

**Policies of the
Los Alamos Youth Soccer League**
May 30, 2017
draft



Los Alamos Youth Soccer League

P.O. Box 649, Los Alamos, NM 87544

<http://www.laysl.org>

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I. OVERVIEW

The primary mission of the Los Alamos Youth Soccer League (LAYSL) and its associated Los Alamos Football Club is to provide a high-quality, safe, and fun opportunity for the youth of Los Alamos and the surrounding area to learn the "beautiful game" at a modest cost. LAYSL is interested in creating lifelong soccer players and fans of the game. We want kids of all ages and abilities on the pitch playing. We strive to teach our players the individual technical skills needed to play the game and a fundamental tactical understanding of how to play. Our players learn life skills including responsibility, commitment, discipline, sportsmanship, and teamwork.

We are a non-profit organization that operates under international, national, state and local rules, bylaws, and guidelines. LAYSL was granted 501(c)(3) non-profit organization status by the Internal Revenue Service in June 2003. Our bylaws were created in 1982. We are affiliated with the New Mexico Youth Soccer Association (NMYSA) and the United States Youth Soccer Association (USYSA). Our league has recreational, pre-competitive, and competitive programs. LAYSL games and practices are played on fields located throughout Los Alamos and White Rock. These facilities include Overlook Park, Rover Park, North Mesa Field, Community Field, Western Park, and Urban Park. Our LAFC teams play games with other regional leagues including Santa Fe and Taos as well as the Duke City League in Bernalillo. The League is an all-volunteer organization including our Board of Directors, coordinators, coaches, and field assistants. The League may hire contractors such as the League Registrar and pays referees by the game. The Board of Directors generally meets monthly. Our Board of Directors consists of a nine person panel elected by our members. The Board members each have specific functions in running the League. Board member terms last two years. Each year, four or five of the board positions are up for election at our annual general meeting held in early May.

II. RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE

LAYSL is a private organization and reserves the right to refuse service to any and all people. All participants in LAYSL, may they be players, assistant coaches, coaches, committee leads, Board of Directors, volunteers or contractors are considered at will employees and can be terminated by methods laid out in the Bylaws of the Los Alamos Youth Soccer League or by conditions laid out in this document. If a procedure for removal is laid out in the Bylaws, those will supersede procedures described here.

LAYSL provides a number of different soccer playing options, including the recreational, the pre-competitive and the competitive programs. The fees and commitment level vary for each program. In order for any player to participate in LAYSL programs, all registration documents and fees need to be properly filled out and submitted by the registration deadline. Documents are considered on time if they are submitted online by 24:00 of the registration deadline date or postmarked by the registration deadline date. Documents submitted or postmarked after the registration deadline will be considered late with no exceptions; however, the player will be placed on a waiting list and every effort will be made to place them in the recreational program or a pre-competitive team. It is a requirement that each participant be properly registered in LAYSL (and as a by-product in NMYSA) as well as be in good standing in order to participate in any LAYSL program.

A player's actions, as well as a parent's actions, can cause a player's status to fall out of good standing.

The Board of Directors has the final say as to a player's status. Any action that the Board of Directors deem to be not in the best interest of the league will result in that person no longer being in good standing and removed from participation for a period of time no less than the remainder of a season. Actions that could lead to a player being suspended from the league include, but are not limited to: fighting; abusive language; drug abuse; illegal players; county, state, or government law violations; failure to adhere to league policies; and harassing LAYSL volunteer or contract personnel via verbal or written communication.

III. PROGRAMS

LAYSL has three programs: developmental (formerly recreational), pre-competitive, and competitive. The amount of time involved and commitment increases as a player goes from the recreational to pre-competitive to competitive programs. The Board of Directors establishes program policy, guidelines, rate structure, and coaching goals for each program. The Recreational Coordinator administers the Recreational program and the Competitive Coordinator administers the Pre-competitive and Competitive programs.

Age Groups

LAYSL follows the NMYSA and USYSA guidelines for birth-year cut offs for each age group. Age groups are described by the letter "U" followed by a number "nn". The "U" stands for under and the number is the age group. The soccer year runs from January 1 through December 31. A player is considered to be in the UN bracket if they are less than *N* years old at the start of the soccer year.

