

## **BAYS Information Guide for New and Experienced Coaches (Updated March 2021)**

The guide below provides useful information for Travel Coaches related to managing a BAYS Team. The following topics are covered below:

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### **1. The BAYS Website and Contact Information**

The BAYS website is [www.bays.org](http://www.bays.org) and contains numerous resources that Travel coaches should become familiar with. The front page presents the menu options presented below. Many of the main core features are available without logging in; additional functions become available if you log in. In order to log in for the first time, click Login and then select Request New Password. Follow instructions from there.

When you log in for the first time, the first thing you should do is check your contact information. Please make sure your email is accurate and your phone number is your **cell** phone. This is critical in case opposing coaches need to reach you at the last minute on Saturday. Having your home phone number is not helpful when you may be in transit or at the field already. This is where you can also update your contact information in the future if need be. Natick soccer does not maintain this information; you are responsible for making sure it is accurate.

The key resources you will find on the website include BAYS policies (such as playing rules, zero tolerance, rescheduling games, how to manage lopsided games, and much more) as well as access to your game schedule and standings. The balance of this document will make reference to these and other BAYS items.

## 2. BAYS Team schedule and section standings

To access your teams game schedule and view standings go to Bays.org, Click Town, Click Teams/Games/Standings by Town, Pick current season, select Natick as the Town Organization and submit. You will find all Natick teams here and can click your team as well as the section you are playing in. Here is a link to the current season: <https://bays.org/bays/organizations/view/NAT>

## 3. BAYS Policies and Rules

Go to Bays.org and click Policies. The drop down menu contains many individual policies and rules players and coaches should be aware of. The following are worth highlighting:

- **BAYS Complete Rule Book**

<https://bays.org/book/playing-rules-and-regulations-bays-soccer-competition>.

Yes, this is a long read but will help you in the long run. It's important to know the rule modifications that exist for the different age groups as well as FIFA IFAB rules in general, such as:

- Off-sides
- Heading
- Goal keeper punts and goal kicks
- Game length
- Substitutions
- Minimum players to start a game

- **Zero Tolerance Policy** [*Applies to both IM and Travel Teams*]

All individuals responsible for a team and all spectators shall support the referee. No one, except the players, is to speak to the referee during or after the game, except in very limited and defined circumstances: <https://bays.org/content/zero-tolerance-policy> . These exceptions include: Coaches may ask questions before the game, call for substitutions and point out emergencies during the game, or respond to the referee if addressed.

A key element of the zero tolerance policy is the following: “Absolutely no disputing calls, during or after the game, no remarks to the referee to watch certain players or attend to rough play. NO YELLING at the referee, EVER, and no criticism, sarcasm, harassment, intimidation, or feedback of any kind during or after the game.”

For the avoidance of doubt, this policy leaves no possibility that a coach or spectator can initiate a dialogue with the referee about their officiating of the game. This means, for example, you are not permitted at half time (or even after the game concludes) to ask for clarification regarding a call they made.

Referees are human, and often our neighbor's children. They will make mistakes or will have a different visual perspective than a coach or parent on the sideline. Disrespecting the referee by yelling at them

will not make them change their call. Always ask yourself, would you like an adult, (often 3 times their age) addressing your child that way?

There are 3 levels of zero tolerance violations a referee may assign a coach (usually after the game in their game report):

- ZT1 – “Minor” – Comments made but did not disrupt enjoyment of game by players or distract the referee(s).
- ZT2 – “Major” – Significant comments. Did disrupt game. Cautions issued or should have been issued.
- ZT3 – “Severe” – Major distractions for the referee(s). Ejections for ZT occurred or should have. May or may not have considered terminating the game.

The recommended sanctions for ZT violations are as follows:

- ZT1: BAYS recommends that Clubs track and monitor their own coaches' ZT 1 violations and impose sanctions as needed
- ZT2: BAYS recommends a minimum of a letter of apology from the offender(s) to the referee(s) sent via the referee assignor
- ZT3: BAYS recommends a minimum of a one-week suspension and a letter of apology from the offender(s) to the referee(s) sent via the referee assignor

Referee assignors are always interested in obtaining feedback on their referees – both positive and negative.

- If a Natick coach would like to provide feedback to or about a Natick referee, contact Caleb Munson, our referee Assignor, at [calebmunson@yahoo.com](mailto:calebmunson@yahoo.com) **AFTER** the game.
- If a Natick coach would like to provide feedback to or about an Away referee, log into the BAYS site and a dropdown under My BAYS>Coach/Manager should have a Game Feedback tab with a form that goes directly to the home Ref Assignors and Club President. Do not provide this feedback to Caleb.

