a suspected head injury, he or she may not return for the remainder of the game.
- In grades 5/6 and 7/8, play will not stop for an injured player until the next whistle or unless the referees believe the injury to be serious enough to stop play.

Rules:

- **In 5v5 games (K through 4th grade), teams will play two simultaneous, side-by-side games.**
 - **Number of players on the field:** 5 max / 3 min.
- **Game duration:**
 - Kindergarten: Four 7-minute quarters. 1 & 2 and 3 & 4 are separated by a 2-minute break; 2 & 3 are separated by a 5-minute halftime (37 minute games – schedule on the hour)
 - 1st/2nd grade: Four 10 minute quarters. 1 & 2 and 3 & 4 are separated by a 2-minute break; 2 & 3 are separated by a 5-minute halftime (49 minute games – schedule on the 1.25 hour)
 - 3rd/4th grade: Two 25-minute halves with a ten minute halftime (60 minute games – schedule on the 1.25 hour)
 - 5th/6th grade: Two 30-minute halves with a 15-minute halftime (75 minute games – schedule with a 20 minute break)
 - 7th/8th grade: Two 35-minute halves with a 15 minute halftime (85 minute games)
- **Ball in and out of play:** The ball must completely cross the boundary to be out of play.
- **Quarters and halftime:** Each quarter starts with a kick-off: the kicking team alternates each quarter. Teams switch field sides at halftime.
- **Corner kicks:** To be performed when the ball crosses the goal line and is last touched by the defense.
- **Goal Kicks:** To be performed when the ball crosses the goal line and is last touched by the offense.
- **Build Out Line:** Enforced in 1st through 4th grade only. When the goalkeeper has possession of the ball, during play or for a goal kick, the opposing team must drop behind the build out line (midway between the penalty area and the halfway line of the field) until the goal keeper puts the ball into play. The opposing team has 6 seconds to drop and remain behind the build out line, however, the goalkeeper is not required to wait until the opposing team is behind the line to put the ball in play. If the opposing team takes longer than 6 seconds to move behind the line, the referee will warn the coach. If the delays continue, the coach will be shown a yellow card. Restart is an indirect free kick at the build out line.
- **Heading:** Deliberate heading is not permitted until 7th/ 8th grade. Penalty - indirect free kick awarded to the opposing team at the spot of the offense or on the goal line nearest to the point of the infringement, if the offense occurs within the penalty area.
- **Punting:** Punting is not permitted until 5th/ 6th grade. In grades K-4, goalkeepers may throw, roll, or set the ball down and kick it into play. Penalty - indirect free kick awarded to the opposing team on the goal line nearest to the point of the offense.
- **Goalkeepers:**
 - Goalkeepers must wear a pinney or shirt that is a different color than the white or blue of Aces uniforms.

