

Rules and Regulations

Update: 7/1/2026

LAWS OF THE GAME:

All games will be played under international rules (FIFA) as modified below.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

1. Awards will be given to the 1st and 2nd place teams in all age groups at the completion of the championship game at the tournament headquarters or on the field upon which the game was played.
2. The Tournament Committee, Directors, and any of its sponsors or partners will not be responsible for any expenses incurred by any team or club if the tournament is cancelled in whole or in part, nor will any refunds be made. Event cancellation insurance can be purchased separately through [ViCoverage](#).
3. The Tournament Directors have the right to combine age groups, adjust division formats, modify schedules, relocate matches for a successful event.
4. The Tournament Directors have the final authority in the interpretation of the tournament rules and operation.

COMMUNICATION:

Coaches, club administrators and/or team managers are responsible for ensuring there is accurate contact information (phone and email) in (GotSport/Playmetrics) for a minimum of 2 team representatives to be used for official tournament communication. All relevant tournament communication will be sent out via (GotSport/Playmetrics) including acceptances, brackets, schedules, registration, cancellations, delays, general information, etc. The tournament is not responsible for missed communication resulting from inaccurate contact information, email filtering, and/or team's failure to monitor communication sent via GotSport/Playmetrics.

TEAM ELIGIBILITY:

Rosters:

- 4v4- Max of 10 Players
- 5v5- Max of 10 Players
- 7V7- Max of 16 Players
- 9V9- Max of 18 Players
- 11V11- Max of 22 Players

If teams are playing League Games in the event, league rules will supersede the event rules for Roster Size.

Guest Players: Guest players are permitted as outlined in the guidelines below. The maximum number of guest players allowed is based on the team's game format:

- 4v4: Maximum of 2 guest players
- 5v5: Maximum of 2 guest players
- 7v7: Maximum of 3 guest players
- 9v9: Maximum of 4 guest players
- 11v11: Maximum of 5 guest players

Guest Player: A player may be officially rostered to **one** (1) team and may serve as a guest player for **one** (1) additional team during the event, for a maximum of **two** (2) teams total. Under no circumstances may a player participate for more than two teams during the event.

To be eligible as a guest player, the player must:

- Be listed on the approved roster of their primary team and on the approved guest player roster of the guest team.
- Meet the age group eligibility requirements for both teams.
- Have all required documentation and a valid player pass uploaded and verified in GotSport for both teams prior to participation.
- Comply with all applicable State Association and event eligibility requirements.

Trapped Players: U14 teams may roster a maximum of five (5) trapped players, whether rostered or guest players, provided that:

- Their league has approved them to compete at the U14 age group.
- They have a valid State Approved Player Card uploaded in GotSport.

All trapped players count toward the maximum of five (5) guest players per team.

No roster changes will be permitted after a team roster has been approved at tournament registration. All teams must be currently registered with their State or National Association. No special formed all-star teams will be permitted. Each player must have a valid USSF/USYSA ID card.

AWARDS: 8U-19U Awards for Champion and Finalist

DURATION OF GAME:

15U-19U	2-35 minute halves
13U-14U	2-30 minute halves
11U-12U	2-30 minute halves
8U-10U	2-25 minute halves

If teams are playing League Games in the event, league rules will supersede the event rules for match length if necessary.

U8 (5v5) MODIFIED RULES:

General Rules:

- A game may end early if a team reaches a 10 goal advantage.
- No offside rule.
- Sideline restarts are kick-ins, not throw-ins.
- Opponents must give adequate distance for all restarts.
- Substitutions are unlimited and can be made on the fly.
- The exiting player must leave the field before the substitute player enters.

Goalkeeper Rules:

- No punting permitted.
- Goalkeepers may handle the ball within designated space.
- Goalkeepers must distribute the ball by throwing/rolling it into play.
- No handling deliberate pass-backs from teammates permitted.

Fouls & Misconduct:

- No slide tackling permitted.
- Sliding to save/block a ball is permitted if no contact with another player is made.
- Fouls inside the penalty area will be a penalty kick.
- Referee decisions are final.

Playoffs:

- Pool play games may end in a tie.
- Semi-final and championship games tied at the end of regulation will go to shoutouts.
- Shootout Procedures:
 - Three shooters per team.
 - If still tied, sudden death kicks follow.
 - Every eligible player must kick before any player takes a second kick.

9U-12U MODIFIED RULES:

9U-10U teams: Off-side will not be enforced unless the referee determines the offside position is directed, intentional, and/or persistent in an effort to gain an unfair advantage (Law11). Defending teams will be awarded an indirect free kick from the offside players' position.

9U-10U teams: All 9U-10U matches will be played with a build out-line. The build out line is located halfway between the top of the penalty area and the midline (In the event a complex does not have build out lines the midway line may be used). With any possession of the goalkeeper (in their hands) or goal kicks, the opposition must move behind the build out line.

