



## District Representative Guide

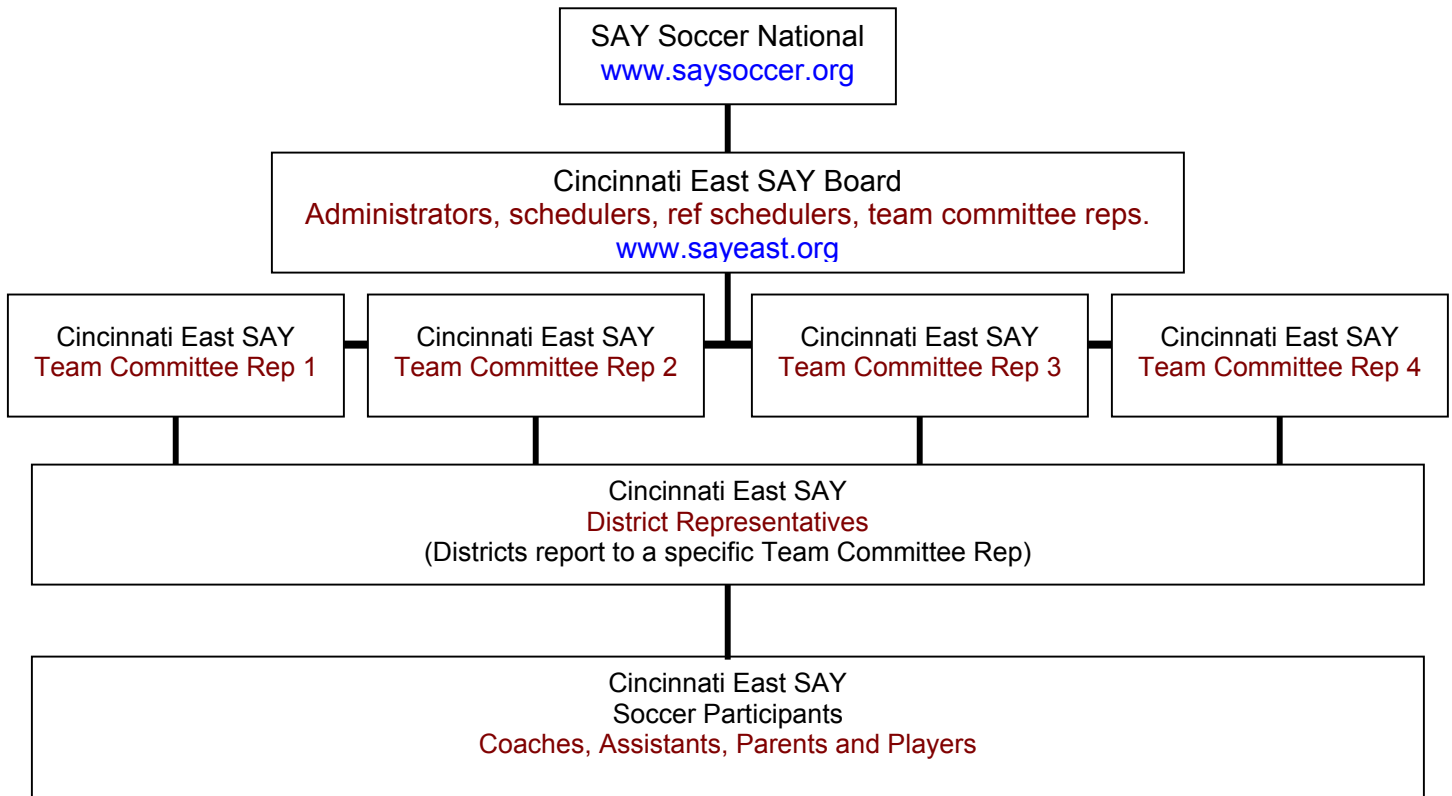
Spring Season 2007

The District Representative is one of the most important positions within this all-volunteer recreational soccer organization. Your knowledge of Cincinnati East SAY and SAY National rules, regulations, forms and deadlines are critical to our efforts to provide a fun, safe and fair soccer league each spring and fall season.

This guide is designed to help new District Representatives understand their duties. We know that communications are sometimes difficult within volunteer organizations. If ever you have a question, please contact your two organizational supervisors who are listed with contact information in the **Volunteers** section of Cincinnati East SAY website at [www.sayeast.org](http://www.sayeast.org):

- Your **Team Committee Representative** who supervises the activities of about 4-5 District Representatives within Cincinnati East SAY;
- The **President** of the Cincinnati East SAY Board of Directors.

