

# PLUM AREA YOUTH SOCCER



## PARTICIPATION HANDBOOK

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# **PLUM AREA YOUTH SOCCER**

## Participation Handbook

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Parents, players, legal guardians and volunteers, through participation at practices and games, agree to the regulations and guidelines set forth in this "Participation Handbook", applicable rules and regulations promulgated by Plum Area Youth Soccer, PA West Soccer Association and their affiliated organizations and sponsors. PAYS reserves the right to limit or prohibit participation at practice and/or games if, in the opinion of a majority of the Board of Directors, one or more of the rules and regulations referenced herein are violated. In accordance with the terms of the registration agreement, parents, players, legal guardians and volunteers hereby release, discharge and/or otherwise indemnify and hold harmless PAYS, PA West and USYSA, its affiliated organizations and sponsors, their employees, servants and agents, including the owners of the fields and facilities utilized for the programs, against any claim or action by or on behalf of the registrant as a result of the registrant's participation in the programs and/or being transported to or from the same.



<b>SECTION 1: PHILOSOPHY AND MISSION OF PLUM SOCCER</b>
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## **Introduction**

Plum Area Youth Soccer Club (PAYS) is non-profit organization run by volunteers, and was incorporated in 1987 to “foster youth athletics, promote soccer as a family activity and to promote youth soccer among children in the Plum area”. The mission of the Directors and Members of the Soccer Board is to provide safe, age-appropriate practice and games for all children who participate in the program without regard to race, gender, religion or national origin.

Plum Area Soccer is run for the players to have fun while learning specific soccer skills within each age division level. Also maximum participation, good sportsmanship, gradual competition, and fair play are stressed. To accomplish this, we assign players to their prospective age level based on their ages as of July 31 of the calendar year. This also is the rule set by the U.S. Youth Soccer Inc., the youth division of U.S. Soccer.

Teams are coordinated so that each has success throughout the season. Every player who signs up by the prescribed day is assigned to a team with a roster size that allows all players to play an average of one half of each game.

The use of any alcoholic beverages, drugs, or disruptive activities are not in keeping with the spirit of the youth sporting activities and are absolutely prohibited.



## **Coach Development Commitment**

PAYS is committed to providing competent, caring and skilled coaches for each team it sponsors. A program of internal clinics combined with state licensing requirements will assure that coaches have the resources needed to guide each child in individual skill development, the concept of team play and a respect for the game of soccer and its rules of play. PAYS relies on volunteers and parents to serve as coaches. No experience is necessary. PAYS will provide a variety of coaching materials and tools, including assistance from experienced coaches. Advanced training may be provided by PAWest and FIFA certified instruction.

## **Player Development Commitment**

PAYS is committed to promoting an age-appropriate program for player development that provides a logical introduction of soccer skills and competition. Maximum limits have been set for the number of children on teams to assure fair playing time for each child. Clinics are periodically offered to further enhance PAYS coaching techniques.





<b>SECTION 2: SOCCER PROGRAMS AVAILABLE TO FAMILIES</b>
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PAYS is a member of the PA West Soccer Association. PA West is a National Affiliate Member of the United States Youth Soccer Association (USYSA), the United States Amateur Soccer Association (USASA) and has been constituted as a national State Association as defined in the US Soccer Official Administrative Rulebook.

PA West is subject to the authority of the USYSA, USASA, United States Soccer Federation (USSF) and the Federal International de Football Association (FIFA).

PAYS makes every effort to adhere to the rules, regulations and guidelines set forth by each of the associations cited.

PAYS soccer programs available to the families in the Plum Area include:

1. Recreational programs for children at least 4 years of age (by July 31st of the year of season). Recreational programs are played at the PAYS complex located at Larry Mills Park on Saturdays
2. Competitive programs for children between the ages of 9 (by July 31 of the year of the season) and 19 (before August 1 of the year of the season) with games on Sunday

The competitive (a/k/a travel) programs are played between teams within the regions established by PA West and are structured by Divisions of ability within each program.