9U-10 teams: If a goalkeeper punts or drop kicks the ball, an indirect free kick should be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense. If inside the goal area, an indirect free kick should be awarded from a spot outside the goal area closest to where the infraction occurred.

8U-11U teams: Intentionally heading the ball in these matches shall result in an indirect free kick awarded to the opponent at the spot of the infraction. If inside the goal area, an indirect free kick should be awarded from a spot outside the goal area closest to where the infraction occurred.

UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT: Home team must wear their light uniform and provide the game ball. Each player must wear shin guards and an official uniform with a number on the back.

START OF THE GAME: The home team will choose the side of the field they wish to defend. The away team will get the kick-off to start the game.

SUBSTITUTION: The following rules for substitution will be followed: A modified FIFA rules of substitution will be followed for all games. Any team may substitute at any dead ball based on the referee's approval. **Substitution is unlimited. If teams are playing League Games in the event, league rules will supersede the event rules for substitutions.**

FAILURE TO SHOW – FORFEITS:

A minimum of seven players for 11v11, six players for 9v9, five players for 7v7 and four players for 5v5 constitutes a team. A five (5) minute grace period will be extended beyond the kickoff time before a forfeit will be declared. The Tournament Directors will make the final decision if a forfeit shall be allowed depending upon extenuating circumstances that may have prevented a team from making the game on time. If a forfeit is determined, the winning team will be awarded a score of 3-0 per FIFA. In the event a team withdraws from the event prior to the event and we can not find a replacement team or do not have enough time to reschedule the division, all teams who were supposed to play the team who withdrew will receive a 0-0 draw.

FAILURE TO COMPLETE A MATCH - FORFEITS:

Failure to complete a match or a team leaving the field before the match has concluded will result in a forfeit. If the match is tied at the time of the forfeit, the non-forfeiting team will be awarded a 3–0 victory. If the non-forfeiting team is already leading, the score at the time of the forfeit will stand, provided it is greater than 1–0.

INELIGIBLE PLAYERS - FORFEITS:

In the event that a team is found to have ineligible players and a forfeit is determined, the winning team will be awarded a score of 3-0 per FIFA. The team who forfeits a match will have all of their matches recorded as a 3-0 loss regardless of the actual outcome and the forfeiting team will not be eligible to advance to the semi-finals or finals.

Decisions concerning forfeits will be at the sole discretion of the Tournament Director.

CODE OF CONDUCT/EJECTION

The harassment of the officials from coaches, spectators, or players will not be tolerated.

Player: Any player or coach ejected from a game will be ineligible to participate in the team's next game. No substitution will be permitted for an ejected player. Anyone fighting can be subjected to ejection from further tournament participation. Passes will be retained by the tournament and returned to the coach of the team after the player has sat out their suspension. The coach is responsible for picking up the player's pass after their suspension is completed.

Coach: In the event a coach is ejected from a game, he/she must leave the complex and not return until the conclusion of the team they were coaching completes their next game. A coach may not coach another team until the suspension has been completed. In the event a coach has been ejected and the game cannot be completed the score will be recorded as a 0-6 forfeit.

Parent: In the event a parent is removed from the sideline, he/she must leave the complex and not return until their next game. Coaches will be held responsible for the behavior of their fans. If a coach can't control the behavior of parents of their own team, the game may be terminated.

DISSENT: IN ACCORDANCE WITH FIFA POLICY, there shall be no dissent between players, coaches or fans, and the referee. Questioning a referee's call is considered dissent. All coaches are urged to solicit the support of their fans in monitoring and enforcing this policy. Coaches will be held responsible for the behavior of their fans. Any player or coach ejected from a game will be ineligible to participate in the next scheduled game. For very serious offenses the player or coach may be declared ineligible for more than one game.

Sideline Organization:

1. Both teams will sit on the same side of the field. Only coaches and trainers may stay on the player's sideline.
2. Spectators are permitted on the opposite side of the field from the coaches and players AND SHOULD BE DIRECTLY ACROSS FROM THEIR TEAM and are limited to being in the designated area from the penalty box to the penalty box.

No spectators are allowed behind the goal areas.

PROTESTS:

Any protest must be presented in writing to the tournament headquarters within one hour of the completion of the game, and must be accompanied with a \$500 bond, which will be returned only if the protest is upheld. The referee's judgment will not be a basis for protests.

SCORING FORMAT: Official scoring is held by the tournament director at headquarters and not online. Three (3) points will be awarded for a win, one (1) point for a tie, and zero (0) points for a loss.

