

# Region 297



Montgomery, Prattville, Wetumpka



## Player/Parent Handbook 2009-2010

[www.ayso297.org](http://www.ayso297.org)

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## Letter from the Regional Commissioner

AYSO is in its' 44th year and is known the world over as the premier youth sports organization. From its humble beginnings in a Hawthorne, California to now having roots in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, and a start-up in Russia, our organization boasts over 650,000 players. AYSO is a program developed and designed for kids of all abilities.

I want to welcome you and thank you for being a part of AYSO Youth Soccer. We are all proud to be a part of such a positive and rewarding program that strives to enrich the lives of children through the wonderful game of soccer. To those players and parents returning – *Welcome back!* To those of you who are new to the AYSO Family – *Welcome!* *We are so glad to have you as a part of this organization.*

As a parent you play a special role in contributing to the needs and development of our children. Through your encouragement and good example, you can help assure that all players learn good sportsmanship and self-discipline. AYSO strives to help young people learn to work together, to sacrifice for the good of the team, to enjoy winning and deal appropriately with defeat; all while becoming physically fit and healthy. Most importantly, they have fun!

The foundation of any AYSO program is the spirit of its' volunteers. Everyone in Region 297 (Regional Commissioner, Board Members, Referees, and Coaches) is an unpaid volunteer who has made a commitment to helping our organization be the best it can. We are always in need of your help to keep our region running smoothly. Don't be nervous about volunteering, we will provide you with free training. Everyone has something to offer.

We want to thank all of our volunteers for their time and effort no matter how big or small they think their job is. Thank you for everything you do to ensure the success of Region 297. Because of your efforts we have seen a surge in enrollment and strong growth for our region. Your continued help and support is greatly appreciated!

Additional information regarding our region can be found on our website [www.AYSO297.org](http://www.AYSO297.org)

Again, welcome to this new season of AYSO Soccer. We look forward to enjoying our weekends with you and your families!



John Bailey  
Regional Commissioner

## **History of AYSO Region 297**

Region 297 was organized on Maxwell AFB as a Pilot Region in the fall of 1980 by an AYSO parent who was previously assigned to Hickam AFB, Hawaii. The program quickly expanded to include Gunter AFB and St. Bede's Catholic School. In 1982 the region was given its Charter.

Base support of off-base teams raised questions over jurisdiction over the program. Therefore, in 1983 the Region split with Maxwell/Gunter and Region 297 was relocated off-base. The Maxwell/Gunter AYSO program became AYSO Region 398. In 1990 Prattville also formed its' own AYSO Region.

After several years of being volunteer AYSO programs both Maxwell/Gunter and Prattville handed over the responsibility of their youth soccer programs to a third party. The Maxwell/Gunter Region returned the program to Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) Department and the Prattville Region gave their program to the City Parks and Recreation Department.

AYSO Region 297 has existed in Montgomery for 26 years. The program supports approximately 675 children on approximately 49 teams. There are about 120 active adult volunteers and 10 youth volunteers (coaches, referees, administrators, etc.)

The children come from various backgrounds including some private schools, some who are home-schooled and some from the public schools.

There are two sub-seasons per school year; one in the fall and another in the spring. Most teams practice twice a week and play games on Saturdays.

## **AYSO Philosophy**

AYSO is a non-profit, local volunteer organization that develops and delivers quality youth soccer programs in a fun, family environment based on AYSO's Five Philosophies:

**Everyone Plays** – Our programs goal is for kids to play soccer – so we mandate that every player on every team must play at least half of every game.

**Balanced Teams** – Each year we form new teams as evenly balanced as possible – because it is fair and more fun when teams of equal ability play.

**Open Registration** – Our program is open to all children between 4 and 19 years of age who want to register and play soccer. Interest and enthusiasm are the only criteria for playing.

**Positive Coaching** – Encouragement of player effort provides for greater enjoyment by the players and ultimately leads to better skilled and better motivated players.

**Good Sportsmanship** – We strive to create a positive environment based on mutual respect rather than a win-at-all-costs attitude, and our program is designed to instill good sportsmanship in every facet of AYSO.

## **AYSO Safe Haven – Child and Volunteer Protection**

Safe Haven is a child and volunteer protection program that was the first of its kind in youth sports.

The child protection aspect is intended to stop child abuse, educate or remove its perpetrators, and screen out predators before they get into the program. It includes proactive steps which provide a medium for positive, healthy child development, precluding the outbreak of child abuse in a weak, unfocused, non-empowering environment.