Please note that you are responsible for the behavior of your parents on the opposing sideline too. It's a good idea to remind your parents of the ZT policy and share it with them.

Natick Soccer Club tracks ZTs assigned to our coaches and takes that into account when making coach assignments.

- **Lopsided Score Management**

BAYS would like to see goal differentials of no more than +5. Beyond that, it is considered poor sportsmanship and lack of respect for your opponent. Why? Winning by more than 5 goals does not enhance the experience for the winning team but it can significantly diminish the enjoyment and interest in soccer for the losing team. It is the coaches' responsibility to manage the scoring and take the necessary steps to keep within the suggested +5 goal differential.

Managing these situations is completely within the control of the coach.

- BAYS has made available the following PowerPoint file with useful strategies to manage lopsided game situations: <https://bays.org/content/lopsided-score-management-0>.
- Discuss it with your players in practice BEFORE it happens in a game
- Have a plan that your players understand and have practiced
- Recognize the potential for a lopsided game early (e.g. the score is 3-0 after 10 minutes) and manage it immediately. Do not wait until it's 5-0.

- Ensure your players understand that there are consequences for disobeying your instructions...and follow through when the situation warrants it! The most effective method is to remove a player from the game if they continue to score goals past +5. You probably only need to do this once for players to realize you are serious about stopping scoring.
- Consider whether a mid-season swap should be requested.

- **Playing the Schedule and Rescheduling Games**

BAYS expects games to be played according to the schedule but recognizes there will be circumstances where that's not possible. It's very important for coaches to recognize these situations early and follow the BAYS rules regarding notifications and rescheduling.

Link to the BAYS rules – Match Rule 8: <https://bays.org/book/playing-rules-and-regulations-bays-soccer-competition> .

Instructions on how to request a reschedule of a Natick home game can be found at: <http://naticksoccer.org/wp/nsc-fields/>. Please note that you need to agree with the opposing coach on the rescheduled day and time prior to submitting a reschedule request. This process will update the games on the BAYS website, assign a field, and notify the home and away coaches and the referee assignor of the change in game time via email. If you fail to follow the process described above and on the Natick website, it may result in referees showing at the day and time of the original game. In these situations, the referees are still paid and fines are levied by BAYS.

There is no notification requirement for Natick teams related to away games.

Failure to play a game may result in a single (one team) or double (both teams) forfeit for the teams involved. If you are assigned a forfeit, the club is fined \$25. Please do everything you can to avoid a forfeit. Consult with your Age Group Coordinator if you are having trouble rescheduling a game.

**Update for Spring 2021:** BAYS expects that all games will be played according to the schedule irrespective of the COVID status of a town. Unilateral decisions by a team or soccer club not to play games against a team or town due to their covid status will result in forfeits being assigned or forfeit fines of \$25 per game not played. The only exception to this is if a state or local government or authority (e.g. Natick Board of Health) does not permit the game to be held. Why is this BAYS policy? Soccer clubs and parents have registered their teams and players with full knowledge that opposing towns could have various COVID statuses. Failure to play a game denies both teams players the opportunity to play a game of soccer.

- **MYSA Credentials (aka “the Lanyard) [Applies to both IM and Travel Teams]**

A Mass Youth Soccer adult credential (aka "the lanyard") is required to be worn by ALL adults working with youth (for BOTH practices and games). The primary purpose of the Adult Credential is for all parents of children to feel comfortable that the adults involved in coaching and interacting with their children have been properly CORI/background checked, completed Safe Soccer and Concussion training, and are in good standing (registered and affiliated, thus insured) by Mass Youth Soccer. Two important points to note:

- Wearing the lanyards can be impractical in windy conditions or when the coach is moving around a lot. MYSA recommends that initially when arriving at the field the adult should have their credential worn around their neck. Then, in order not to hamper their activities (coaching, lining fields, running, etc.) they may, if necessary, store the credential with their personal belongings during that activity.
- The MYSA credential is required for every coach, assistant, or parent that gets involved with helping the head coach. So, if a parent helps out at practice as a one-off, they are required to be

MYSA credentialed. If there was ever an “incident” that occurred and an adult was not properly credentialed, there could be adverse consequences for the club. If you know of a parent that you may ask to help out occasionally, be proactive and get them credentialed.

