

AYSO × Cedars-Sinai – Spring 2026 ACL Injury-Prevention Initiative Launch

AYSO and Cedars-Sinai expand their partnership to deliver elite medical insights, injury-prevention tools, and safer training for U.S. youth soccer players.

TORRANCE, CA, UNITED STATES, January 20, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As youth soccer players, coaches, and families gear up for the Spring 2026 season, AYSO is introducing a national initiative to help improve mechanics and performance while potentially reducing the risk for anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injuries among young athletes.

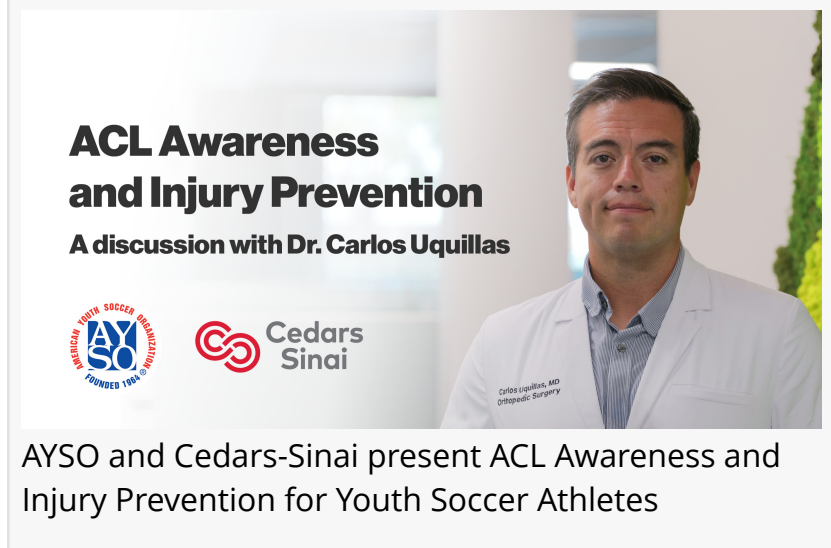
Developed in partnership with Cedars-Sinai [sports medicine](#) experts, the program delivers age-appropriate agility, strength, and movement exercises starting at age 8. The goal: introduce correct movement patterns at an early age to reduce the risk of ACL injuries during a critical developmental period when these injuries are on the rise.

Nationwide, ACL tears in adolescents have increased by nearly 70% over the past two decades, with youth soccer players—particularly girls ages 12–17—experiencing some of the highest rates.

“We are seeing a clear and concerning rise in ACL injuries among young athletes, particularly in



AYSO Classic Color Logo



AYSO and Cedars-Sinai present ACL Awareness and Injury Prevention for Youth Soccer Athletes



This renewed partnership with Cedars-Sinai sets a new national standard for youth athlete health and safety. AYSO players deserve the very best, and we're committed to delivering it."

Doug Ryan, President, AYSO National Board of Directors

youth soccer and particularly among female players," said Michael Banffy, MD, chief of Sports Medicine at Cedars-Sinai Orthopaedics. "The good news is that many of these injuries are preventable when proper movement patterns, strength, and neuromuscular control are introduced early."

By gradually integrating these exercises into regular warm-up routines, AYSO aims to keep players healthy, active, and confident on the field, while empowering coaches and families with practical tools to protect young athletes.

This initiative marks the most comprehensive youth injury-prevention effort in AYSO's 62-year history, bringing sports-medicine insights directly to the grassroots level at a moment when spring soccer participation is surging nationwide.

A New National Standard for Youth Soccer Health & Safety

"With the FIFA World Cup coming to North America, the entire soccer community is looking for youth sports-oriented organizations that elevate the game where it starts—at the grassroots," said Doug Ryan, president of the AYSO National Board of Directors. "This partnership with Cedars-Sinai sets a new national standard for youth athlete health and safety. It sends a clear message: AYSO players deserve the very best, and we're committed to delivering it."