Volunteer protection comes into play as a result of volunteer training, certification, and continuing education. The Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 provides certain legal protections for volunteers who have been trained, certified, and act in accordance with a written job description. Safe Haven has these three elements, giving volunteers the highest degree of protection available under the law.

**All coaches and volunteers are required to be Safe Haven certified each year.** Please see your school coordinator or visit the information tent (Gorman Field) if you have any questions.



### **AYSO Kids Zone Program**

In the past, the national media has focused on the negative, even violent behavior of players, coaches, and parents involved in youth sports. In a proactive effort to counteract this trend of violence, AYSO has initiated a program called Kids Zone.

As part of AYSO's education agenda, Kids Zone is a dynamic program targeted to eliminate negative sideline behavior. It is aimed toward producing a thoroughly positive impact on everyone involved in youth soccer.

## Region 297 Specific Rules

- All players are required to wear shinguards. Shinguards must be completely covered by the socks.
- Players may not practice or participate in a game with a cast, splint, or brace for bone injuries.
- No jewelry (watches, bracelets, necklaces, ear rings, etc.) are to be worn by players during practices or games.
- Metal hair clips may not be worn during practices or games.
- All jersey shirts must be tucked into the shorts at the beginning of each game.
- Cleats are not required, but are recommended. Please ensure that cleats are soccer cleats; no toe cleat.
- Non-prescription sunglasses are not allowed to be worn during practices or games.
- Prescription glasses should be secured to the head with a strap to avoid having the glasses fall off during play.
- For cold days, sweatpants and sweatshirts may be worn, but must be worn under the uniform.
- Goalkeepers are allowed to wear ball caps for shading eyes.

### ***Match Durations, Ball and Team Size***

Age Group	Ball Size	Players on Field	Match Duration
U6	3	5, Including goalkeeper	8 Minute Quarters
U8	3	7, Including goalkeeper	10 Minute Quarters
U10	4	9, Including goalkeeper	25 Minute Halves
U12	4	11, Including goalkeeper	30 Minute Halves
U14	5	11, Including goalkeeper	35 Minute Halves
U16	5	11, Including goalkeeper	40 Minute Halves

### ***Start Times, Quarter Breaks, and Half Times***

- Games should start no more than 10 minutes after scheduled time.
- For U6 and U8 games, quarter breaks should be no longer than 3 minutes. Play is restarted with alternating kickoffs.
- For U10 and U12 games, play will be stopped at a normal stoppage\*\* in play approximately midway through the half. Play will be restarted with the appropriate restart. This break is for substitutions and should be no longer than 2 minutes. See “Substitutions”.
- Halftime break for all age groups should be no longer than five minutes. Each half will restart with alternating kickoff.

\*\*Normal stoppage is defined as a throw-in, goal kick, or corner kick.

\*\* Regardless of game start time, the game must end on time so that the next game can begin on schedule.

### ***Substitutions***

- For all age groups except U14 and above, substitutions are permitted on the quarter and for injuries.
- For all age groups except U14 and above, substitutions during quarters are not permitted without prior arrangement with referee or opposing coach.
- For U10 and U12 games, the stoppage in play for substitutions should be kept to a minimum. The players are **not** to leave the playing field. Coaches are to “call off” the player(s) coming out and then “send on” the players entering the game. Coaches should encourage parents to take drinks to the players but the players must remain on the playing field. Parents are not allowed on the field.
- U14 and above games use “free” substitution. Referee approval is required before a substitution is permitted. Substitutions are allowed on normal stoppage of play: all throw-ins, all goal kicks, all corner kicks, and all kick-offs.  
**All substitutions are at the discretion of the referee!**
- Due to lack of substitutes or hot weather, referees may use their discretion to allow for a short break for players to get a drink. The referee will inform both coaches if this is to occur.

## **Age Specific Rules**

### ***Under 6 and Under 8***

- **NO SLIDE TACKLES**
- No Penalty Kicks
- All free kicks are direct kicks. If a foul occurs inside the penalty box, the ball is to be moved outside the penalty box for the free kick.
- No offsides unless it is used to gain advantage (player hanging out in front of the goal). Coaches will be asked to remove any player who abuses this rule.
- Throw-in violations will result in a repeat throw and instruction given by the referee.
- For goalkeeper fouls, the referee should not call a foul but should instruct the keeper and inform the coach. Play will restart with a drop ball.
- No coaches will be allowed on the field during play unless they are acting as the referee.
- A coach will be asked to remove a player (by substitution) for repeated violations.
- All games should be played at even strength. No team should ever play with a “player down” (No 5 v 4 games)
- For U6 games, only one coach will be allowed on the field at a time to act as the referee. All coaching should be done from the sidelines. Coaches are encouraged to alternate halves if both want to ref.
- Remember that the U6 group is for soccer familiarization and meant to be noncompetitive.