Developmental Program

The developmental program is LAYSL's first offering at the younger ages and spans the U7 through U14 age groups, and includes a special kindergarten soccer training academy. The purpose of this program is to provide a safe, fun, and educational environment in which to play soccer, and to teach soccer skills, teamwork, and good sportsmanship to our players. The primary emphasis is player development, exercise, and fun, not winning games. The developmental program is coed and there are no tryouts.

Coaching Requirements

All of our developmental coaches are volunteers. In order to coach in the Recreational program, all volunteers need to pass the online NMYSA Risk Management Certification prior to their first practice (see link at <http://www.laysl.org/coachescorner>). Coaches also need to complete the NMYSA Youth Module 1 on-line course (<http://www.nmysa.net/LeftNav/programs/coached.htm>).

Age Groups

No formal teams are created in the developmental program, rather separate group practices are held in Los Alamos and White Rock. Coed groups are usually formed for kindergartners and for U6, U8, U10, U12, and U14 age groups. Some years, demographics may require combination and/or restructuring of age groups. To maximize the soccer experience for players—in particular, to provide a larger number of individual player touches on the ball during games—the program strives to achieve the minimum reasonable team size.

Practice and Games

Roughly one coach per six to eight players will be assigned at the younger age groups with one parent assistant to help out. Practices will be held twice a week and games will be played once a week on Friday evenings. The coach will determine the practice days, time, and location. On game day, players will be divided up onto teams of more or less equal strength and will play several short games against different teams. No permanent teams will be formed and no official score will be kept.

The table below shows for each age group, the ball size, the recommended number of players per side in a game, and the recommended number of minutes per game. The League subscribes to the United States Youth Soccer Association's emphasis on small-sided matches to enhance touches on the ball and player skill development. It will use these guidelines, published on the US Youth Soccer web site, under their small-sided games section. At the time of this publication, it can be found at <http://www.usyouthsoccer.org/coaches/RulesSmallGames.asp>. These recommendations include field sizes. For older age groups, a decision may be made to play small-sided games depending on the number of players in the age bracket.

Age Group	Ball	Players per side	Match Duration
Kindergarten	3	4, no goalkeeper	12 min mini-games
U8	3	4, no goalkeeper	12 min mini-games
U10	4	7 with goalkeeper	25 min halves
U12	4	9 with goalkeeper	30 min halves
U14	5	11 with goalkeeper	35 min halves

The Recreational soccer season will consist of six games. For older age groups, game schedules may include teams from other nearby clubs (e.g., Santa Fe) if there are not enough local teams. Coaches will do their best to give players equal playing time assuming that team rules are followed. In no circumstances, shall a player play less than one half game. On older age group teams, players are expected to play the position assigned, except for the goalkeeper position. No one will be forced to play goalkeeper. Note that LAYSL encourages coaches to allow players to play different positions.

Recreational Uniforms

Team jerseys will be provided for the players by the league at no additional cost. The coaching staff will be given jerseys by the recreational coordinator prior to the first game of the season. Players will need to obtain their own shorts and socks. Shin guards are required for practices and games. Soccer cleats are recommended.

Recreational Refereeing

It is preferred that recreational games be officiated by a certified referee holding a Grade 9 license or higher, however parents or coaches may referee if no referee is available. The modified rules prescribed by the USYSA will be used at the different age groups. The recommendations can be found at <http://www.usyouthsoccer.org/coaches/RulesSmallGames.asp>. In order to be paid for officiating a game, the referee needs to be certified at the Grade 9 license or higher, and turn in a completed game report to the Referee Coordinator. The game report form is available on the league website in the Referee Resource section. For each signed game report, the center referee will be paid \$20. Assistant referees will be \$10/game. Only a center referee is needed for kindergarten, U8 and U10 soccer. Assistant referees are optional at U12 and U14. All game reports should be filed with the Referee Coordinator (layslrefcoordinator@gmail.com) within a week of the game.