Cedars-Sinai clinicians worked closely with AYSO to translate sports medicine into practical, easy-to-adopt tools for volunteer coaches. The program is designed for implementation across practices, warm-ups, and team sessions beginning this spring.

"Our goal was to create age-appropriate exercises that are simple, practical, and easy for coaches to integrate into everyday warm-ups," said Carlos Uquillas, MD, orthopaedic surgeon at Cedars-Sinai and a 10U AYSO coach. "By improving movement patterns early, we can help young athletes move better, perform better, and potentially reduce injury risk over time."

Cedars-Sinai's Role in Advancing Sports Medicine

Cedars-Sinai is recognized nationally and internationally for its work in sports medicine and is one of three FIFA-designated Medical Centres of Excellence in the United States.

In partnership with AYSO, Cedars-Sinai Orthopaedics brings experience supporting athletes across all levels of play—from youth sports to elite competition—with a focus on injury prevention, recovery, and long-term athlete health. Cedars-Sinai physicians regularly contribute clinical insight and leadership across professional leagues and international sporting events, including Major League Soccer, the U.S. Soccer Federation, and the FIFA World Cup.

The AYSO initiative reflects the work of Cedars-Sinai physicians, including:

- Carlos Uquillas, MD – Orthopaedic surgeon specializing in sports medicine and pediatric orthopaedics; lead clinical contributor to the development of AYSO's age-appropriate movement and injury-risk reduction exercises; and an active AYSO coach involved in coach education, program delivery, and research.
- Bert Mandelbaum, MD – Medical director of the FIFA Medical Centre of Excellence at Cedars-Sinai Orthopaedics; associate chief medical officer of Major League Soccer; lead orthopaedic surgeon for the U.S. Soccer Federation; and team physician for the U.S. Men's National Team, LA Galaxy, and Pepperdine University.
- Joshua Scott, MD – Primary care sports medicine physician and chief medical officer for the LA Galaxy; team physician for Angel City Football Club; and Venue Medical Officer for the 2026 FIFA World Cup in Los Angeles.

Together, these clinicians provide practical, evidence-based guidance that supports AYSO's goal of keeping young athletes healthy, active, and engaged in the sport.

What AYSO Families and Coaches Can Expect This Spring

- Launch of [AYSO.org/Health](https://www.ayso.org/Health), featuring curated health and wellness resources, research insights, and practical support for families and coaches.
- Educational videos featuring Cedars-Sinai and AYSO leaders exploring today's youth sports landscape and unveiling the AYSO ACL research initiative and its findings.
- Coaching manuals and training programs updated to include age-specific exercises seamlessly integrated into dynamic warm-up routines

This new initiative represents the next evolution in youth health, safety, and community access.

"More frequently, neuromuscular programs have been either too advanced or too time-consuming for practical integration and mass adoption," said Scott Snyder, AYSO senior director of Programs and Education. "Our new scaffolded approach breaks these concepts into simple, bite-sized exercises that any AYSO coach can deliver. Over time, this will be a game-changing effort for youth soccer."

###

About the American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO)

Founded in 1964 in Torrance, California, the American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) is the birthplace of organized youth soccer in the United States and a proud member of the U.S. Soccer Federation. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, AYSO has introduced millions of children to the game through its Six Philosophies—Everyone Plays®, Balanced Teams, Open Registration, Positive Coaching, Good Sportsmanship, and Player Development.

Today, AYSO is the world's largest soccer alum community, nurturing players who have gone on to compete at every level – from grassroots programs to the professional stage. As North America prepares to host the 2026 FIFA World Cup, AYSO continues to lead the way in making soccer accessible, inclusive, and community-driven. Each year, AYSO supports more than 150,000 games and serves nearly half a million players and volunteers across the U.S. [Find an AYSO club near you at AYSO.org.](#)

Frederick Heim

AYSO

FredHeim@AYSO.org

Visit us on social media:

[LinkedIn](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

[YouTube](#)

[TikTok](#)

[X](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/866640425>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.