- **Mid-Season Swaps**

The BAYS team placement process results in appropriate placements for the vast majority of teams. However, despite the fact that BAYS has a placement system that is heavily based on the judgment, input and evaluation of teams by those who know them best—the town organizations—there are times when a team is significantly misplaced. For those teams, BAYS has a mid-season swap process designed to offer relief to the most seriously misplaced teams. Link to BAYS mid-season swap guidance: <https://bays.org/content/team-swaps-explained> . Please note, in the Spring season, there are generally no swaps approved for teams in MTOC eligible divisions and sections (Gr 6 D1 and D2; Gr 8 D1 and D2). This is because it can result in inequities within a section whereby teams play different opponents. This can impact the standings which are used to determine playoff eligibility and seedings. As a result, in almost all cases, a swap request in these sections will not be successful. Those restrictions do not apply in the Fall as there is no MTOC tournament.

- **Equipment (Can I wear earrings or a plaster cast on my arm?) (Answer: No)**

*[Applies to both IM and Travel Teams]*

If you’ve ever wondered what the rules are regarding permissible equipment, here is a link to the BAYS rules: <https://bays.org/book/law-4-players-equipmentjerseysshin-guardscastssplintsorthopedic-bracesjewelry>.

- **The Role of Division Directors**

Division Directors are BAYS Board members and are responsible for the administration and smooth operation of an assigned group of BAYS Sections during the season. They are usually managing 30+ teams. The Division Director will communicate with you at the beginning of the season and throughout on various topics related to the BAYS season. In many cases, these communications are reminders about BAYS policies and rules. However, they also get involved in other activities, including:

- Validating your roster
- Approving game rescheduling requests
- Monitoring the competitiveness of sections and proposing section swaps
- Reviewing referee game reports and correcting incorrectly reported game scores
- Communicating with coaches regarding games that have lopsided scores with more than a +5 goal differential
- Adjudicating and assigning forfeits
- Resolving games that cannot be completed
- Resolving Zero tolerance matters and other sportsmanship issues

If you receive a communication from a Division Director and you are unsure how to address it or have questions, please reach out to your Age Group Coordinator for guidance.

#### **4. Game Management Matters**

The following items should be addressed in order to make for a smooth BAYS match:

- **Pre-game day**

- Reach out to your opposing coach (contact info on BAYS site) by at least the Wednesday prior to your Saturday or Sunday game (irrespective of whether you are the home or away team) and confirm the game date, time, field location, and jersey color. **You should also obtain from the opposing coach the COVID policies of the opposing town and share Natick’s policies. The BAYS policy is that the home team’s policies apply, even if stricter than the away team’s policies. For away games where Natick is the visiting team, the**

opponent's policies should be communicated to all Natick parents and they must be adhered to without exception. If there is a matter you need clarification or advice on, contact Natick Soccer's COVID-19 Safety Officer: Heather Bonner at [hbonner@naticksoccer.org](mailto:hbonner@naticksoccer.org).