Pre-Competitive Program

The goal of the Pre-Competitive program is to provide a bridge from the Recreational program to the Competitive program. The Pre-Competitive Team Program will expose players to a more structured training environment and gradually introduce players to the increased speed of play and technical skill level so they can steadily adjust and improve over time. Pre-Competitive team coaching will focus on individual player development. Players who meet the age qualification and express the desire to improve their play and can commit to the expectations for training and games may play on the pre-competitive team. Separate boys and girls pre-competitive teams are generally formed for the U10, U11, U12, and U13/14/15 age groups. Sometimes the oldest age group is

Practice and Games

Pre-Competitive teams will be trained in the Academy style with multiple coaches and teams training together. Pre-competitive teams will primarily play in the Northern Rio Rapids League (Santa Fe), but may also have games in the recreational league or against other local clubs. They may also play in several tournaments throughout the year, typically located in Santa Fe or the Bernalillo/Albuquerque area, but some involve travel out of the state. Pre-competitive teams used to have an annual tournament budget, but due to lack of participation by some teams, the LAYSL Board decided to remove the tournament budget while simultaneously reducing the pre-comp registration fee. If a pre-comp team decides to play in a tournament, the tournament registration fee is now paid for by the team's participants. Pre-comp teams will practice at least twice a week, with three times being the recommended maximum allowed. Attendance at practices is required unless prior arrangements are made with the coach.

Coaching Requirements

LAYSL is trying to jump start the player's skills and tactics, as well as emulate the physical and aggressive aspects of competitive soccer without being in the competitive program. The coach will have already instructed at a competitive level as either a head or assistant coach in the past as well as having at least a USYSA E license. An example of competitive level is Duke City League or at any of the high school level teams. These requirements are in addition to the Recreational program.

Competitive Program

The purpose of this program is to prepare players to participate in High School level soccer. Advanced team tactics and player skills will be developed over winning, but a higher level of effort and commitment is expected over the other programs. A higher level of commitment is required to participate in this program, and for this reason, there will not be a half season rate. Every player participating in this program will pay the same registration fee. Competitive teams play in the Duke City Soccer League which holds games at the Bernalillo Soccer Complex. Teams from Las Cruces and Durango participate in this league. Competitive teams also play in several tournaments each year. An annual tournament budget of \$500/team has been allocated. Tournament expenses beyond this budget are to be paid for by the team participants. Competitive teams start at the U11 or U12 age level. Tryouts for the U11 through U14 competitive teams are held annually in mid May. Spring-only competitive teams are formed for high school players and the tryouts for the U15 through U18 age groups are typically held in November the week after the state high school championships.

Under no circumstances will players not registered with LAYSL be allowed to participate in any

manner with team field activities. This includes all practices, scrimmages, games, and tournaments. The only exception is when a player, registered with another NMYSA team, is asked to participate as a guest player for a tournament or game. Players with other NMYSA clubs will need permission from their team coach to participate in a LAYSL practice. The guest player will only be allowed to participate the week before the date of the tournament or game unless prior approval is received from the Competitive Coordinator.

Practice and Games

The Competitive teams will practice at least twice a week, three are recommended. Attendance at practices is required unless prior arrangements are made with the coach. Teams will participate in the Duke City Soccer League which has an eight game fall season generally starting the first week of September and an eight game spring season generally starting the first week of March. Showing up at these games is critical in order to honor LAYSL's commitment to playing in the Duke City League.

Age Group and Team Selection

Boys and girls teams will be formed in U11, U12, U13, and U14 if demographics allow. These teams will play in both fall and spring seasons at Duke City Soccer League (DCSL). Boys and girls teams will be formed in the U15 through U19 age groups based on each year's demographics. A team will not be sanctioned to play in any tournaments or leagues if minimum team sizes are not met.

Age Group	Minimum Team Size	Maximum Team Size
U11 (10 year olds)	11	14
U12 (11 year olds)	11	14
U13 (12 year olds)	15	18
U14 (13 year olds)	15	18
U15-U19 (15, 16, 17 and 18 year olds)	15	22*

*Only 18 players may participate in any given DCSL game

Teams will be selected from the pool of players that participate in tryouts. The coach for each team will be able to select their team from all eligible players in their age group.

Attendance at least one tryout is mandatory to make a Competitive team. If a player is interested in participating in the Competitive program, but cannot attend tryouts, arrangements can be made to tryout for the team after selections are made. This can only be done if space is still available on the team after the scheduled tryouts are completed.