### Organizational flow chart



## District Representative Skills

### Communications

One of the most important duties of a District Representative is to communicate with Cincinnati East SAY, and the parents and coaches of your school or neighborhood. District Representatives need sound communications skills. You also need computer skills for e-mail communications, website access, the review and creation of SAY Team Forms and to create various sign up notices for your school or neighborhood.

### Organization

You simply can't do this job if you aren't organized. The duties of a District Representative run throughout most of the calendar year. District Representatives who miss or are late for a series of seasonal deadlines create big problems for Cincinnati East SAY volunteers and the coaches, parents and players within their district.

### Diplomacy

Parents and coaches will consistently ask you for special favors that you cannot grant, including age variances, team selection, coach selection, etc. SAY Soccer and Cincinnati East SAY have strict rules on player eligibility, Age Division cut off dates, and the team selection process. These rules are enforced. Your Cincinnati East SAY colleagues, and a vast majority of your school's parents and coaches, will greatly appreciate your volunteer service. This is an important job. But, expect complaints. Some parents and coaches will just not understand or accept the reasons for various SAY league rules - no matter how well you explain them.

## District Representative First Duties

### ***#1) Identify yourself as a District Representative to your Team Committee Representative, the Cincinnati East SAY Board President and SAY National.***

Vital organizational meetings and District Rep. duties are conducted up to four months before the start of a season. Schools and neighborhoods must have a District Representative in place to participate in Cincinnati East SAY area soccer program. If you don't know who we are, we don't know who you are. District Reps must register themselves on the SAY national website [saysoccer.org](http://saysoccer.org); click on forms, then AreaDistrictBoard form for an electronic registration form system. Consider yourself as District Representative as "president" of your District (school or neighborhood). Once confirmed you are the official District Representative and will begin receiving information from SAY national and the Cincinnati East Area board.

### ***#2) Obtain and read the SAY National soccer rulebook.***

The SAY National rulebook is issued in July for two seasons. It contains two sections on Organizational Rules and Playing Rules with detailed rules for everything from player eligibility and team draws to proper conduct and game rules. District Representatives must be familiar with this rulebook in order to do their job.

### ***#3) Attend the Cincinnati East SAY area District Representative meetings.***

Cincinnati East SAY holds a MANDATORY meeting for District Representatives about three months before each season (usually in January for spring and July for fall). This is your **only** opportunity as a District Representative to learn about the Cincinnati East SAY area policies and seasonal deadlines, to ask questions, obtain official player, team and District registration forms and vote of area matters. District Representatives who miss this meeting (or don't send a representative) ALWAYS create problems that will impact your coaches, players and parents.

**#4) Repeat this sentence, “SAY soccer is based on a player’s age on July 31 of the current year - not their grade.”**

SAY recreational soccer (and Cincinnati East SAY) is based on a player’s age for several important reasons, including:

- Many Districts (schools or neighborhoods) cannot field full soccer teams within just one grade. Therefore, SAY Soccer’s Age Divisions combine two years: *Passers* (age 6 – 7); *Wings* (ages 8-9); *Strikers* (ages 10-11); *Kickers* (ages 12-13), *Minors* (ages 14-15) and *Seniors* (ages 16-18).
- The Age Divisions are the best way to ensure players are of similar size, weight and strength on the practice and game field.
- The SAY Soccer National insurance policy, of which you, your coaches, and your players are covered, is based on ages with strict age cut off dates. If players are in the wrong Age Division, their insurance coverage would be voided.

SAY National/Cincinnati East SAY has a rule and process for parents who wish to request an age variance exemption based on a player’s physical or mental challenges. Read and follow the SAY National Rulebook, closely.

**#5) Cultivate quality soccer coaches.**

Districts Representatives must identify head coaches for Team draws, and provide the name and phone number of their head coaches at least five weeks before the start of each season. Securing quality head coaches is one of your most important duties. Don’t wait until after you form teams on the hope that a parent will step up to the plate.

Prior soccer knowledge is not needed to be a good soccer head coach. Someone who is well organized, a good communicator and good with kids is much more important. Cincinnati East SAY has excellent coaching clinics for first time and veteran coaches.

**#6) Identify volunteers from your District to serve the Cincinnati East SAY area board.**

Cincinnati East SAY **requires** each district to provide volunteers to serve on the Cincinnati East SAY board, and adult referees. Cincinnati East SAY is an all-volunteer organization. Each District must provide volunteers for the system to work.

**#7) Cultivate for your District Representative successor.**

A training period of at least one season is very helpful for future District Representatives.

