

Risk Management Guidelines
Los Alamos Youth Soccer League
(originally adopted by the Board of Directors 24 Jan 2000)
(revision adopted 25 Feb 2002)

I. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to communicate to parents and volunteers some of the risks associated with youth soccer, to provide a set of guidelines and suggestions to reduce some of the risks, and to reiterate some of the “Laws of the Game” to help reduce risks. The goal is to protect and provide a safe and healthful environment to volunteers and players participating in Los Alamos Youth Soccer League (LAYSL) activities.

II. Introduction

In August 1994, the United States Youth Soccer Association (USYSA) approved the KidSafe Program and placed it into effect immediately. KidSafe is a risk management program designed to foster safe circumstances for every person, and especially every child, who participates in a USYSA-affiliated activity. It is a program to inform all US Youth Soccer volunteers and employees of the risks associated with youth programs and to recommend actions, and encourage conduct, to reduce those risks. As part of this program, the USYSA charged each state organization with the responsibility of developing a written program outlining safety guidelines and procedures.

For member leagues, the New Mexico Youth Soccer Association (NMYSA) has recommended having a risk management committee to implement risk guidelines and procedures at the local level, and also to designate a league risk manager to work with the state risk management committee. LAYSL has designated its Vice President as the league’s risk manager.

III. Guidelines

A. Volunteers (coaches, assistant coaches, league officers, and other individuals who will be conducting LAYSL activities)

1.) Disclosure Statement

a.) All volunteers for LAYSL will be required to fill out a Volunteer Disclosure Statement, provided by NMYSA to the LAYSL Registrar. The Registrar will then forward the completed forms to the NMYSA. Should NMYSA contact LAYSL identifying a potential problem, LAYSL will prohibit any such person from having contact with youth players until such time as NYMSA can conduct a full inquiry in reference to the individual's prior activities and give approval for the individual to participate in LAYSL activities.

b.) LAYSL (through the coordinators) will supply the Disclosure Statement and keep an updated list of individuals who have submitted the Disclosure Statement. No volunteer

will be allowed interact with youth soccer players until such time as his/her Disclosure Statement is forwarded to NMYSA (by the LAYSL Registrar).

c.) No LAYSL team will be allowed to practice or participate in games without a volunteer coaching the team who has submitted a Disclosure Statement.

d.) All volunteers must periodically fill out and submit a Disclosure Statement in accordance to NMYSA recommendations.

e.) Referees for LAYSL games are independent contractors. The Disclosure Statement for referees will be handled through their United States Soccer Federation registration. Assurance of proper licensing level and disclosure compliance is the responsibility of the LAYSL Referee Coordinator who also serves as Referee Assignor for all LAYSL games.

2.) Training/Clinics

a.) Clinics and training will be organized and scheduled periodically by the LAYSL Director of Coaching in concert with the LAYSL Training Coordinator. Coaches may request training by contacting the LAYSL Training Coordinator.

b.) All U10, U8, U6, and U5 coaches are strongly encouraged to take the Youth Module Training conducted by NMYSA (see Appendix A).

c.) The appropriate license for U11 and above coaches (generally when team size and player development allows for 11-a-side soccer) is a minimum of an "E" License. Volunteers coaching U11 and above soccer are strongly encouraged to acquire an "E" License. LAYSL assists in defraying licensing costs for active volunteers.

d.) All advanced team coaches must have or be willing to obtain a minimum of an "E" License. A "D" License or higher for coaches coaching older advanced teams is strongly encouraged (see Appendix A).

e.) All volunteers are required to be familiar with the league's risk management program. Volunteers may be asked to watch video presentations as part of the risk management program at one of the twice-a-year coaches meetings.

f.) To assure LAYSL players are exposed to proper training (age-appropriate, relevant, economical, low risk), only soccer camps approved by the LAYSL Director of Coaching will be supported, advertised (as part of the LAYSL calendar), and endorsed by LAYSL.

