

# THE AYS EQUALIZER

A (maybe) quarterly newsletter brought to you by Abington Youth Soccer

SPRING/SUMMER 2019

## State of the Program



Did you know that over 650 players participate in AYS every year? While the program has had its ups and over the years we are currently experiencing a bit of a boom. Last fall we had an incredible 326 players age 3 through 2nd grade, up 12% over the previous season. This spring we have 243 travel players in 1st through 12th grade, up 10% over last year. While we are thrilled by the program growth, it does bring some challenges including having enough field space and making sure we have enough volunteer coaches. We continue to make small tweaks to the program based largely on the feedback we get from parents and coaches during our end of season surveys. Our board has grown as well over the last year which has been absolutely critical in keeping things running. We currently have 12 board members, but there are 3 open positions if anyone wants to join us and help shape the program.

## Program Calendar



You are not imagining things, AYS now offers programs virtually year round.

From our mission statement: *The mission of Abington Youth Soccer is to prepare players for the next level of competition through age appropriate training, a positive development environment, and maintaining a fun enjoyable experience. AYS focuses on the players first, striving to help each individual to have strong fundamentals and the confidence to carry them to their highest potential.*

To help us meet this mission we have adopted a sort of à la carte approach to our offerings. Players (and families) are encouraged to play in as many or as few offerings that fit into their schedule and help them scratch their soccer itch. Below are some of the highlights of the current program calendar.

**Summer:** Free weekly training sessions for Grades K - 8

**Sept-Early Nov:** Fall Rec for Age 3 - Grade 9

**Sept-Early Nov:** Fall Travel for Grades 3 - 8

**Mid October:** Tryouts for Spring Travel

**Nov-Mar:** Indoor Soccer for Grades 1 - 8 (targeted towards Spring travel players)

**Feb-March:** Winter Training for Grades K - 8

**April-June:** Spring Travel for Grades 1 - 12

**April-May:** Spring Development for Age 3 - Grade 2

**Mid June:** Tryouts for Fall Travel

## Refs and Rules



### Referee 101

- In order to referee travel soccer, referees must be 14 years old and take the Grade 8 certification course ([www.massref.net](http://www.massref.net)).
- Once certified all Grade 8 refs must take an annual recertification course.
- For Fall Rec we use "Junior Refs" for the younger age groups. Junior Refs must be 2 years older than the group they are refing.
- AYS reimburses our refs for all training courses and buys them their first ref shirt.
- AYS also reimburses coaches who take the Grade 8 certification.

## Coach's Corner



US Soccer introduced the Grassroots approach to soccer training a couple years ago. Mass Youth Soccer (MYS) was one of the first state programs to adopt the approach and subsequently AYS was one of the first towns in MA to join the movement. Grassroots soccer was developed to teach soccer in a way that is player focused. Practices start with small sided games as players arrive. Then the teams focus on a single concept (creating space, supporting teammates, 1 on 1 defending, etc.). The practice ends with a scrimmage where this concept can be applied in a game environment. This approach encourages a slow build in concepts. The unstated goal is 1% improvement per practice. The provided lesson plans also only focus on concepts that players of that age have the ability to grasp. For example, a concept like switching positions while defending is not introduced until 5th grade because the majority of younger players will not be able to fully grasp it until then. MYS provides a season worth of lesson plans to help coaches setup and efficiently run practice. MYS also offers Grassroot Education courses for coaches and AYS gladly reimburses coaches for any class they take. If you are interested in learning more please visit [http://www.mayouthsoccer.org/coaches/coach\\_education/](http://www.mayouthsoccer.org/coaches/coach_education/). If you are interested in coaching this Fall please [register here](#).

Have questions or ideas for a future newsletter topic? Email us at [abingtonyouthsoccer@gmail.com](mailto:abingtonyouthsoccer@gmail.com).

**Have a better name for our newsletter? Submit your ideas and you could win a free Fall Registration!**

Abington Youth Soccer  
Email: [abingtonyouthsoccer@gmail.com](mailto:abingtonyouthsoccer@gmail.com)  
Website: [abingtonsoccer.com](http://abingtonsoccer.com)

Purchase your own AYS fanwear @ [wegotsoccer.com/ayis](http://wegotsoccer.com/ayis)