- If there is a jersey color conflict, the home team must fix the situation by wearing a different color jersey or use pinnies. (Do you have enough pinnies?). If you are the home coach, the field link on our website (<http://naticksoccer.org/wp/nsc-fields/>) contains helpful field information for the opposing coach. For Cole Center and Elm Bank games, there are field maps on the website that show the field layout so you and the away team know which field you are playing on.
- Rosters- You'll need 2 printed copies of your official BAYS roster for the referee at every game. It's a good idea to print 25 copies of your roster at the beginning of the season and have them with you in your coaching bag/car. Other than signing the roster, updating player jersey numbers, or adding a coach, no manual edits are permitted by coaches as they have been validated by your Division Director. If you have changes to your roster, ensure you coordinate with our registrar, Marcus Janus ([mjanus@naticksoccer.org](mailto:mjanus@naticksoccer.org)), to obtain an updated, validated roster. Commencing with the Spring 2021 season, the name of your team on your roster must match the name of your team on the BAYS website for it to be a valid roster. If it does not match, contact Marcus Janus for an updated roster.
- **Game Day**
  - Rosters - Have your 2 BAYS rosters with you for the referee. You will be given a copy of the opposing team's roster. Scan it quickly and make sure it's not been manually adjusted. If you notice something odd, ask the referee. For example, if you are playing town A and there is a player from town B listed (and not a "double town" club like Dover-Sherborn) and there is no waiver number next to the player, they may not have been cleared to play. There are circumstances when this is ok (e.g. if a parent teaches in a different town than where they live, their children can play in either town) but the roster always needs to include a waiver number to indicate it has been approved by BAYS. Also, if for some reason none of the coaches listed on the printed roster are at the game, another Natick credentialed coach can coach the team. They simply should handwrite their name on the roster and show the referee their MYSA credential / lanyard.
  - MYSA Lanyard – Wear your Lanyard or, at least, have it with you. Referees should be checking that you have a MYSA lanyard and can choose to prohibit you from coaching that game and ask you to go to the parents side of the field if you don't have your Lanyard with you. If there is no coach with MYSA credentials available you may end up with a game forfeit.
  - Minimum number of players – The first table at <https://bays.org/book/playing-rules-and-regulations-bays-soccer-competition> lists the minimum number of players necessary to start a game. Make sure you have a mechanism to contact parents by phone to verify attendance.
  - Players' equipment – All players will be checked for unsafe items. Please make sure your players are familiar with the equipment rules at : <https://bays.org/book/law-4-players-equipmentjerseysshin-guardscastssplintsorthopedic-bracesjewelry>. Further, all players must be wearing shin guards in order to play. **In addition, masks are mandatory. Refer separate Covid-19 rules. The only permitted type of mask are those that loop over the ears. You may not wear masks that go around the whole head or wear gators. Finally, masks must be worn over the mouth and nose.**
  - Weather – Your match will be played in inclement weather unless you've been notified as follows:
    - For Home games, NSC will notify coaches via email, on our website, and through social media when the fields are closed. Immediately notify your opposing coach. Please note however, NSC will first look to reschedule your game onto a turf field in order to stick to the schedule wherever possible. Often times your game time may change as a result. We have found that in many cases, NSC home games are able to

be played even when opposing clubs have closed all their fields. So, it's also important in these situations to inform your opposing coach that the game may still be played and provide any updated information. Assuming you have already established an email thread with the coach, this should be easy to do.

- For Away games, your opposing coach should notify you via email if their fields are closed. You can also consult your opposing coach's club website but it's highly recommended you still confirm via email that the game is cancelled and will need to be rescheduled.
- For both Home and Away games, it's possible you arrive at the field and conditions have changed such that the field is potentially unplayable. In these situations, it is the referee's responsibility to determine if the field is playable or not. This is not a decision to be made by coaches.
- Where games need to be rescheduled due to unplayable fields, refer to BAYS Match Rule 8 at <https://bays.org/book/playing-rules-and-regulations-bays-soccer-competition> for BAYS guidance.
- Zero Tolerance – Don't get a zero tolerance violation! This is not the world cup! We want our BAYS games to be positive and enjoyable experiences for everyone. The example you set, with respect to sportsmanship, fair play, observance of our zero tolerance rules, and enjoyment of the game, will greatly influence your players and their families. Plus, you may not be asked to coach again if you incur repeated zero tolerance violations.
- **Post Game**
  - Score reporting – One of the coaches in each section will volunteer to be the Section Captain. Feel free to volunteer as it is very light lifting. A Section Captain's ONLY responsibility is to enter the scores for each game in their section into the BAYS website. You will be contacted by your Section Captain prior to the first game with instructions on how to report scores. Generally, it's as simple as sending an email to your Section Captain with your game score. It's a good idea to jot down the goals as they occur during the game in case there is a dispute with the opposing coach reporting a different score.
  - Referee Feedback - Provide referee feedback if you feel you want to.
  - Zero Tolerance or Lopsided score follow up – If you receive a ZT violation or your team won by more than 5 goals you will receive communications from representatives of Natick Soccer Club and/or your BAYS division director. Please cooperate.

## 5. Who to go to for follow up questions?

We understand this can be overwhelming for a first time BAYS coach. Many members of the NSC Board of Directors have BAYS experience and can assist you. The current board members and contact information can be found at: <http://naticksoccer.org/wp/2020-2021-board-of-directors/> .

The following individuals have specific BAYS responsibilities and are a good starting point (all contact information can be found at the link above):

- Age Group Coordinators
- Travel Director – Neil Knapik
- BAYS Board Member / Liaison – Dave Gordon / Matt Catania
- Game Reschedules (fields)– Ric Leeds
- Referee Assignor – Caleb Munson
- Registrar (rosters) – Marcus Janus
- President – Reuben Ackerman
- Vice President – Ken Boggis
- Safe Soccer Safety Officer – Meg Kiely
- **COVID-19 Safety Officer – Heather Bonner**