### ***Under 10***

- **NO SLIDE TACKLES**
- Offsides Rules are enforced.
- No red cards will be issued. Yellow card infractions will result in a 2 minute penalty for the player and the team responsible for the infraction will play down a player during that time. For red card infractions or repeated yellow card infractions, the referee will instruct the coach to remove the player for duration of the game and player may be replaced.
- For the first game of the season, throw-in violations will result in repeat throw-in. Thereafter, an infraction will result in a loss of possession.

### ***Under 12 and above***

- All laws enforced.
- **Slide tackling is prohibited in U12.** In addition to the obvious dangers, the playing surface is not of sufficient quality to allow safe execution of this maneuver.
- Use of Yellow and Red Cards
- Red Cards result in suspension from the following game.

## Goalkeeper Rules

- **The goalkeeper is to be protected from charging players.** Players may follow-up on the ball, but any contact with the goalkeeper or attempts to intimidate the goalkeeper will result in a free kick.
- The goalkeeper cannot hand carry the ball outside the penalty box.
- Goalkeepers are allowed six seconds to release the ball.
- No player is allowed to obstruct the goalkeeper from releasing the ball once it is in the goalkeeper's possession.

## General Rules

- If one team can not field a full team, both teams will have the same number of players on the field.
- Coaches are encouraged to “lend” players to the opposing team to field the proper number of players. **NOTE:** Using players from other teams of an equal or lower age group is acceptable as long as both coaches and the referee agree before the game begins! The idea is for the kids to play but it is very unsportsmanlike to use a “star” player from another team to unbalance the match. No game will start 5 v 4, 6 v 7, etc.
- When there is a five goal difference, the team that is ahead must make every effort to “pull-back”, i.e. move more skilled players to defense, play less skilled players forward, shoot from outside penalty box, choose a “designated” scorer, etc. Remember that this is a recreational league and no scores are kept, but the kids keep track. We don’t want blowouts. **Coaches do not have to wait for five goals, remember “Good Sportsmanship”.**
- For injuries, allow the referee to assess the situation. Coaches should wait for the referee to signal them before entering the field. **No parents are allowed on the field unless the referee calls them onto the field.** Bring injured players to referee’s attention if the player is out of the referee’s field of vision.

## Sideline Behavior

- The games are for the children's enjoyment. **Coaches:** coach during the week and let the kids play on Saturday. It is, after all, their game.
- Spectators should be at least 2-yards from the touchline.
- **Coaches are only allowed to coach from one side of the field and are to limit their movements to the coaches' boxes.**
- For full size fields, fans are allowed in the area from top of penalty box to top of penalty box.
- No one is allowed to be past the penalty box or behind the goal lines. **No one is allowed to sit or stand behind the goals for any age group.**
- Sideline dissent by coaches or parents: (per game)
  - 1<sup>st</sup> occurrence – Verbal Warning
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> occurrence – Recorded Caution
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> occurrence – Ejection and 1 game suspension
- Two ejections in a season will result in suspension from the program.
- Refusal to leave after an ejection will result in suspension from the program.
- **Coaches!:** You are responsible for your parents. If the coaches are unable to control a parent, the game will be stopped until the offender leaves.
- Profanity will result in ejection and removal from all playing fields. People using profanity will be asked to leave the complex. The game will not continue until they leave.
- Physical contact with a ref, league official, coach, or any other person will result in suspension from the league and may be subject to further discipline.
- Referees and/or all league officials may enforce all these rules
- **No child will be allowed to play up more than ONE age group. Playing up requires the permission of the team coach and the Regional Commissioner.**

## **Team Practices**

Team practices will be held at the discretion of the coaches. They will practice at schools, parks, etc. It is important that the players attend practices since this is where game skills and strategy are taught. Coaches should be notified if it is necessary for a player to miss practices or games so coaches can make necessary changes in game plans and line-ups. Practices will be held once or twice a week for one hour at a time.