Coaching Requirements

In order to coach in the Recreational program, all volunteers need to pass the NMYSA Risk Management Certification prior to their first practice. Coaches also need to complete the state level E certification. The league office will cover the costs associated with E level certification, if the coach is in good standing with the league, and passes the certification. These costs include hotel at training site, per diem for meals, and cost of training class. The Department of Energy guide for hotel and per diem rates will be used for reimbursement.

House Players

Game-only house players are players that are added to the team roster to help out the team in DCSL games when the team is short on players. Being short on players is the only reason house players will be used in games. Each house player may play in a maximum of 4 games per season. The

fee for each game is \$25. House players are added at the coach's discretion. They are permitted to participate in practices during the week leading up to a game they will be participating in. A house player who is being added for a tournament must pay \$25 to register with NMYSA and have a player card made (if not already registered) and should pay their part of the tournament registration fee.

A practice-only house player who wishes to participate in practices full time will pay a \$75 fee. This player is not permitted to participate in DCSL games except as a house player with the fees described above. The practice-only house-player option is at the discretion of the head coach.

Any player participating in team activities, whether these activities are practices or games, must be registered with NMYSA for liability reasons.

Dual Rostering with Recreational Program

NMYSA allows for the Dual Rostering of players. This is where a child is registered in a Competitive team as well as a Recreational team. These teams can be in different leagues as well. The NMYSA rule states that a child can only be in one Competitive team and one Recreational team in any season.

IV. OTHER PROGRAMS

Indoor Training Program

The purpose of this program is to help kids maintain and improve their individual skills during the winter months. This is a "free" program open to all registered players. Indoor space is provided by the public-school system and is subject to their regulations. Currently, there is great demand for indoor time from many town activities. The league may not always be able to obtain indoor time from the school system to support the entire league. A coach volunteer from the developmental, pre-competitive, or competitive program must also be found to lead the indoor training session. Coaches will work with the Fields Coordinator to schedule indoor time. Teams of similar age or sex can practice together if desired. Note that in addition to LAYSL policies and guidelines, public school policies and guidelines need to be followed. A violation of a public-school policy or guideline could affect a coach or player's good standing in LAYSL.

Summer Pickup Soccer

The purpose of this program is to help kids maintain and improve their individual skills during the summer months. This is a "free" program open to all registered players. A coach from the developmental, pre-competitive, or competitive program must volunteer to lead the outdoor pickup soccer games. Coaches may decide to include skill sessions, but are encouraged to allow players to also have small-sided and full-field pick-up games for the majority of the time.

Summer Optional Practices

A competitive or pre-competitive team coach may offer optional summer practices. Coaches cannot require players to attend, i.e., all practices are optional.

Participation Requirements

In order for a player to participate in the Indoor Training program, Summer pickup soccer, or optional summer practices, he/she needs to already be a LAYSL member. If a new player wishes to join this program, they will need to first register and join one of our three programs.

V. AGE EXCEPTIONS

Playing “down” (i.e, an older player playing in a younger bracket) is not allowed in the pre-competitive and competitive programs, and only under exceptional circumstances and with Board approval would this be considered in the recreational program. Playing “up” (i.e., a younger playing in an older age bracket) outside a player's age group is not encouraged, but is allowed if the players development is suppressed on the age-appropriate team and does not harm other players or the long-term health of the league. In all cases, the LAYSL President or Vice President must sign off on the play up request. As part of the play-up request, not only should the player's technical ability be considered, but also the player's intellectual understanding of the game and emotional maturity. In all cases, the competitive program coordinator must be notified about competitive and pre-competitive team play-up candidates and the recreational program coordinator must be notified about recreational league play-up requests. Play-up requests (also known as “age exception” requests) require the approval of the league President or Vice President. Age exception request forms are found on the www.laysl.org website.

The following rules will apply when evaluating play-up age exceptions:

- 1) the player is in the top 20-25% of the older team to play up on¹,
- 2) the play up does not cause the age-appropriate team to have numbers problems, and
- 3) the play up does not cause a qualified player to be cut from the older team (and putting that player in a situation with no place to play).

With the new birth-year age bracketing, if the play-up player is classmates (in the same grade) as the younger half of the play-up team, then that would be looked upon favorably (i.e., keeping same-grade-level players together is a good thing in the long run) and item 1) above can be waived.

