



TOURNAMENT RULES OF PLAY

The rules of play shall be the FIFA “Laws of the Game” except as modified by US Soccer, US Youth Soccer, and South Texas Youth Soccer Association, unless modified by the tournament rules, and in the case of conflict the tournament rules below shall take precedence.

The tournament director shall decide all matters not explicitly covered by the rules that need to be addressed during the tournament. The judgement of the tournament director is final.

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1. PLAY FORMATS

Table 1 – Basic Play Formats

AGE GROUP	U08-U10	U11-U12	U13-U15	U16-U19
PLAY FORMAT*	7v7	9v9	11v11	
GAME LENGTH, per half**	20 mins	25 mins	30 mins	35 mins
HALF-TIME	5 minutes			
ROSTER LIMIT	12	16	22 (20 in Uniform)	
MINIMUM PLAYERS***	5	6	7	
NO HEADERS	Applies to U08 to U11		-	

* No build-out line for 7v7 play.

** If tournament play is suspended for any reason, a game will be deemed to be officially completed if at least the full first half has been played. The score at the time of the stoppage will be the final score.

*** Games may only start, or continue, if the minimum requirement of players is met.

2. GAME START

2.1 Scheduled Game:

Teams should arrive at their assigned field and be ready for inspection by a referee or tournament official at least 15 minutes prior to the scheduled game time. All games start at the time shown on the schedule. A FORFEIT may be awarded by the referee if at least one (1) team is not ready to play at the scheduled time.

2.2 Home Team:

The team designated as the home team shall supply the game ball and shall choose which half of the field to use for the start of the game.

3. PLAYERS

3.1 Player Eligibility:

All players must be:

- Listed on the official team roster used to complete online check-in
- Playing for only one (1) team throughout the event
- Possessing a player card valid for the seasonal year

All player cards must be issued by a youth soccer association affiliated with US Soccer. Player cards must be available for inspection by a referee or a tournament official at any time during the tournament.

3.2 Guest Players:

There is no limit on the number of guest players allowed. To be eligible, guest players must:

1. be listed on the official team roster AND
2. have provided a valid player card and a medical release during online team check-in

Tournament player cards for guest players, issued by a youth soccer association affiliated with US Soccer, are valid for use in the tournament.

3.3 Substitutions:

Unlimited substitutions are allowed, but all substitutions require the permission of the referee.

Substitutions are allowed:

1. Prior to a throw-in, by team in possession (if team in possession substitutes, opposing team can also substitute)
2. Prior to a goal kick, by either team
3. After a goal is scored, by either team
4. After a stoppage due to an injury (only injured player can be substituted)
5. After a player is cautioned (only cautioned player can be substituted)
6. At half time, by either team
7. During water breaks, by either team

3.4 Illegal Players:

Any player that is:

- not on the official team roster for the tournament OR
- found to be impersonating a player that is on the official team roster OR
- found to be older than the age group of the team on which they play

is defined as an illegal player.

A team that uses an illegal player, whether as player on the field, or as a substitute in uniform on the bench, shall be disqualified from the tournament and forfeit ALL games. The tournament director shall make the final determination in any investigation regarding the suspected use of an illegal player.

3.5 Player Uniforms:

All outfield players must wear a team uniform of a like color, that is distinguishable from the uniform of the opposing team and the referee. Each team should have an alternative color jersey, which may be used when there is color conflict with the opposing team. The team designated as the home team should change their jersey color, if deemed necessary by the referee. Each player should have an assigned number, which should be listed on the official roster, and should wear a jersey with that number. Each player on a team should have a different assigned number. The referee may approve the use of any alternative number for a player.

4. TEAM OFFICIALS & TEAM SPECTATORS

4.1 Team Officials:

All team officials must have an adult participation pass, or proof of an equivalent background check, to be allowed on the team side of the field, and it must be shown to the referee upon request. A maximum of four (4) team officials may be on the team side of the field.

4.2 Spectators:

There shall be a team side and a spectator side of the field. The team coach, or other designated team official, is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the spectators of their team are on the correct side of the field
- Controlling their behavior.

A referee may stop or abandon a game if the behavior of the spectators cannot be controlled and the game may be awarded by forfeit to the opposing team

5. SCORING

Table 2 - Scoring

RESULT	GAME RESULT POINTS	SCORING NOTES
WIN	6	-
TIE	3	-
LOSS	0	-
FORFEIT	10	Scored 3-0

Bonus points

- One bonus point per goal scored (maximum three bonus points per team per game)
- One bonus point for a shutout

6. ADVANCEMENT

6.1 Eligibility: Any team that forfeits a game during the tournament will not be eligible to advance to a final or be declared the champion.