All practice facilities must be on file with the Regional Commissioner in order to ensure a Certificate of Liability Insurance is on file.

All players are asked to bring a soccer ball, shinguards, and water to every practice.

## **Inclement Weather**

The general soccer game or practice policy is that games will be played "rain or shine" and practices will occur "rain or shine". Practices will be canceled at the discretion of the coach. Games will **not** be canceled because of rain, wind, or muddy fields unless such weather results in hazardous conditions. Cancellations will be made at the discretion of the Regional Commissioner, the Referee Administrator or referee of the game, and the Coach Administrator. Cancellation will be made as early as practical before game time to allow adequate notification. Once the decision has been reached to cancel a game(s), the decision will not be changed.

The only person authorized to cancel a game on the field is the referee on the field for that game. This will only be done on an individual basis after personal inspection of the field. The referees scheduled for the game are completely in charge from the moment they enter the field of play.

**All fields are to be vacated when thunder is heard and are to stay vacated until no thunder is heard for at least 30 minutes. This applies to practices as well as games.**

## Code of Ethics

If during game play the conduct of a player goes beyond the limits of good sportsmanship and fair play, the referee will caution (yellow card) or eject (red card) the offending person (s). Issuance of a yellow card will require the player to leave the field for a “cooling off” period. The player may re-enter the game at the referee’s discretion. Two yellow cards in the same game equal a red card. Ejection from a game mandates suspension from the next game. The referee will file the necessary reports prior to leaving the field.

If spectator or coach conduct goes beyond the limits of good sportsmanship, this may result in the offender being asked to leave the field or if necessary, termination of the game. Please refrain from such conduct and set a good example for the children.

In the event that a child is injured during the course of a game, the referee will stop play **ONLY IF** there is further danger to the injured players, OR at the first available opportunity. A coach may be called onto the field to attend to the child. **Parents/Spectators are not to enter the field unless called by the referee.**

The goals, nets, and other field equipment have been purchased by AYSO, Region 297 for use by its’ players. **Goals and nets are not to be climbed on.** Parents will be financially responsible for damage caused by inappropriate behavior of their children.

Since at times we are using school property, damage to fields or school property can result in AYSO losing use of the field. Please help us maintain our fields. **Parents are responsible for their children while at the practice or game fields.** Parents need to assess the risks for injury to their child while their children are playing in the area. **No climbing trees, throwing objects, climbing on equipment, playing in the parking area, etc.**

## Field Policy

**NO PETS ARE ALLOWED** ON THE FIELDS DURING GAME DAY OR PRACTICE, NOR ARE THEY ALLOWED TO ROAM IN THE PUBLIC AREA (AVOID PET DROPPINGS). PETS SHOULD BE LEFT AT HOME.

**All fields must be left in clean condition after each game.** Parents need to remind their children not to litter. **After each game, each team is responsible for cleaning their area and placing the trash in the trash bins.**

## **Sportsmanship**

All games and practices shall be governed by AYSO Rules & Regulations and FIFA Rules of the Game. Coaches will be responsible for proper behavior of parents and players assigned to their team.

Coaches, players, parents, referees, AYSO Volunteers and Spectators who are unable to comply with this Code of Ethics are subject to appear before the Child/Volunteer Protection Advocate and the Risk Management & Safety Director who will decide the final course of action.

Individuals wishing to discuss any aspect of the program should do so in a positive manner by first speaking with the coach and then the school coordinator. If your questions cannot be answered or resolved, then contact the Regional Commissioner for AYSO, Region 297. Remember, quality input results in a quality program for everyone involved.

### **Alcoholic beverages and smoking are not permitted in the soccer field area !**

Negative or inflammatory remarks or actions directed towards coaches, players, referees, or AYSO Volunteers or other spectators are absolutely unacceptable and will not be tolerated from anyone.

During a game, the referee makes the final decision in all matters.

## Coaches

All AYSO volunteers are important to the success of our organization. But if we had to choose one that was the most important, it would have to be the coaches. They spend the most soccer time with your children. They are the catalyst that brings everything together. They are the front line volunteers that are out there working with the kids everyday. AYSO coaches and youth sport coaches in general can make a lasting impression, good or bad, on the kids. For that reason, AYSO takes great pains in educating our coaches and providing them with the equipment and materials they need to do their job successfully. All coaches are required to attend and partake in the training provided by the Region.