- Goalkeepers may hold a ball up to six seconds before releasing it. If the keeper holds the ball for more than six seconds, an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team.
- When the goalkeeper is in full or partial possession of the ball, opposing players must make every effort to avoid contact with the goalkeeper. **Any decisions regarding goalkeeper contact are at the sole discretion of the referee.** Coaches should instruct all players before each game to avoid deliberate contact at all times. The penalty for such contact could be immediate ejection from the game with an accompanying suspension.
- **Penalty Kicks:**
Referees will award penalty kicks, according to the Laws of the Game, in 3rd through 8th grade. If a penalty kick is awarded, the goalkeeper stands on the goal line and may only move laterally between the goal posts until the ball is kicked. All other players must stay outside of the penalty box until the ball is kicked.
- **Playing Time:**
 - Unless a player is injured, they must play at least half a game. No player should play more than 3/4ths of a game until all players have played 3/4ths of a game.
 - If you have few or no subs or are short players, you may borrow players from another Aces team, including the opposing team. **Borrowed players MUST be the same grade or younger and registered for the current season of Aces soccer.**
 - **If the team you are playing is short players, recruit players from your team to help them out. Sharing demonstrates sporting behavior and allows for more playing time for all players!**
- **Substitutions:** The game clock doesn't stop for substitutions, and teams are allowed unlimited subs, with permission of the referee, in the following situations:
 - Kindergarten, 1st/2nd grade: on any stoppage in play.
 - 3rd through 8th grade:
 - Prior to a throw-in by either team. Delay of game not permitted.
 - Prior to a goal kick by either team.
 - After a goal by either team.
 - After an injury on either team which necessitates a game stoppage, before play resumes.
 - At the end of each quarter or half.
 - After a player receives a yellow card (only that player may be subbed).
- **Mercy Rule** – A team losing by 4 goals may add a player. For each additional 2 goals scored by the leading team, the other team may add another player. When the losing team has exhausted its roster, the leading team must remove a player each time the losing team is eligible to add player(s). The losing team must remove a player each time the above conditions are not met. Teams may also share players to keep games competitive and avoid this situation.
- **Kick-offs:** Ball may be kicked in any direction on the kick-off. The player taking the kick, and only that player, may stand in the attacking half of field at kick-off.
- **Slide Tackling:** Not permitted in K through 4th grade. Penalty is an indirect free kick. In 3rd and 4th grade, the referee may award a direct free kick for serious infractions.
- **Team check in:** Each player must wear shin guards and an AHPD house soccer uniform. Jewelry and metal accessories are prohibited (new piercings may be covered with Band-aids). "Street" glasses are permitted if secured by a strap. Properly padded casts are permitted with a doctor's written release to play soccer.

House League Divisions

Kindergarten

- **Ball Size:** 4
- **Field information:** pop-up goals
- **Goalkeepers:** None
- **Goal mouth:** Players may not touch the ball once it has entered the marked area in front of the net. If a player from the offense touches the ball in, the defense is awarded a goal kick. If a player on defense touches the ball,

the offense is awarded a goal.

- **Scoring:** A goal may only be scored from the attacking half of the field. If any player kicks the ball from the defending half and it goes into the opposite side goal untouched, no goal is awarded.
- **Offside rule:** not enforced
- **Heading:** not permitted
- **Free kicks:** All free kicks will be indirect at the point of incursion. Opponents must be 6 yards from the kicker. A free kick given within 6 yards of the goal must be moved seven yards away so the defenders may form a wall 6 yards from the ball.
- **Kick-ins:** There are no throw-ins. Kick-ins are taken at the point where the ball left the field and are taken by the team that did not kick the ball out.
- **Goal kicks:** May be taken from anywhere on the goal line. In first grade, goal kicks may be taken half way between the goal line and the penalty area.
- **Penalty kicks:** not awarded

1st / 2nd Grade

- **Ball size:** 4
- **Field information:** 6x12 or 6x18 goals
- **Offside rule:** not enforced
- **Heading:** not permitted
- **Punting:** not permitted
- **Build Out Line:** enforced
- **Throw-ins:** players allowed two attempts
- **Free kicks:** opponent must be 7 yards from the ball
- **Penalty kicks:** not awarded

3rd/ 4th Grade

- **Ball size:** 4
- **Field information:** 6x12 or 6x18 goals
- **Offside rule:** enforced
- **Heading:** not permitted
- **Build Out Line:** enforced
- **Punting:** not permitted
- **Throw-ins:** by the rule
- **Free Kicks:** opponent must be 10 yards from the ball
- **Penalty kicks:** awarded

5th/ 6th Grade

- **Ball size:** 4
- **Number of players on the field:** 8 plus goalkeeper (9 players total). Minimum players 6
- **Field information:** 7x21 goals
- **Offside rule:** enforced
- **Heading:** not permitted
- **Punting:** allowed
- **Throw-ins:** by the rule
- **Free Kicks:** opponent must be 10 yards from the ball
- **Penalty kicks:** awarded
- **Slide Tackling:** legal tackles permitted

7th/ 8th Grade

- **Ball size:** 5
- **Number of players on the field:** 10 plus goalkeeper (11 players total). Minimum players 7
- **Field information:** 8x24 goals
- **Offside rule:** enforced
- **Heading:** permitted
- **Throw-ins:** by the rule
- **Free Kicks:** opponent must be 10 yards from the ball
- **Penalty kicks:** awarded
- **Slide Tackling:** legal tackles permitted