Play-up age exceptions will also be allowed for these other reasons:

- 4) A player can play up if the team needs the player to form the team. The player can remain with the team the following year, if without the player the team would fold. If there are enough age appropriate players, then it is recommended that the player should move back to their appropriate age group (if condition 1 above does not apply).
- 5) For older age groups where it is common to have 2-year or even 3-year age bracket teams in order to form a team.

¹ A play-up player needs to be ranked by independent observers (in addition to the coaches). Independent observers may include LAYSL Board members who do not have a player on the team, or LAYSL coaches who are not involved with either team. The coaches from both the age-appropriate team and the older team should agree that a play up is in the best interests of the player in question and that they meet bullet 1 above.

- 6) For girls teams at any age in which it is common to have 2-year or even 3-year age bracket teams in order to form a team.
- 7) On a case by case basis, LAYSL will allow a one-year play up on a competitive, pre-competitive or recreational team if a coach has not been found and a qualified coach/parent of a younger player is willing to coach the team. The younger player would move back to his age group the following year (i.e., not continue playing up) if the parent coach is no longer coaching the team.

Refunds

Refund requests should be made through the CONTACT US email on the league website. A \$40 processing fee will be subtracted from any refund. For the recreational and pre-competitive programs refunds will be available until games begin. For the competitive program, refunds will not be available once team practices begin. Additionally, for the competitive program, a legitimate reason that will be considered by the Board of Directors is required for a refund. The refund policy for the competitive program is more stringent because team formation depends upon the commitment of the players to participate.

PROPER ATTIRE FOR ALL PROGRAMS

Players are to wear all safety equipment required by the USYSA and the NMYSA for participation in soccer activities during all league-sanctioned activities. In addition, but not limited to, players will wear shin guards, inside socks that cover the entire shin guard, at all league-sanctioned activities. A player must not use equipment or wear anything that is dangerous to their self or another player during league-sanctioned activities. Earrings (even plastic trainers), necklaces, watches, bracelets (other than medical alert bracelets), metal hair clips, and other jewelry shall not be worn. Covering any type of jewelry, other than medical alert bracelets, with tape or band aides is not acceptable. Cleats with a toe stud (e.g., a softball cleat) or metal spikes are not allowed in league-sanctioned activities. Casts or other braces must be properly wrapped to ensure that they are not dangerous to other players. Jeans and other clothing that has metal rivets are not allowed. Clothing that is torn or otherwise creates an issue where a player's body part (e.g., finger) can become tangled in said clothing is not allowed. Coaches are required to ensure the clothing and equipment players wear follows the above guidelines.

Club Uniform for Pre-competitive and Competitive Players

All players participating in the Competitive and Pre-competitive program will be required to use the Competitive kit selected by the Board of Directors. The uniform is purchased separately by the individual player. The registrar will set up a link to Eurosport (www.soccer.com) for each player. This link will include the player's assigned jersey number. Basic uniforms kits are currently about \$80. Please note that uniform manufacturers change designs every two to three years.

VI. EQUIPMENT

Team equipment will be supplied the Equipment Coordinator (layslequipment@gmail.com). This equipment includes balls, pinnies, cones, pop-up goals, and a medical kit. Special equipment such as portable goals or ground ladders may be available. For pre-competitive and competitive teams, there

is a \$300 annual budget for purchasing additional team equipment (e.g., goalie gloves, game ball, training materials). This equipment is to be given over to the league once the team retires or transferred to the new coach. It is preferable to have equipment purchased through the Equipment Coordinator as LAYSL receives bonus points that can be used to make future purchases.

VII. FINANCIAL AID

LAYSL solicits funds every year for financial aid. All requests for financial aid must come from the player's parent or legal guardian. In order to be considered for financial aid, the player's authorized guardian must contact the league Vice President (layslvp@gmail.com) two weeks prior to the registration deadline. Additionally, all registration materials must be filed by the program's deadline. Financial aid awards will be approved by the Vice President and can be appealed to the Board of Directors. The league aid guidelines can be found on the league website under Popular Forms/Financial Aid. Aid can be provided only as long as funds are available.