In the event of ties in total point standings, the following sequence will be used:

1. Head to head competition between teams that are tied

2. Best goal difference for all games - up to a max of +/-6 per game
(Example: Team winning 6-1 would only be the max of +5)
3. Fewest goals allowed (Max of 6)
4. Goals For (Max of 6)
5. Most Shutouts
6. Coin Toss

If more than two teams are tied, the sequence below will be followed until a team is eliminated/advanced. The remaining teams will then restart the sequence at #1 below until the tie is broken.

The following tie breaker sequence will be used:

1. Head to Head (will only be used when there are two teams remaining)
2. Best goal difference for all games - up to a max of +/-6 per game (Example: Team winning 6-1 would only be the max of +5)
3. Fewest goals allowed (Max of 6)
4. Goals For (Max of 6)
5. Most Shutouts
6. Coin Toss

Example 1: (4 Team Bracket) Three teams have 6 points and have all defeated each other. Team 1 has a goal differential of +6, Team 2 is +4 and Team 3 is +2. Team 1 is 1st, Team 2 is 2nd, and Team 3 is 3rd.

Example 2: (4 Team Bracket) Three teams have 6 points and have all defeated each other. Team 1 has a goal difference of +4, Team 2 is +4 and Team 3 is +2. Team 3 is eliminated and is 3rd; Team 2 defeats Team 1 therefore Team 2 is 1st and Team 1 is 2nd.

Example 3: (4 Team Bracket) Three teams have 6 points and have all defeated each other. Team 1 has a goal difference of +4, Team 2 is +2 and Team 3 is +2. Team 1 advances and is 1st; Team 3 defeats Team 2 therefore Team 3 is 2nd and Team 2 is 3rd.

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TIE BREAKER, SEMI-FINALS & FINALS

Games that are tied at the end of regulation time will end as a tie in preliminary rounds. In the event of a tie in a semi-final or final game, kicks from the spot will be taken as listed below to determine a winner.

TIE BREAKERS – Kicks from the Mark:

In the event that penalty kicks must be used to determine a winner in the semi-final or final rounds the format will be as follows:

- (a) Each team will select (5) players to kick - only players on the field at the end of the game may be selected
- (b) Team will alternate kicks - first team to kick will be determined by the referee's coin flip.
- (c) If the score remains tied after five (5) kicks, teams will alternate kicks one at a time until a winner is determined.
- (d) All eligible players must kick before any eligible player can repeat.
- (e) Keepers may be changed after any shot.

Communication to teams:

The tournament will use one or all 3 ways to communicate to all teams and spectators -- Email or text message from the event via the REGISTRATION System, Phone Call from tournament official or club official, website/social media update.

Security Plan

Tournament Officials: All staff in identifying apparel with 2-way radios.

Field Marshals: with 2-way radios.

Police: Onsite during event hours.

Trainers: Onsite during event hours.

Weather Monitoring: Onsite Radar, Onsite Lightning Detector

Inclement Weather Policy

Coach/Manager: In the event a game needs to be stopped due to inclement weather, lightning, etc., one or all the following methods will instruct you:

Notified by tournament official and or field marshals

Referees on the field

Air Horns/Police sirens

Event Facility Weather System

The tournament director will continue update the manager and coach via email, text message and the tournament website.

In the event of **Lightning** the tournament will wait 30 minutes after the lightning strike before the games will be restarted. **DO NOT LEAVE THE COMPLEX!**

In the event of a **Severe Thunderstorm Warning**- all fields will be cleared until the local National Weather Service lifts the warning. **DO NOT LEAVE THE COMPLEX (unless otherwise notified by the Tournament Director)**

In the event of a **Tornado Warning**- all fields will be cleared until the local National Weather Service lifts the warning.

Extreme Cold/Heat Conditions:

The following US Soccer weather guidelines are recommendations used as guidelines for extreme cold and heat. Please see links below for these recommendations. The Event Directors reserve the right to make final weather related decisions.

US Soccer Warm Weather Recommendations

US Soccer Cold Weather Recommendations

Re-Entry on the Fields: The air horns/sirens will sound again or a tournament official will inform you when everything is "all clear." You should then return to the field. If it is necessary for you to check with Tournament Headquarters regarding this situation, we ask that only one team official go to the headquarters tent. If your team/player is on the field while the "prior to the ALL CLEAR" your team may be asked to leave the tournament and all your games will be forfeited.

No refund is given.

INCLEMENT WEATHER/CANCELLATIONS:

The tournament committee has the right to shorten and/or cancel matches due to climatic conditions or other acts of nature, which are beyond our control.

In the event that severe weather delays the tournament, all games which are at least at halftime (first half complete) will be considered a complete match.

All games which have not reached halftime will complete the current half (first) only if weather and field availability permits. In the event the current half (first) can not be completed the game will be considered a 0-0 tie.