3.) Conduct

a.) Referees are expected to carry out their duties as presented in the "Laws of the Game" and in accordance with USSF policies and procedures for referees.

- b.) When appropriate, the referee is expected to submit a formal game report documenting conduct and/or safety issues to the LAYSL referee coordinator, who will forward forms he/she deems need further attention to the LAYSL Vice President.
- c.) It is the responsibility of the coach to set the standard of behavior on the field. The coach is responsible for the actions of the coaching staff, players, parents, and spectators at practices and games.
- d.) Whenever possible, at least two adults should be present at all team functions or player interactions. Volunteers should avoid one-on-one instances with players.
- e.) Coaches, or a designated parent volunteer or other volunteer, shall not leave the field after a practice or a game until all players have been picked up by a parent or approved adult. Coaches should stress to their parents the responsibility for safe and timely transportation to and from practices/games. Coaches shall not send a player away from a practice or a game, for any reason, until a parent or an approved adult is present.
- f.) Physical contact shall be limited to that necessary and appropriate to teach a skill, treat an injury, or console or congratulate a player.
- g.) Offensive, insulting, and abusive language or actions by volunteers is unacceptable. Coaches should model good communication skills. Inappropriate language, gestures, and actions targeting officials, players, opponents, or spectators are unacceptable.
- h.) Sexual contact of any kind or type is prohibited between volunteers and players, whether or not contact is consensual.

B. Parents

1.) Responsibilities

- a.) Parents should be aware that there is an inherent risk of injury in playing youth soccer.
- b.) Parents are strongly encouraged to be involved with the team, to attend practices, and to pick up children immediately upon the termination of practices or games. Should a player require transportation by someone other than his/her parent, the coach should be informed. Parents asking transportation by a LAYSL volunteer must realize that this transportation is not provided in the capacity as a LAYSL volunteer. Transportation arrangements are between parents.
- c.) Parents are expected to provide appropriate equipment for their child.

2.) Conduct

a.) Good sporting behavior is expected from parents. Offensive, insulting, and abusive language, gestures, or actions by parents is unacceptable. Parents should model good communication skills. Inappropriate actions targeting officials, coaches, assistant coaches, players, or spectators are unacceptable.

b.) Parents shall not direct offensive, insulting, or abusive actions (verbal or physical) towards their own child at a LAYSL event.

C. Preventing Injuries to Players

1.) Equipment/Fields

a.) Coaches and referees should check personal equipment and disallow participation until standards are met at practices and games (*e.g.*, shinguards covered by socks are required, no jewelry is allowed, no hard casts are allowed unless properly padded to prevent injuries to others, etc.)

b.) Referees and coaches should check grounds, including proper installation and anchoring of goals, and identify, correct, or mark areas judged to be dangerous (*e.g.*, gopher holes, low spots, puddles, sprinklers) and communicate the potential dangers to participants.

c.) Referees shall terminate or delay the game and coaches shall terminate or delay practice if a dangerous situation cannot be corrected.

d.) Lightning can be a risk in Los Alamos. LAYSL encourages the use of the 30/30 rule. That is, if the time delay between seeing the lightning and hearing the thunder is less than 30 seconds (ca. 6 miles), individuals should be in or seek a safer location. Play (or practice) may resume 30 minutes after the last flash or thunder.

e.) Volunteers and parents shall discourage or stop any child from playing (climbing, swinging, hanging) on goals or nets.

f.) Any field or equipment problems deemed to be a significant risk should be immediately reported to the LAYSL Field or Equipment Coordinator.

2.) Coaching/Refereeing

a.) Certified referees as assigned by the LAYSL Referee Coordinator are the only individuals qualified to referee LAYSL games. Should a referee be unable or one not be assigned to a game, the game should be treated as a scrimmage with both coaches physically on the field to control and direct play.

b.) Coaches should provide proper pre-game and pre-practice warm-ups and stretching.

c.) At the recreational level, small-sided teams are formed to encourage individual player development, especially at the younger ages. Age-appropriate exercises and training are important both to teach individual skills and to minimize injury. Coach licensing and training programs as well as books are good sources of such information.