**#8) Understand and enforce strict rules on the formation of teams.**

District Representatives are often pressured by coaches and parents to bend the rules on the formation for teams to accommodate a myriad of what they consider as “special circumstances,” ranging from car pools to practice times, etc. Don’t bend the rules. The rules on team formation are strictly enforced.

As District Representative, you are responsible for conducting a blind, random draw under the SAY National Rules for non-competitive division: Passers and Wings. This team draw (Excel Rosters) is then reviewed by your Team Committee Representative who check ages and prior rosters and records for anomalies (ie, same teams season after season).

**Note #1:** Your Team Committee Representative must supervise the District draw for the two competitive divisions – Strikers and Kickers – if the District has more than one team in a division. Team Committee members may attend this portion of your draw, or make the draw themselves based on your excel sheets with players entered by age.

## **District Representative Checklist**

### **4 months before each season** (fall and spring)

- Identify yourself as a new District Representative with Team Committee Rep and Cincinnati East SAY President and SAY National for formal registration.
- Read the most current SAY National rulebook.
- Check Cincinnati East SAY website for seasonal schedule with District Rep meetings and deadlines.
- Plan and promote for your Districts soccer sign ups and player registrations.
- Identify your District's Cincinnati East SAY volunteers.

**Note #1:** Promote your sign ups heavily, especially for the fall season when there is little opportunity to communicate with parents over the summer before the final day to add or drop teams in early August (before school begins). Most Districts hold their fall soccer sign ups in May or June – before school lets out for the summer.

**Note #2:** Know SAY National player eligibility rules so you can explain them to parents and coaches.

### **3 months before each season**

- Hold your District's soccer sign ups and player registrations.
- Apply for any special age variances (see SAY National Rulebook).
- Secure 1 coach and 1 assistant per team before blind team draws. Promote coaching clinics, referee training and a MANDATORY coaches meeting as announced on seasonal calendar.
- Conduct a blind team draw according to specific SAY National rules. Cincinnati East SAY Team Committee Representatives must supervise draws for competitive age divisions – Strikers and above – if there are more than one team with that division.
- Send extra players or partial teams to player pool. See Player Pool contact information on SAY East website.

**Note #1:** Make sure you know all of the SAY player eligibility rules, including age cut-off dates and District attendance (school) or residence (neighborhood) and District transfer policies.

**Note #2:** Team Committee reps closely review all team rosters. They can spot ineligible players (age, school attendance and residency) and improperly conducted team draws from past records.

### **2 months before each season**

- Attend MANDATORY District Representative meeting
- Provide District Team Rosters (Excel spreadsheet), District Team form #101 (“blue sheet”), and District Registration form #102 (“white sheet”) to your Cincinnati East SAY Team Committee Rep. for review and approval. All forms available on SAY East website.
- Your Team Committee Rep must review and approve you team rosters. Make sure you contact your Team Committee Representative about ANY changes to your rosters at the appropriate time, including additions, drops and replacement players. See the SAY National Rulebook on this key issue.
- Your coaches should be given a copy of the final roster, and confirm (with formal signatures) that the players listed are correct.

**Note #1:** The District Team form #101 (“blue sheet”) are used by Cincinnati East SAY schedulers to create the game schedules that are handed out at a coaches' meeting right before the season. It is vital that you have the name and home phone number of each head coach on the District Team form.

**Note #2:** You may request 1 “block out” date per team each season for specified school activities such as school festivals, communions, and special events or holidays. This does not include extracurricular activities such as scouts, or coach requests. Schedulers try their best to honor these requests.

- Provide your District’s league fee check to the Cincinnati East SAY treasurer. **DO NOT PAY OR SEND YOUR DISTRICT FEE CHECK TO SAY NATIONAL.**

**Note #1:** Cincinnati East SAY (and many larger Areas) handles league fees based on the number of teams, not by the number for players. Cincinnati East SAY collects league fees from our Districts, then sends player fee funds on to SAY National. Check the website for a list of league fees per team by their age division. Questions? Contact your Team Committee Rep.

### **1 month before each season**

- Explain league polices, rules and deadlines to you District’s coaches and assistants, including: league Volunteer Forms and practice and game policies; game cancellation policies, the field hotline phone number; net responsibilities, referee fees responsibilities, league policies on game conduct for coaches, parents and players, etc.
- We recommend that each District hold their own internal coaches meeting to review responsibilities, rules and expected practice and game conduct.
- Attend and make sure your coaches attend the MANDATORY coaches meeting.