Inclement Weather

- The **Soccer Inclement Weather Hotline is 847.577.3003, extension 5**. If there is bad weather on a game day, call the hotline to see if there are game cancellations. If we haven't closed your field, go to your game prepared to play. The Park District or the referee may cancel games if they judge that playing conditions are dangerous.
 - **COACHES MAY NOT CANCEL GAMES.**
 - **UNDER NO CONDITION SHOULD ANY GAMES BE PLAYED DURING THUNDER OR LIGHTNING.** When a referee stops a game for lightning, immediately remove all players from the field to a safe place. The referee may restart the game 20 minutes after the last thunder or lightning is detected. In the case of ongoing delays that heavily impact the remainder of the game schedule, the referee may choose to cancel the game.
- **In case of thunder or lightning during a practice, immediately stop and move all participants to a storm safe area. WAIT UNTIL 20 MINUTES AFTER THE LAST OCCURRENCE OF THUNDER OR LIGHTNING TO RESUME PRACTICE.** The safest location is a building. If one is not available, bring participants to a vehicle and wait until the storm subsides or the event is cancelled. Stay away from high structures, trees, fences, or any item that can conduct electricity. Once the storm has passed and it is safe to resume play, review the field. If conditions are safe, resume play.
- In case of a tornado, immediately seek shelter in a building or, if a building is not available, in the lowest lying area. Participants should lay flat or as low as possible to the ground.
- It is the coach's responsibility to keep participants safe. Coaches should move players to safety or hand over to their legal guardians. Under no circumstances should a player be dismissed without a parent.

Uniforms and Player Equipment

Coaches pick up player's uniforms prior to the first game of the season and are responsible for distributing uniforms to their players. In all divisions, jerseys are reversible blue and white. Home teams wear white, and away teams wear blue.

- Soft-cleated soccer shoes are encouraged. Gym shoes are allowed. Metal spikes and shoes with toe cleats are prohibited.
- Shin guards are **MANDATORY** for all games and practices. Socks must cover shin guards.
- Players must wear the AHPD uniform at games. The goalkeeper must wear a shirt other than blue or white.
- Players may wear warm layers under the official uniform and soft fabric, knit hats on very cold days. Headbands are permitted as long as they conform to the USSF rules. Hoods must be tucked under the jersey.
- USSF rules do not allow players to wear watches, earrings, bracelets, necklaces, or hard barrettes. Encourage players with glasses to wear sport glasses. Glasses must be secured by a strap.

Violations and Penalties

To insure fair play and sporting behavior, the following penalties have been established:

- **A coach shown a red card:** 30-day probation, which may result in expulsion from the Aces. When a coach receives a red card, he or she must immediately leave the park for the day and may not coach the following game.
- **A player shown red card:** one game suspension for the first offense and a three-game suspension for subsequent offenses during the soccer year.

- **Any red card suspensions that cannot be served because the current season ends will be served at the beginning of the next season.**

Team Formation

Player teams are determined by their registered practice time. Coaches are recruited for each practice time slot, and each practice time will need at least one head coach per game field. K through 4th grade teams will need at least two coaches. 5th through 8th grade teams will need at least one coach.

Players on a 5v5 team play in a pool, and all coaches work collectively with all players in a practice time slot. We do not split players registered for the same practice time into two independent teams.

Referee vs Coach Responsibilities

If you have any questions regarding referees, contact Nick Wirth at nwirth@ahpd.org.

Referees apply and enforce the Laws of the Game:

- Arrive at least 10 minutes before the start of the game dressed in a proper referee uniform.
- Inspect the field, and check in both teams.
- Start games on time and keep them on time using a running clock.
- Keep score for application of the Mercy Rule. Scores are not otherwise needed.
- If a player does not understand a call, referees may explain the call to the player, but they do not coach. Referees do not have to explain the reason for a call or non-call to coaches and parents but may explain a Law, if they wish, after a game.
- Work with coaches to keep the game safe, fun, and fair.