<b>SECTION 3: RECREATIONAL SOCCER: IN-HOUSE PROGRAMS</b>
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As PAYS has grown over the years, so too has the soccer programs available to the youth in the Plum Area. Outlined below is a summary of current recreational in-house programs (as of 01/2007):

### **U-5 Division**

1. Co-ed soccer for children between the ages of 4 and 5 (The minimum age for soccer is 4 - the child must be 4 before August 1 to be eligible for play)
2. Micro Soccer (3 v 3 or 4 v 4: no goalkeeper)
3. Field is 30 yards in length and 20 yards in width
4. Goals are 4 feet high and 6 feet wide
5. Ball is size 3
6. Teams will do age appropriate foot skills training before all games on Saturdays. There will also be structured practice on Wednesday nights from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM during the season. Practices will consist of training modules and scrimmages.
7. Game is four 8-minute quarters with a 5-minute halftime.
8. Each player shall play a minimum of 50% of total time
9. Coaches will officiate the games under USYSA Modified Playing Rules. One coach per team on field
10. Players will stay with their coaches at all times during games.
11. Parents and Coaches with their teams will stay on opposite sides of the field

### **U-6 Division**

1. Co-ed soccer for children between the ages of 5 and 6 (The minimum age for soccer is 5 - the child must be 5 before August 1 to be eligible for play)
2. Micro Soccer (3 v 3 or 4 v 4: no goalkeeper)
3. Field is 30 yards in length and 20 yards in width
4. Goals are 4 feet high and 6 feet wide
5. Ball is size 3
6. Teams will do age appropriate foot skills training before all games on Saturdays. There will also be structured practice on Wednesday nights from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM during the season. Practices will consist of training modules and scrimmages.
7. Game is four 8-minute quarters with a 5-minute halftime.
8. Each player shall play a minimum of 50% of total time
9. Coaches will officiate the games under USYSA Modified Playing Rules. One coach per team on field
10. Players will stay with their coaches at all times during games.
11. Parents and Coaches with their teams will stay on opposite sides of the field

## **U-7 Division**

1. Separate Boys and Girls programs for children between the ages of 6 and 7
2. Micro Soccer 4 v 4. No goalkeeper.
3. Field is 50 yards in length and 30 yards in width
4. Goals are 7 feet high and 12 feet wide
5. Ball is size 3
6. Structured practices will be held one evening per week
7. Games will be four 10-minute quarters with a 5-minute halftime
8. Each player shall play a minimum of 50% of total time, and have an opportunity to play all positions.
9. Coaches will officiate the games under USYSA Modified Playing Rules four games. Second half of the season will be officiated by licensed referees.
10. Players will stay with their coaches at all times during games.
11. Parents and Coaches with their teams will stay on opposite sides of the field

## **U-8 Division**

1. Separate Boys and Girls programs for children between the ages of 7 and 8
2. Micro Soccer 4 v 4. No goalkeeper.
3. Field is 50 yards in length and 30 yards in width
4. Goals are 7 feet high and 12 feet wide
5. Ball is size 3
6. Structured practices will be held one evening per week
7. Games will be four 10-minute quarters with a 5-minute halftime
8. Each player shall play a minimum of 50% of total time, and have an opportunity to play all positions.
9. Coaches will officiate the games under USYSA Modified Playing Rules four games. Second half of the season will be officiated by licensed referees.
10. Players will stay with their coaches at all times during games.
11. Parents and Coaches with their teams will stay on opposite sides of the field

## **U-9 Division (Effective Spring 2008)**

1. Separate Boys and Girls programs for children between the ages of 8 and 9.
2. Modified soccer (7 v 7: 6 field and goalkeeper).
3. Field is 70 yards in length and 50 yards in width. Goals are 7' x 21'.
4. Ball is size 4.
5. Practice is two evenings per week, minimum one night.
6. Games are two 25-minute halves with a 5-minute halftime.
7. Each player shall play a minimum of 50% of total time.
8. One certified referee with two linesmen will officiate the game under USYSA Modified Playing Rules.
9. Coaches with their teams will stay on one side of the field. Spectators will stay on the opposite sides of the field.

