

## Requests and Team Balancing

### How We Make Up Teams and Deal with Requests

From the Regional Commissioner and Regional Coach Administrator:

We would like to remind everyone our policies on requests for players to be placed on the same team and, more generally, on how teams are selected. Some of what we do is mandated by the national rules of AYSO; a lot is just plain common sense.

Before giving you our rules and policies, please remember that AYSO's National Mission Statement is founded on five principles: balanced teams, open registration, good sportsmanship, positive coaching and everyone plays. Region 253 is a part of AYSO and we stand for these above everything else and our policies on requests and team selection reflect these principles.

In addition, the process of making up teams is very time consuming work and once the teams have been made up every player move involves more than just that player. Not only would it necessitate displacing another player already assigned to the team, it would involve finding a replacement player of comparable skill levels (to maintain team balance). We also work hard to distribute players with goalkeeping skills, as well as players with volunteer parents, reasonably equally among the teams. Parents frequently see this from their perspective and don't take into consideration that granting a seemingly simple request can have a wave of repercussions and stretch our volunteer resources beyond breaking.

### PART I - REQUESTS

AYSO's national rules and policies forbid player retention or building teams by strategic placing of assistant coaches. While we sometimes place parent coaches & assistants together, we try to avoid this unless it's absolutely necessary. The bar for what constitutes necessity has been raised because, sadly, it has been abused over the years in various regions.

Team balancing takes priority and no requests will be accepted. The only exception is for brothers and sisters and for children living in the same household where age and gender would place them in the same division. We will accept requests in these situations for the children to be placed (a) on the same team or (b) on different teams.

What if your team has a practice day that conflicts with some other commitment that you cannot rearrange? What if you need help with carpooling? Please be flexible and try to work something out. Almost always you will get to know someone on the team with whom you can share carpooling and other responsibilities. And don't worry about your children not knowing anyone on the team. One of the joys of AYSO is the opportunity for children and their parents to make new friends and it is done so easily in the context of participation on a sports team. Take advantage. If you cannot work around the practice schedule assigned for your team, you may choose to have your child put on the waiting list until there is an opening at his/her evaluation level on a team that practices on a different night. However, there is no guarantee that all players from the waiting list will be placed.

### PART II - MAKING UP TEAMS

We build teams with random coach assignments using the following criteria:

- ✓ Coaches will be identified and approved by the Regional Coach Administrator.
- ✓ Coach's and Assistant Coach's children will be the only players that are automatically placed on any team.
- ✓ Parents may make requests at the time of registration. Region 253 will entertain reasonable requests for player placement but does not guarantee them. Team balance takes priority over any request.

- **Requests that are always honored:**
  - Head Coach's child

- Siblings in the same division will be placed on the same team unless otherwise requested by the parent or guardian
- Requests NOT to be assigned to a particular coach
- **Requests that we do NOT honor:**
  - Requests for children to play up to an age group where they will be playing players who are more than 2 years older than they are. (i.e. a 6 year old playing on a U10 team).
  - Coach's requests for specific players.
  - Player request to play for a specific coach
    - Avoids the situation where a coach rates a player low in anticipation of getting him or her "cheap" next year with a request. Rare exceptions require approval of the Coach Administrator
- **Requests that we try to honor (listed by priority):**
  - Important car pool requests (Child couldn't play otherwise)
  - Friends to play together
    - Placing two children together is reasonable. Three or more compromises team balance and is discouraged. Attempts to "stack" a team via this request will be rejected.
  - Coach request not to be assigned a specific player
- ✓ Any ratings for the previous season are used to form balanced teams and any new child that has not been rated will be sorted separately by age.
- ✓ Once the initial sort is done the teams will be looked at and adjusted if needed.

Under no circumstances are coaches to take team assignments into their own hands. Player trades are absolutely prohibited.

Under the supervision of the Regional Commissioner and the Assistant Regional Commissioner, the Coach Administrator always retains the right to make adjustments. Sometimes, even the best laid plans go astray. For example, the switch of players to reunite them with their coach-parent can cause a team to be without an experienced goalkeeper or an assistant coach, while the other team gets two. Coaches and parents must accept that if a seriously unbalanced team is created, we will reassign players or re-make the schedule, although this is a measure we take very rarely. The Coach Administrator, the Assistant Regional Commissioner and the Regional Commissioner have unlimited authority to make changes and adjust the implementation of our policy in the best interests of the program and in particular to take steps to prevent and counteract any manipulation of the system.

There will always be the inevitable sad band of conspiracy theorists who believe we do it differently. We do not.

Team Rosters will be distributed to coaches who have completed Safe Haven training at or before the Coaches Meeting. Coaches who have not completed training will not be allowed to have the team roster or hold practices until this training is completed.