Likewise, players and parents also have a responsibility to their coach. The players' responsibility is to always show respect for the coaches, cooperate with them, and abide by their policies and rules. Perhaps even, once in a while, telling them how much you appreciate what they are doing and how much you enjoy being a part of their team. The parent's responsibility is to support and reinforce the coach's policies with your own children and to offer your help whenever you can.

It is important that our coaches are able to devote all of their time to working with the kids on the field. Therefore we expect the parents, under the direction of the designated team parent, to handle all the administrative duties of running the team. Duties include providing after game refreshments, organizing team meetings and parties, making phone calls. The team parent will do their best to coordinate these responsibilities, but it's important that every parent become involved. Any contribution will be welcomed and greatly appreciated.

Coaches, if you know that your team will not be able to play a scheduled game, please notify the other team's coach so that they can notify their team. This will prevent a team from showing up without a game to play. If you cannot find their phone number, call John at 799-7492 or 396-9547.

If we all work as a team – players, parents, and coaches, we can accomplish our goal of teach our kids to be:

**GOOD PLAYERS AND GOOD PEOPLE!**

## **Coaches and Players**

AYSO, Region 297 takes pride in providing a quality skill building program for all players. All coaches are required to attend training courses designed to enhance and strengthen their coaching skills. They make commitment; without compensation, to teach and improve the skills of all players. In return, they expect a commitment from the players to attend all practices and games. There are of course occasional times when a player may miss a practice or game due to unavoidable circumstances. This is understandable.

Parents must also make a commitment to their children and to the soccer program.

The end result is that the players and the coaches count on one another for a fun, rewarding learning experience, and a successful season.

## **AYSO VIP (Very Important Player) Program**

AYSO VIP (Very Important Player) Program provides a quality soccer experience for children and adults whose physical or mental limitations make it difficult to successfully participate on mainstream teams. VIP teams may include those who are: blind or visually impaired, amputees or conditions that impair mobility, mentally or emotionally challenged, autistic Down's syndrome, and cerebral palsey. These participants are Very Important Players in AYSO. We recognize that all participants need to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance. The VIP program offers that acceptance and carries our philosophy of Everyone Plays to new heights – giving Everyone a chance to play.

AYSO VIP Program Goals:

- Have fun playing soccer
- Understand the fundamentals of the game
- Learn teamwork and Fair Play
- Increase positive self-esteem
- Become more physically fit
- Meet and be comfortable with new people.

VIP helps more than just the players. Buddies and other volunteers increase their appreciation and understanding of individuals with special needs. They find their lives greatly enriched by their involvement with their new VIP friends.

For parents, thinking they would never see their children playing a sport or making new friends, VIP give them joy and hope. They relax and enjoy watching their children having fun like other kids, perhaps for the first time.

## Who's Who on the Soccer Field

### *Players*

Soccer is played between two teams of up to 11 players. Some younger teams use fewer members. Unlike our American football, soccer has very few set plays.

Soccer does not have separate defensive and offensive teams. Players keep on playing their position whether their team has control of the ball or not.

**Defenders:** The defenders, also call fullbacks, defend the goal and try to take the ball away from the opposing team. Defenders who play certain positions have special titles: **Sweeper** “sweeps”, or runs to either side, to help out teammates in defending the goal. He/She usually does not guard or mark any special opposing player. **Stopper** guards the middle and marks the opposing strikers. **Fullbacks** often start the plays from the sides and guard the other teams wingers.

**Midfielders:** The midfielders are also call halfbacks and are usually the busiest players on the team. They are the important link between the defenders and the forwards.

**Forwards:** The forwards score most of the goals and try to delay the offensive team's drive up the field. There are special names for certain forwards also. **Wingers** create offensive plays on the two outside parts of the field. **Strikers** play in the middle and usually finish the scoring plays.

### *Officials*

**Assistant Referee:** The assistant referees are the two officials who stand on each sideline. They are responsible for watching the players behind the referee and help in determining who has possession of the ball when it goes out of bounds.

**Referee:** The referee is the only official who goes onto the playing field. He/She enforces all rules, keeps time, and gives penalties.

## Soccer Definitions

**Throw-in:** The method of putting the ball in play after it has gone completely over the sideline. When a player kicks the ball out over the sideline, a member of the opposing team is given the opportunity to throw the ball in. This is the only time a player (other than the goalie) can handle the ball.

**Kick-off:** A pass used to start play at the beginning of the game, at halftime, or after a goal is scored. A kick-off is always taken from the center of the field and must move forward before it can be kicked backward.