INSURANCE AND INJURY REPORTS

NMYSA provides secondary insurance for its members. It is effective on the date when a player's properly completed registration form and fees are received by the program's registrar. An injury report form which is found on the league website under Popular Forms, should be filed with the LAYSL President (layslpresident@gmail.com) within 72 hours of the accident. A league official will then file an injury form with NMYSA. NMYSA insurance provides coverage once the player's primary insurance deductibles exceed \$500. NMYSA sends a letter to the player's parents explaining this policy. Receipts for the expenses must be submitted within 90 days of the injury. NMYSA has encouraged LAYSL to not be hesitant in filing injury reports.

VIII. LIGHTNING

LAYSL follows the NMAA guidelines for practice and play during thunderstorms and lightning. Lightning is a critical safety issue in our state and therefore is to be treated as a major obstruction and threat to the safety of participants outdoors during any LAYSL activity, including games and practices.

The lightning policy uses the 30-30 rule. Lightning is considered too close when the sight of lightning is followed by thunder in under 30 seconds. At this point, all activities are to be suspended and the entire complex of coaches, players, parents, spectators, etc. needs to be cleared for 30 minutes. This means entire grass surface should be cleared and all participants should move to shelters or vehicles. Subsequent lightning after the beginning of the 30-minute suspension of play will reset the clock and another 30 minutes count will begin.

IX. POLICY VIOLATION CONSEQUENCES

There have instances when parents or players felt it was in their best interest to take actions directly against league policies. Examples of this are failure to report injury to players, participating in LAYSL activities without properly registering with the league, and failure to complete risk management. The Board of Directors will review each action and disciplinary action will be taken. The By-laws of Los Alamos Youth Soccer League outlines the appeal process.

The largest issue facing LAYSL at the time of this writing is illegal players participating in league activities. This includes self-transferring of players to a different team and people participating without registering. If LAYSL learns about this type of activity from a parent or coach of the team where the illegal player is participating, no action will be taken against the team or coach, and only against the illegal participant. If LAYSL learns of these actions from any other source, the team will be disbanded for the remainder of the season and the coach will be suspended for at least one year.

X. REIMBURSEMENT OF VOLUNTEER SERVICES

LAYSL relies on the generosity of those in the community. LAYSL will reimburse for various services and training. These services include volunteering, coach training, and referee certification. We also provide reimbursement for time donated for particular manual labor services.

League Volunteers

The only method of payment that can be made for any volunteer for LAYSL is the reimbursement of the most expensive registration for each job fulfilled. All volunteers, prior to player registration, must make payment in full. At the end of the volunteer period, most often the spring season, all volunteers will be mailed a check to the address on the registration form. The Board of Directors have the discretion to issue a prorated reimbursement in the event a volunteer does not fulfill their complete obligation or a new volunteer steps in mid term.

Coach Training

The league encourages furthering the quality of coaching. To that end, the board will reimburse for certain training classes. LAYSL is part of the USYSA and encourages all league coaches to participate in these training classes. All training levels will be reimbursed. This includes rates and meals up to per diem. Travel expenses associated with getting to the training location can be negotiated. The cost for the training is also reimbursable. Original receipts are required.

Certification levels Y, C, B, and A require that training passed back to the league in some form. Most often this is done with field sessions to the other coaches in the league. It can also take the form of performing volunteer positions for extended period of time, such as director of coaching, or coaching multiple competitive teams.

Other training might be covered, but needs the approval of the league coordinator (one of the Recreational coordinators for a recreational coach, competitive coordinator for the competitive league) and the league President or Vice President.

Referee Certification

LAYSL hopes to maintain a safe environment for all the kids during games. A certified referee is the best way to accomplish this goal. LAYSL will reimburse the fees for certification when the course is taken in Los Alamos. The certified referee must first officiate 3 games in LAYSL before the reimbursement is issued. Certifications that will be reimbursed are new Grade 9 and 8 licenses.

Field Lining

LAYSL needs fields lined for our Recreational league games. LAYSL uses the United States Youth Soccer Association recommendations for field sizes. These recommendations can be found at <http://www.usyouthsoccer.org/coaches/RulesSmallGames.asp>. The league will reimburse time-spent painting any field in Los Alamos County used for soccer games at the rate of \$20.00 per hour,

plus any cost associated with purchase of field paint, if receipts are provided. Prior arrangement needs to be made with the Fields Coordinator and Equipment Coordinator, in order to qualify for reimbursement of time.