NOTE: Currently PAYS U-9 Boys teams play each other and teams from the Monroeville Soccer Club U-9 In-house program throughout the season. The PAYS U-9 Girls teams play each other and teams from the Monroeville, Murrysville and Woodland Hills Soccer Clubs U-9 In-house programs throughout the season.

## **U-10 Division**

10. Separate Boys and Girls programs for children between the ages of 9 and 10.
11. Modified soccer (7 v 7: 6 field and goalkeeper).
12. Field is 70 yards in length and 50 yards in width. Goals are 7' x 21'.
13. Ball is size 4.
14. Practice is two evenings per week, minimum one night.
15. Games are two 25-minute halves with a 5-minute halftime.
16. Each player shall play a minimum of 50% of total time.
17. One certified referee with two linesmen will officiate the game under USYSA Modified Playing Rules.
18. Coaches with their teams will stay on one side of the field. Spectators will stay on the opposite sides of the field.

NOTE: Currently PAYS U-10 Boys teams play each other and teams from the Monroeville Soccer Club U-10 In-house program throughout the season. The PAYS U-10 Girls teams play each other and teams from the Monroeville, Murrysville and Woodland Hills Soccer Clubs U-10 In-house programs throughout the season.



## **General Rules**

In accordance with applicable PAYS and PA West Procedural rules the in-house program:

1. May not maintain league standings or hold championship games
2. May not permit a player to participate if they are registered with another soccer club
3. May not move a player between divisions more than one time per year (preferably in the fall)
4. The age group coordinator will assign teams. Coordinators will take into consideration requests, seasons played, age and skill level to create the most even teams as possible.

PAYS will offer age-appropriate soccer programs for all youth. PAYS reserves the right to approve exceptions to established standards based on the ability of each player. PAYS will make every effort to assure that each child is participating in the program that the coaches, administrators and coordinators believe will suit their maturity and technical competence.



<b>SECTION 4: COMPETITIVE SOCCER: TRAVEL PROGRAMS</b>
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**Club Travel League** (Sunday Play)

*BOYS PROGRAM*

The boys club travel program consists of teams ranging in age from U-10 to U-19 in Divisions 1, 2 and 3.

*GIRLS PROGRAM*

The girls club travel program consists of teams ranging in age from U-10 to U-19 in Divisions A, B and C.

**Guidelines**

1. Each team shall consist of a minimum of one head coach one assistant coach and one manager. The head coach for all PAYS Travel teams must have a State "E" coaching license at minimum.
2. Certified referees: one center and two linesmen.
3. Game time and location notification process: The home team will call the away team coach with the time and directions to the field by Tuesday of the week of the game. The coach or team manager will contact each player with that information.

**General Information**

In accordance with applicable rules and regulations, PAYS follows these procedures for all Competitive Programs:

1. Travel teams established during the fall season shall be carried over to the spring season of the following year



2. Each player and coach must be properly registered with the PA West registrar.  
Registration for any travel team must be approved by the PAYS Registrar
3. Playing time for travel team players shall be determined by the coach(es) of the teams. Attendance, cooperation, respect, ability to play fair and general attitude may affect a coach's decision on playing time. Questions from parents should be directed to the coach after the game or practice in question and in an "adult-only" environment
4. Try-outs for travel teams will be held each spring and all children interested in playing on a team will be given a fair and impartial try-out
  - a. A minimum of two try-out dates will be held and the dates will be publicized via the PAYS website, community newspaper, cable channel notice or other method
  - b. Players must attend a minimum of one try-out to be eligible to play on a team. If a player cannot attend one of the try-out dates and would like to be considered to be on the team, they must submit a written request to PAYS
  - c. It is the Travel coach's responsibility to notify, in a timely manner, if they have been chosen to be on the team
  - d. PAYS reserves the right to approve exceptions to established standards based on the ability of each player to assure that they are participating in the program that the coaches, administrators and coordinators believe will suit their maturity, technical competence and cooperation



<b>SECTION 5: MISCELLANEOUS PROGRAMS</b>
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### **Tournament Play**

PAYS teams may participate in outdoor tournaments sponsored by PA West approved hosts. The PAYS Board of Directors must approve all other non-sanctioned tournaments.