Coaches enforce Park District rules and ensure their players and spectators exhibit sporting behavior:

- Communicate to teams where players and parents should sit during games, including the areas they must avoid (behind the goal line and dashed lines, etc.)
- Keep players on the bench behind the dashed line.
- Coaches are responsible for the conduct of all players, coaches, and spectators on their team.
- Work with referees to keep the game safe, fun, and fair.

Code of Ethics for Coaches

- I will place the emotional and physical well-being of all my players ahead of a personal desire to win.
- I will treat each player as an individual, remembering the large range of emotional and physical development for the same age group.
- I will do my best to provide a safe playing situation for my players.
- I will promise to review and practice the basic first aid principles needed to treat injuries of my players.
- I will do my best to organize practices that are fun and challenging, providing growth opportunities in skills for all my players.
- I will lead by example in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all my players.
- I will be knowledgeable in the rules of soccer, and I will teach these rules to my players.
- I will use those coaching techniques appropriate for each of the skills that I teach and the level of development of each player.
- I will remember that I am a youth sports coach and that the game is for children and not adults.
- I will provide opportunities for all players to participate in both practice and game situations, allowing the players to apply new skills and demonstrate their abilities.

Guidelines for Coaching

Coaches have a double responsibility: teaching the game while being mindful of the mental and physical development of their players. Ages 5 to 14 years are ideal for learning soccer skills. Children are energetic and enthusiastic, and coaches should channel this energy into positive development at a pace and level that is physically and emotionally appropriate.

- Hold a parent meeting before the 1st game to introduce yourself, explain league rules, and answer questions.
- Accentuate the positive. Criticism should be constructive and sandwiched with positive comments.
- Make practice fun. Use a variety of exercises and drills and break them up by introducing games. Children participate in sports to have fun, make friends, and improve their skills.
- Give players responsibility during practices and encourage creative play. Allow them to make up their own rules, make up new practice drills, play different positions, resolve their own arguments, and lead warm-up exercises.
- Demonstrate sporting behavior and communicate to your players that you expect the same behavior from them.
- Be alert to individual needs, and be flexible. Work in small groups, praise players' strengths, and encourage them to practice their weaknesses.
- Come to practices and games prepared with drills, games, and rosters. Practice your skills so that you can give competent demonstrations. Keep your team organized, both on and off the field.
- Encourage players to compete against their own past performance rather than against the performance of others. Set realistic personal and team goals.
- Teach skills, tactics, and rules in practices, and utilize these new skills in games. Do not expect your players to implement new instructions given during a game.
- Complexity is confusing. Explain moves using clear, specific explanations with appropriate soccer terminology.
- Let everyone play. Research has shown that children would rather play on a losing team than sit on a winning team.
- Don't over coach. Coach at practices, and allow players to play and learn from mistakes at games. During games, take notes about what needs improvement, and use them to plan your next practice.
- Don't "psych up" your team before games. Chances are they are nervous enough. Play down the importance of winning, and praise new skills and effort.
- Require that all players wear shin guards at and bring a ball to every practice.
- Be aware of your players' stage of physical and mental development. They will vary in age and ability.
- If you are having difficulty with a player, talk with their parents. If you continue to have difficulty, or have difficulty with a parent(s), contact AHPD staff.

Ages 5 to 8

Players at this age are self-conscious, have a limited attention span, and have difficulty sitting still. Encourage movement through soccer related games such as playing tag with a soccer ball. Use small grids for small-sided games. Emphasize fun over winning.

Ages 8 to 12

Players at this age are typically well-balanced physically and mentally. They have a sense of team loyalty, are competitive, and learn skills eagerly. Introduce dribbling, juggling, receiving, passing, shooting, tackling, and team play with games that emphasize specific skills or techniques and small sided scrimmages.

Ages 12 to 14

Players at this age are entering puberty. They are experiencing physical changes and may be easily frustrated or emotional. They may be more interested in building a social group than mastering techniques. Continue to develop techniques introduced at the 10 to 12-year level. Channel players' desire to form groups into creating team spirit and tactical unity.