**Note #1:** As a District Rep., you will get a copy of all game schedules, which should be closely reviewed for accuracy (proper name and phone number of head coach), and mistakes (proper number of games, more than 1 game on 1 day, etc). This is the only opportunity to catch and correct any game schedule problems before the season.

### **Key league items to explain to coaches:**

**Fair Play:** Coaches need to teach their players about fair play, what constitutes a foul or dangerous play and improper conduct. This includes league rules for coaching and parent conduct such as no derogatory comments to players or refs, no parental sideline coaching and rules prohibiting parents from the team sideline or behind the goal or touchline.

**Nets:** Coaches are responsible to securing the goal nets at most, but not all, Cincinnati East SAY soccer fields. The game schedules have a system (marked with an asterisk) for designating what coaches are responsible for the setting up and taking down the nets each game day. Soccer nets are expensive. If the head coach cannot attend a game, make sure they pass this responsibility on to an assistant or parent.

**Referee fees:** Coaches are responsible for paying the referees before each game. Please have coaches bring the exact amount in cash. The ref fees are posted on the SAY East website. Most Districts Reps (treasurer) send coaches an advance check or reimbursement check for the referee fees each season. If the head coach cannot attend a game, make sure they pass this responsibility on to an assistant or parent.

**Game schedules:** Coaches must carefully review their game schedule at the MANDATORY Cincinnati East SAY coaches meeting. Look for mistakes, too few games, too many games – anything that could create a problem for their team or other teams.

**Note #1:** Some coaches transfer the game schedule to a team letter. Please have them triple check the accuracy of their game schedule for errors. This is a common source of mistakes for “missed” games.

**Game cancellation policy:** Cincinnati East SAY has a detailed game cancellation policy posted on its website. Please read this policy closely, and make sure coaches read and follow this policy during the season. Please let coaches know that the cancellation of a game should be the last resort. Do everything you can to play the game. Assign an assistant or parent if the

head coach can't make the game. Teams may play short. Coaches should lend players to help even out the numbers.

**VITAL NOTE #1:** The cancellation of a game is a big deal. It requires coaches to take specific, advance steps in notifying the opposing coach and referee scheduler, and making sure the nets are covered if they have set up or take down responsibilities.

**Cincinnati East SAY field status hotline:** Let the coaches know about the Cincinnati East SAY field status hotline (369-8036), which provided a recorded message on the status of game fields the evening and morning before each game date. Coaches and parents may call this hotline.

**Note #1:** Some games are cancelled, postponed or moved for reasons other than the weather. Check the field status hotline before each game so you may notify parents on changes due to floods, special school events and other such field anomalies.

### During each season

- Serve as a liaison between your Team Committee Rep and coaches regarding any issues or problems such as improper game cancellations, no shows and improper conduct.
- Enjoy the soccer season, rest.

Remember! SAY soccer is a recreational league. The emphasis is on making sure all players have fun while learning individual skills, teamwork, fair play and having fun. You set the tone. Cincinnati East SAY is here to help you.

## Fall Tournament Duties

### SAY Area and State Tournament Rules

Cincinnati East SAY holds a post-season tournament only in the fall season and only for the Strikers and Kickers age divisions. Teams qualify for this tournament based on their league standing from the regular season; the number is determined from the total teams in that Age/Division.

Cincinnati East SAY holds a single elimination tournament right after the fall regular season for the qualifying Strikers and Kickers teams. The Cincinnati East SAY Area champions (and sometimes the runner up) qualify for the SAY state tournament in the fall.

There are special rules and procedures for the SAY fall tournament, including final team rosters, player eligibility checks, advance tournament meetings, and rules for rostered player absences and the tracking of playing time.

Player eligibility for the post-season tournament is based on the final team roster as submitted at the beginning of the season. The coach and District Rep are responsible for making sure this team roster accurately reflects any player drops, additions, replacements or changes of any kind that may have taken place during the regular season.

Each fall season, a few Strikers and Kickers players are not allowed to participate in the fall tournament because their coach and/or a District Rep. did not properly register a late player, additional player or a replacement player.

**VITAL NOTE #1:** Read the SAY rules on player eligibility, including the addition and/or replacement of players. The eligibility of players for SAY post-season tournaments is based on the **final** team roster submitted by the District Representative to their Team Committee Representative at the **beginning** of the season. Any changes to the roster after submission must follow the procedures in the SAY National Rulebook. If a player is not on this **final** team roster, or has not been properly qualified during the regular fall season as an additional or replacement player, they will not be eligible to play in the post-season tournament. **This rule is strictly enforced!**