1. In-house teams (U-10 and younger) may only attend the PA West hosted Americas Cup Tournament
2. PAYS travel teams may attend PA West sponsored or approved tournaments (including the PAYS Kick-off Classic Tournament). All other tournaments must be approved by the PAYS Board of Directors
3. The Coach shall be responsible for complying with all appropriate PAYS and PA West rules, regulations and guidelines for tournament play. Non-compliance with applicable rules can result in probation and suspension for all players and coaches

### **Indoor Soccer**

PAYS recognizes that indoor soccer programs assist in the development of individual and team skills for players. PAYS will continue to strive to provide opportunities for players to continue to develop between the fall and spring seasons.

PAYS will attempt to support individual teams that choose to participate in indoor soccer provided that the team(s) consist of a majority of players from a PAYS sponsored team.





## **SECTION 6: PLAYER RESPONSIBILITIES**

The PAYS youth soccer programs provide an opportunity for youth players to develop their minds and bodies. Being part of a team requires a significant commitment of time and energy. To assure that all players, coaches, referees and parent volunteers receive the respect they deserve, players agree to:

1. Conduct themselves in a respectful and courteous manner at any soccer event including practice, games and other soccer outings
2. Be team players - support the efforts of fellow teammates. Dissention on a team is a sure sign of failure
3. Be an ambassador of Plum Borough and PAYS at all times, especially on the field
4. Communicate with coaches and team parents about attendance at practices and games
5. Bring soccer balls and water bottles to each game and practice
6. Always wear shin guards at practices and games. Soccer shoes are recommended for play, tennis shoes are permitted for recreational programs only
7. Present a good appearance at games - game shirts should be tucked into shorts, socks should be over shin guards. Players are not permitted to wear jewelry or clothing with zippers, snaps, hoods or drawstrings around the neck



## **SECTION 7: PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

The PAYS Board of Directors is dedicated to providing a quality soccer experience for each child that registers to play. The PAYS Board of Directors volunteer their time to oversee the management, philosophy and technical aspects of the programs offered by PAYS. Much of the success gained by PAYS occurs when parents volunteer to execute the plan developed by the PAYS Board of Directors.

Parent - volunteer. Synonyms. Parental involvement is critical to the following key areas of PAYS:

1. **Communications.** Team parents serve as an assistant to the team. Team parents will be asked to distribute literature, remind parents of responsibility for setting up or returning nets, and assist coach with emergency contact of children (practice change, etc.)
2. **Labor.** Each team will be expected to take a turn setting up or returning nets if they are the first or last game of the day. Nets are located at the soccer storage building at the soccer fields. Before the first game nets should be set up 1/2 hour before the scheduled game.
3. **Presence.** Every child needs parental approval and encouragement as they seek new adventures. Soccer, while not a contact sport, involves running, kicking, jumping, and related coordination skills and occasionally an injury may occur. In consideration of the positive benefit for the child, and in support of the effort of PAYS volunteers, parents are expected to be with their children at all games and practices.



4. **Commitment.** Being part of a team can be the most important benefit of a child's participation in a PAYS soccer program. Each child's commitment to their teammates and coach to be hard working, respectful and reliable begins with their parent's commitment. Players will receive practice and game times and each parent is asked to have their player to the field on time. Parents will advise the coach of anticipated absences as soon as possible.
5. **Praise.** PAYS is committed to providing a positive playing environment for each child. Parents can support this effort by refraining from shouting directions and comments to the players during practices and games. Words of encouragement and praise are welcomed and will further enhance the positive experience for each child. If at any time you feel another parent and/or coach is conducting himself or herself in a way that is not positive for the children please contact your age group coordinator or a PAYS board representative for appropriate action to be taken.
6. **Respect.** PAYS attempts to assure that each volunteer receives adequate training to execute his or her duties. Each coach, administrator and coordinator is a volunteer and is doing their job to the best of their ability. If you find a need to address a concern with any PAYS volunteer you are asked to do so in an "adult only" environment. Soccer is a sport that encourages a mutual respect for the opponent and parent conduct at the field sets an example for each player.