6.1 Tie-Breakers:

Tie breakers shall not be used in qualifying games, and teams shall be awarded the points associated with the score of the tied game. Tie breakers shall be used to determine which teams advance to a final, as required, if teams finish qualifying play with an equal number of points and not all of the teams can advance. The following sequence of tie breakers shall be used to determine the advancing team(s):

1. Result of head-to-head game - not used if more than two (2) teams are tied
2. Goal difference - total goals for, minus total goals against, with no limit on goals scored or conceded per game.

3. Total goals against – with no limit on goals conceded per game.
4. FIFA penalty shoot-out

For finals only, ties shall be broken by a FIFA penalty shoot-out, immediately after regulation time (no overtime periods). Only players on the field at the end of regulation time may participate in the penalty shoot-out.

6.2 Advancement Criteria: The advancement of teams to a final will be decided by the results of the qualifying games for the respective bracket:

Table 3 – Scheduling Format & Advancement

BRACKET TEAM COUNT	REGULAR PLAY FORMAT	GROUPING OF TEAMS	QUALIFYING GAMES	ADVANCEMENT TO FINAL
4	Round Robin	Single group	3	2 teams with most points advance
5			4	No advancement /no final
6	Cross-over*	Single group	3	2 teams with most points advance
8	Round Robin	2 groups of 4	3	2 teams - 1 from each group - with most points advance

* Each team "crosses over" to play 3 of the teams in the group

Any team that forfeits a game during the tournament will not be eligible to advance to a final or be declared the champion.

6.3 Awards:

First and second place teams in each bracket will receive awards.

7. SAFE PLAY

7.1 Heading (U08-U11) Age Groups Only:

If in the opinion of the referee a player deliberately heads the ball in a game, an indirect free kick shall be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense. If the deliberate header occurs within the goal area, the indirect free kick shall be taken on the goal area line parallel to the goal line at the point nearest to where the infringement occurred. If in the opinion of the referee a player does not deliberately head the ball, then play should continue.

7.2 Player Equipment:

A referee, or a tournament official, may inspect a player prior to a game, or at any time when there is concern for the safety of the player. The player must meet the following requirements:

1. All players must wear suitable shin guards

2. All players must wear suitable cleats
3. No hard cast or hard splints allowed unless padded and approved by the Referee
4. No jewelry of any kind may be worn

7.3 Water Breaks:

Water breaks may be mandated by the tournament director, depending upon weather conditions, or may also be agreed by coaches from teams and the referee prior to the start of a game. The referee shall manage any mandated or agreed water breaks, which shall be taken in both halves of the game, and shall be of about 2 minutes duration, during which time the game clock CONTINUE to run.

7.4 Concussion Protocol:

If in the opinion of the referee (or assistant referee), a player has suffered a head injury or possible concussion:

- the match must be stopped IMMEDIATELY
- If able to leave the field on their own, the injured player must be escorted to their coach/trainer, who must be told that the player cannot return for the duration of the game
- If a coach/trainer is brought onto the field because the player is incapacitated, the referee must still notify the coach/trainer that the player cannot return to the game
- The referee crew must ensure, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES or due to appeals from team officials, that the impacted player is NOT allowed to return to the game.
- The referee is to note the suspected concussion on the game report, identifying the impacted player
- It is the responsibility of the coach/trainer and the player's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) to seek medical attention

The player with the suspected concussion will be suspended from play until tournament officials receive written clearance from a licensed physician stating that the player can return to play.

7.5 Inclement Weather:

The tournament director shall make all decisions related to playability of the fields, stoppages in play due to the proximity of lightning, restarting play, canceling play for the day, canceling the event, or any other issue related to the operation of the event. The judgement of the tournament director is final. All inclement weather announcements will be updated on the SCHEDULE web page of the tournament. Whenever possible, attempts will be made to complete the tournament, if necessary, by re-scheduling games, reducing length of games, eliminating finals, and any other means that are deemed practical by the tournament director within the tournament time constraints.

8. REFEREES, RED & YELLOW CARDS

8.1 Referees:

USSF referees shall be assigned to all games as listed in table 1

- The referee shall submit the official game report, signed by both teams, to the tournament office
- All referee decisions are final: no protests are permitted
- Referees are required to include on the official game report all disciplinary actions taken before,

during, or after a game, and to record details of any player removed from play due to a suspected concussion

8.2 Yellow and Red Cards:

Any player or coach that receives a red card (a direct red or a second yellow card) is suspended for at least the next game. If the direct red card is issued for violent conduct, then the player is suspended for all remaining games in the tournament. Any player that receives red cards in two (2) different games is suspended for all remaining games in the tournament. All cases of serious misconduct will be reported to the appropriate governing soccer association.

9. REFUND POLICY

9.1 Refunds:

A team withdrawing from the tournament after being accepted shall forfeit its entry fee. In the event of inclement weather, the tournament director has the authority to restructure or cancel the tournament. It will not be rescheduled for another date and no refunds will be issued once game play has begun. If the tournament is cancelled prior to the start of play, a refund less expenses will be distributed.