**Penalty kick:** A penalty kick is awarded when a player commits a serious foul in the penalty area. The fouls include a dangerous tackle or touching the ball with your hand.

**Free Kick:** A free kick is awarded when a foul is committed outside the penalty area.

**Indirect kick:** A free kick which must come in contact with another player prior to entering the goal.

**Direct kick:** A free kick which is allowed to enter the goal without touching another player.

**Drop Ball:** A drop ball is awarded when the referee stops play for injury while the ball is still in play or when the referee is unable to determine who is supposed to have possession of the ball. The ball is placed into play by dropping the ball between two opposing players. The ball must hit the ground prior to being touched by either player.

**Goal:** A goal is scored only when the entire ball has crossed over the goal line. Unlike in football, the position of the ball is considered rather than the position of the player.

## Region 297 Board Members

### Executive Board Members

Board Member	E-mail	Phone
John Bailey	<a href="mailto:johnbailey@knology.net">johnbailey@knology.net</a>	396-9547
Dan Davidson	<a href="mailto:danthemanclan@hotmail.com">danthemanclan@hotmail.com</a>	244-4965
Bob Mendonca	<a href="mailto:Julbob@aol.com">Julbob@aol.com</a>	271-1343
Rod Bourke	<a href="mailto:Roddeburca@Yahoo.com">Roddeburca@Yahoo.com</a>	271-6247
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John Keating	<a href="mailto:jkeating@charter.net">jkeating@charter.net</a>	277-7866
Ken Sanders		354-8047

### Support Board Members

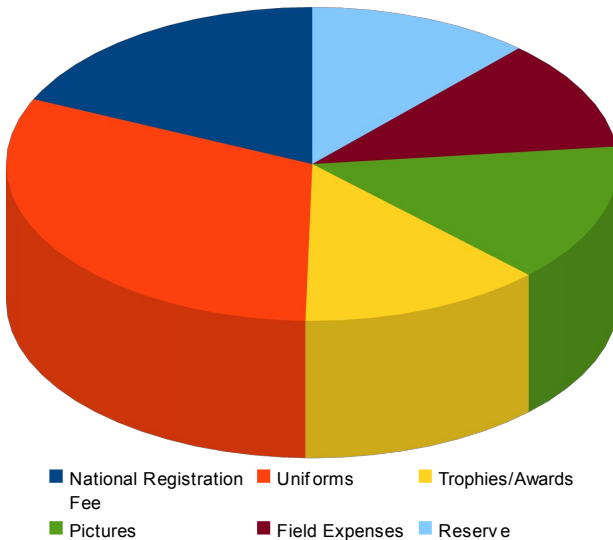
Board Member	E-mail	Phone
Lisa Nelson	<a href="mailto:lisa.nelson@hservinc.org">lisa.nelson@hservinc.org</a>	244-1950
Kippy Tate	<a href="mailto:kippyate@charter.net">kippyate@charter.net</a>	832-9446
Heather Murdoch	<a href="mailto:mrsheathermurdoch@hotmail.com">mrsheathermurdoch@hotmail.com</a>	220-4364
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Jeffrey Jones	<a href="mailto:jeffj1111@gmail.com">jeffj1111@gmail.com</a>	558-4756

## Information Tent

The following items are available from the information tent:

- Game schedules
- First aid kit
- T-shirt pullovers (pennies)
- Administrative forms
- Lost items/items left on the fields
  - Note: items not picked up by the end of the season will be donated to a worthy cause or disposed of.

## Registration Fee Breakdown



- **AYSO Region 297 is an all volunteer organization!** All of our coaches, referees and administrative personnel give their time generously for your kids to have a quality organization. Please keep your criticism and concerns positive or ask yourself how **YOU** could help make improvements!

## **YOU CAN HELP BY BEING A VOLUNTEER!**

Our kids need you! Tell us how you can be of help. Below is a list of possible ways you can help our organization.

Team Coach

Team Parent

Assistant Referee

Field Maintenance

Field Markers

Typing/Printing

Publicity

Assistant Coach

Referee

Fundraising

School Coordinators

Sponsorship

Web Design/Layout

Board Members

For more information, please contact John Bailey, AYSO, Regional Commissioner, at (334) 396-9547 or visit our website [www.ayso297.org](http://www.ayso297.org)

Please visit us on the web  
[www.ayso297.org](http://www.ayso297.org)