3.) Conduct

a.) Any inappropriate conduct or behavior by volunteers, spectators, parents, or players should be reported to the appropriate Program Coordinator or to the LAYSL Vice President.

b.) All volunteers will be screened prior to participation for past problems using the Volunteer Disclosure Statement.

D. Dealing with Injuries

1.) Volunteers should be able to recognize injuries and assess their severity.

2.) Volunteers are strongly encouraged to be able to communicate with local EMS via cellular phone should serious injury occur. Alternatively, the LAYSL Field Coordinator should identify public phones near practice and game fields that may be used should the need arise.

3.) A portion of the state registration fee paid for each player goes toward the NMYSA insurance program. Claim procedures are established by NMYSA.

E. Violations

1.) Violations of these guidelines by volunteers, players, or parents will subject them to disciplinary actions as described in the LAYSL bylaws. Documentation will be kept, by the LAYSL Vice President, of any significant violation or conduct problem for a minimum of five years.

2.) Anyone witnessing a violation of these guidelines should report the violation to the appropriate Program Coordinator or to the LAYSL Vice President.

3.) Any charges of physical or sexual abuse will be communicated to local law enforcement as soon as possible.

F. Organizational Risks

1.) The LAYSL Treasurer will seek an outside review of LAYSL financial records once a year and report the results to the LAYSL Board of Directors.

2.) The LASYL Vice President will communicate and coordinate the necessary compliance with the NMYSA risk management program.

- 3.) This document will be reviewed and amended as necessary each year by the incoming LAYSL Vice President.

Appendix A
LAYSL Risk Management Guidelines
Suggested Coaches Training/Licensing Schedule

State Youth Modules are to provide the most current and advanced information on growth and development of the youth soccer player. The course takes the approach that the ‘Game Within Each Child’ is at the center of all belief, decisions and actions taken by the child, coach, and organization. The course will show coaches developmentally appropriate activities for children and the use of games as vehicles to learning.

Youth Module Level I—recommended for all U6 and U8 coaches

This course is specifically designed for the U6 and U8 coach.

- Philosophy of Coaching U6 and U8 Players
- Characteristics of U6 and U8 Players
- Team Administration and Risk Management
- Prevention and Care of Soccer Injuries
- Appropriate Activities for U6 and U8 players

Youth Module Level II—recommended for all U8 and U10 coaches

This course is specifically designed for the U8 and U10 coach

- Philosophy of Coaching U8 and U10 Players
- Characteristics of U8 and U10 Players
- Team Administration and Risk Management
- Prevention and Care of Soccer Injuries
- Appropriate Activities for U8 and U10 players

Youth Module Level III—recommended for U12 (recreational) and above

This course is designed specifically for the U12 coach

- Philosophy of Coaching U12 Players
- Characteristics of U12 Players
- Team Administration and Risk Management
- Prevention and Care of Soccer Injuries
- Appropriate Activities for U12 players

“E” License—recommended for U11 (competitive) and above; U14 (recreational) and above

The “E” license is a general certification for coaching 11-a-side soccer. The curriculum focuses on the development of the player both as an individual and as part of a team. The emphasis will be to build on the player’s technical training by applying tactical concepts within game situations.

- Methods of Coaching
- Team Administration and Risk Management
- Prevention and Care of Injuries
- Laws of the Game
- Coaching Technique
- Coaching Tactics

- Principles of Attack and Defense
- Small Sided Games

“D” License—recommended for U13 (competitive) and above; U16 (recreational) and above

This course is designed for the U14 and higher coach and is the highest license that the state offers. You must have an “E” License.

- Methods of Coaching
- Team Administration and Risk Management
- Prevention and Care of Injuries
- Coaching Technique
- Coaching Tactics
- Systems of Play
- Match Analysis
- Principles of Play

When possible LAYSL will support higher licensing of coaches.