



Region 678 Volunteer Program

(Revised as of 7/25/11)



Program Objective: To insure the most positive AYSO soccer experience by driving volunteerism throughout the Region and collectively sharing the associated management responsibilities.

Program Guidance: There exists the need for substantial parental participation within the Region so that all of the Region's players, coaches, and families can have a positive AYSO experience. Our Volunteer Program strives to strike a balance between "required volunteerism" and "incentivized volunteerism" by creating opportunities for parents to share in the routine and/or administrative tasks typically handled by the Board. Parents are also routinely encouraged to become a member of the Region Board. In the end, the goal is to improve the Region's soccer program by spreading the workload equitably among our Region's families.

Background: Every year Region 678 manages the soccer experience for more than 2000 kids and coordinates more than a 1000 games. The season generally lasts five months from August through December, but actually operates year-round with post-season play, tournament play and pre-season preparation. There exists a Board comprised of nearly thirty volunteer members (e.g. unpaid) who accept the responsibility of building and managing the program. There exists a Regional Commissioner (RC), three Assistant RCs, a Referee Administrator, a Coach Administrator, and many other positions on the Board. Each division within the region also has a Division Coordinator. As with any volunteer organization, Board participation will have its natural ebbs and flows but with a strong volunteer program in place the Region's soccer experience should remain consistently positive for all.

Core Components for Success: There are a large number of things that go into creating a successful AYSO season. This section attempts to list and briefly describe those facets so that the building blocks can be built for understanding of the Volunteer Program's details. This list is not all inclusive.

- (1) **Registration:** The registration process is challenging and starts long before the season does. It includes marketing, IT support, forms processing, financial responsibilities, and multiple sign-up days. The responsibility for registration lies with the Board and its members quite simply because there are no players or player-parents involved at this time.
- (2) **Team Selection:** Once all of the players are registered and coaches identified, teams must be built for all divisions. In the noncompetitive divisions there is leniency in terms of allowing team requests to be made. With the competitive divisions, there is no such latitude as every effort is made to balance teams through a system of evaluations and ranking of players and then a draft, which in theory creates teams that are equally weighted.
- (3) **Games Scheduling:** Prior to the season's start, a board member creates the game schedules for all of the divisions. This is a monumental task requiring significant hours of planning and then is repeated when the playoffs begin for the competitive division.
- (4) **Uniform Purchase and Distribution:** Jerseys for all two thousand players are purchased and distributed. This task normally falls on a Board member for the purchase of the jerseys while the Board members segregate the jerseys by division and Division Coordinators take responsibility for the issuance of the jerseys.
- (5) **Picture Day:** Aside from playing the games, the kids and parents alike enjoy the chance to have pictures taken. This event takes place on one Saturday but requires pre-planning to identify the photographer, pick the day, as well as a make-up day, and coordinate the scheduling for picture day. This event can leverage the assistance of the player's parents.

- (6) Refereeing: In the noncompetitive divisions there are no referees as no score is kept, however, coaches are required to referee their own games. In the competitive division, however, there exists a demand for a significant amount of volunteerism. Each competitive game requires three referees: one “center referee” and two “assistant referees.” The pool of referees generally come from existing players’ parents, there are some youth referees, and then adults whose children have grown out of AYSO but still enjoy being involved. Considering there are close to a 100 competitive games being played in a single weekend, there exists the need for nearly 300 referee volunteers. There is a certification course required for all referees. Because we cannot have games without adequately trained referees, we have developed an incentive system to reward volunteers who go above and beyond by serving as a neutral referee for games other than their child’s games. Our “Referee Points” system allows referees to earn points for each game refereed that can be applied toward their child’s team or a designated team to help them in the division points standings. Please refer to the Sportsmanship Policy at ayso678.org for more details.
- (7) Coaching: A large part of the AYSO program depends on parents volunteering to be coaches. Without sufficient coaches, the Region cannot meet the large player demand and often the Region finds itself struggling to get coaching volunteers, which can delay the formation of teams. Coaches need to attend age-appropriate training prior to the start of the season (length of training depends on the division level).
- (8) Team Coordinator (AKA “Team Parent”): Along with the coach, having a team coordinator is essential to a successful soccer season for a team. The coordinator often manages the administrative responsibilities of running the team so that the coach can focus his/her time on teaching the fundamentals of the game. Some examples of the duties of the coordinator are setting up a snack schedule or helping to purchase a team banner should the team decide to have one. The team coordinator is normally selected at the first team meeting held by the coach.
- (9) Initial Field Setup: Normally the week before the first games the Region coordinates a “Field Setup Day” wherein all of the fields are lined. This initial setup generally takes about three to four hours on a Saturday morning and is a one-time requirement and is performed by the E A Board member manages the pool of volunteers collected by each team (normally three to four volunteers per team).
- (10) Field Setup and Tear-Down: At the start of each soccer weekend there exists the need to re-line the fields and put out the goals and flags and, when the games are done, to put everything away. Historically the responsibility to setup the fields goes to the teams who have the first games of the day. Tear down is generally the responsibility of the teams that have the last game of the day. A Board member is normally present to help coordinate everything but ultimately the bulk of the work is done by the parents.
- (11) Field Volunteers: One large component to the success of our Region is the ability to maintain a positive atmosphere during game days. Often there will be cousins, uncles, grand parents, or other relatives in attendance who are generally unfamiliar with the field layout and where their soccer star may be playing. In addition, it is the responsibility of the Board to ensure a safe and controlled environment for all of the AYSO family to enjoy during game days. To this end, the Field Volunteers are parents that assist the Board during game days by being visible, friendly, and generally helpful. Specific duties will include helping to ensure that AYSO’s KidZone policies are being followed and reporting to the Board members on duty of any concerns.