## **SECTION 8: WEATHER**

In case of rain.....Soccer is played in the rain. Practices and games may be cancelled in case severe weather is predicted. Practice and games may be cancelled if it is decided that the fields are in too poor a condition for safe play. In any case, players should always consider the game or practice to be on unless their coach or his/her representative calls to let them know otherwise.

### **In-House**

1. All games will be played at the field coordinator/ overall in-house coordinators discretion.
2. If a game is cancelled due to rain or poor field conditions you will be notified by your coach. It will also be posted Saturday morning on the PAYS website ([www.plumsoccer.org](http://www.plumsoccer.org)). General rule of thumb, if you haven't received a call then assume the game is on.
3. Inclement (cold) weather. Tossel caps are permitted. Extra clothing may be worn (see #7 under player responsibilities) but must be underneath soccer shirts, shorts and socks.
4. Absolutely no games or practice will be held when lightning is observed. Teams must wait at least 20-minutes after the last lightning strike before resuming games or practices.
5. Parents will always have the final say in determining if their child should attend practice or a game at any given time.





## **Travel**

1. Referees will stop play at anytime the conditions cause a threat to the safety of the players. All play will be stopped when thunder or electrical storms are sighted in the area and delayed until play can safely continue. Also the condition of the field, after heavy rain, could have a bearing on whether a game should be started or restarted.
2. When play is delayed for any reason, the game will be restarted at the same point where it was stopped. If the ball was in play, the game will be restarted with a drop ball. If the ball was out of play (over the sideline, goal line or goal scored), the play will be restarted with a throw-in, goal kick, corner kick, or in the case of a goal scored, with a kick-off. In compliance with the laws of the game.
3. If the game is called during the first half of the game, it is replayed. If the game is called during the second half of the game, it is considered complete.

## **CONCLUSION: "To the Players"**

No soccer player can become great unless he or she learns the fundamentals of the game. Fundamentals should be stressed whenever one is starting to play soccer. To succeed in soccer, believe in yourself and success will come. Think big. Set a high goal and aim to be the best. Never give up on the outcome of any game. Be great, even in defeat. Do your best in practice as well as in the game, and at all times be a good sport. Practice every opportunity you get, even in the off-season. Ask your coach or a qualified person to help you with your weaknesses and try to overcome them, and continue working on your strong points also.

Try to learn all of the aspects of the game. While shooting the ball is the basis of the game, do not concentrate solely on that phase. How to gain control of the ball, position, defending, passing, attacking, and trapping are just as important and working on improving these fundamentals are also important.

You cannot have too much enthusiasm for the sport. However, never neglect your schoolwork. Without good grades, your life goals can never be accomplished. Always make sure you eat right, get enough sleep, and exercise to stay fit. Proper care of your legs and feet are most important. Wear good footwear, preferably soccer shoes and shin guards (which is mandatory). Remember the first signs of age and wear for any athlete, in any sport, are the legs and the feet. Take good care of them.

Put a soccer goal in your back yard so that you can improve your game at every opportunity. Soccer is a team game one can learn how to play alone. There are many rewarding benefits from learning the game of soccer, but above all it's fun. If you remember this fact, then you will receive many years of enjoyment from the game. Play it hard but respect the rules and your opponents. Plum Area Soccer has tried to support the development of soccer at all levels and hopes that everyone can enjoy the sport.

Fred Lucas, President - Plum Area Soccer

**The terms and conditions of this Handbook may be revised, modified, or otherwise changed by the PAYS Board of Directors.**