- (12) Playoffs for Competitive: Volunteer duties during the postseason are comparable to the regular season but there is a increased need for experienced referees and Field Volunteers as the intensity rises at games.
- (13) Fund-raising: Families are encouraged to assist in our fund-raising Winter Holiday Soccer Tournament, and it will be expected among teams that advance in post-season play to the Area Playoffs, including Regional, All-Star and Tournament teams.
- (14) Board Member Duties: There are ongoing duties that many Board members do throughout the entire year. Most parents do not see the amount of work going into creating this positive soccer environment for their children, but at some time our Region hopes to count on parents just like you to help fill our Board positions. Most positions do not require significant amounts of time while a few do. Duties range in responsibility, but include general duties such as data entry, accounting, purchasing, graphic design, communications, project management and more.

As you can see, it is an overwhelming task to manage such a large, fluid organization built completely on volunteers. All of the tasks listed above and many more take time to complete and it is the goal of Region 678 to provide ample opportunities for parents to become involved and see the value in helping maintain the high standards we set for our Region. By having a diverse wide cross-section of people on the board, we are confident we can continue to do an outstanding job servicing our Region.

Specific Volunteer Requirements, All Divisions

Each team must provide volunteers throughout the season in order for our Region to enjoy a successful season. The hope is that so long as the duties are shared relatively equally throughout all of the teams, then the parents will feel that they have not been taken advantage of, whereas other parents have not contributed their fair share. To that end, we have created an incentive program that rewards parents in Competitive divisions (U10-U14) for doing their fair share. (See 2011 Volunteer Requirements document) To recap, here is the list of minimum responsibilities each team inherently has to fulfill to provide its “fair share” of volunteerism to support the soccer season.

- a) Coaching — one head coach with optional assistant coaches
- b) Team coordinator — one parent per team, coordinates and delegates.
- c) Initial field lining — four parents per team for a four-hour period on one Saturday morning. This will be handled by the Extra program.
- d) Referees (Competitive divisions only) — Providing one assistant referee for each game.
- e) Fundraising – Each post-season team must participate in a Region-wide fundraising campaign, which is our Santa Clarita Gold Rush holiday tournament.
- f) Field setup/tear-down — Teams playing the first game of the day must supply three volunteers to set up their goal and re-paint existing lines 1 hour before the first game of the day. Teams playing the last game of the day must breakdown their goal, net and corner flags to the storage containers. This generally takes 15 minutes when a team works together. Note: Due to team scheduling variables, it is likely that some teams may incur additional setups/tear-downs as compared to other teams. AYSO will not modify the season’s schedule regardless of the number of setups/tear-downs a team may have.
- g) Field Volunteers — Each HOME team is required to supply two Field Volunteers every Saturday for a maximum of 1 hour, 15 minutes (basically the duration of one game depending on age level). Field Volunteers will monitor the fields and surrounding area and report any issues to the nearest board member in an orange shirt or will staff the information tent and assist with communications and coordination. Please refer to the “Field Volunteer” handout at the Volunteer page at ayso678.org for job specifics.