In the event Semi-Finals or Finals cannot be played due to severe weather the following tie-breaker format will be used to declare champions. ***Please note this for inclement weather only!***

- 1 If a field is available and playable- Kicks from the Mark - 5 players per team; if still tied, sudden victory death kicks from the mark.
- 2 Head to head competition between teams that are tied
- 3 Totals Points
- 4 Best goal difference for all games - up to 6 per game
- 5 Fewest goals allowed (Max of 6)
- 6 Coin Toss

TOURNAMENT COMPLIANCE:

The event has the right to deny participation, at any time, if your team falls out of compliance. This includes, but is not limited to, housing, payment, team check-in, team behavior and all other rules stated in this document..

The Tournament Director(s) reserves the right to make changes to all event rules. All decisions from the Tournament Director(s) will be final.

HOUSING REQUIREMENTS

All teams that are selected for participation are **required** to make hotel reservations for their entire team through the reservation system provided by the tournament. Reservations are required at one of the designated tournament hotels and must be booked through the system. In the event your team does not utilize the housing group, your team may not be accepted into the tournament.

Our travel partner Site Search is committed to providing you with the most memorable experience possible. Realizing hotel accommodations play a major role in your experience, we have partnered with area hotels to offer you the best options and prices.

Our housing manager will reach out to you within **two (2)** business days of applying to the event with a housing link to book reservations.

Each family from your team will then have 5 days within creating your block to guarantee all reservations.

If you are a local club (**within 90 miles**) and do not require any accommodations, please let me know. Please understand commuting teams will not receive special scheduling requests based on commute distance. **** The event uses the office address for the club to determine the distance of travel for the team.**

Your team is NOT in compliance with the Stay to Play policy until a minimum of 7 reservations are made for all 8U-12U teams and 10 reservations are made for all 13U-19U teams.

For your team to be in compliance with the tournament rules, your team would need to meet the minimum housing requirement. Teams may be conditionally accepted prior to their housing being booked.

WITHDRAWAL/CANCELLATION POLICY & REFUND POLICY

Team Withdrawal

Before Acceptance: Full refund of the registration fee, minus processing fees, if your team withdraws before acceptance into the tournament.

After Acceptance but Before Flights are Posted:

- **Option 1:** Defer your registration fee to another event within 12 months. Additional fees for the new event may apply.
- **Option 2:** Transfer your registration fee to another team in your club. Additional fees for the new event may apply.

After Flights are Posted: All sales are final. No refunds or credits will be issued.

Event Cancellation Due to Weather

Before Tournament Start:

- **Option 1:** Teams that purchased event cancellation insurance from U.S. Sports Club Insurance (USSCI) through GotSport may be eligible for a refund. Refunds are based on the number of games played versus those guaranteed. Details can be found in the insurance policy.
- **Option 2:** If the event is canceled and you did not purchase insurance, you will receive a credit of up to 50% of the registration fee, minus processing fees to be used at another event within 12 months.

After Tournament Start: Teams that purchased event cancellation insurance may be eligible for a refund. Refunds are based on the number of games played versus those guaranteed. Details can be found in the insurance policy. No refunds or credits will be issued to teams that did not purchase insurance.

Event Policies

Housing Policy: All tournaments are STAY TO PLAY events. Teams are required to book hotels through the event housing service.

Credit Card Authorization: By applying with a credit card, you authorize Kings Hammer SBD Event Management to charge the payment at any time up to and including the application deadline.

REGISTRATION CRITERIA

Team Check-in/Registration will be through GotSport prior to the designated cut off date listed on the web site.

A. US Teams Check-in/Registration Requirements

1. Copy of official roster; either USYS State Association, US Club Soccer, or other USSF approved governing body.
2. Copy of Guest Player Roster (if applicable)
 - Roster provided by team's state association, or
 - Roster provided by tournament (see registration information on tournament website)
 - Guest Players may be written on the official team roster with Player Name and Date of Birth.
3. Permission to Travel paperwork
 - Not Required for US Club Soccer teams
 - **For TN Events: Required for all USYS teams that are not from the host state association.**
 - For KY/OH Events: Teams traveling to USYS Sanctioned Tournaments and events outside of the Midwest Regional MUST submit a Permission to Travel Request via GotSport prior to traveling/participating. The Midwest Region includes: Kentucky, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota.
4. Copies of player / coach passes; either USYS State Association or US Club Soccer
 - Copies of player passes for guest players if applicable
 - Originals may be requested by referees prior to each game

B. International Teams Check-in/Registration Requirements

1. For a team from any other nation:
 - Players must present passports at registration or, if from a nation that the United States does not require a passport, proof of entry into the United States that is required by the United States.
 - Teams are required to have and present player picture identification cards.
 - If required, the team shall have a completed form from its Provincial or National Association approving the team's participation in the tournament.
2. Copy of official roster from governing organization
3. Copy of Guest Player Roster form (if applicable)
 - Roster provided by team's state association
4. Permission to Travel paperwork
 - If required by the National Federation
5. Copies of player/coach passes from local or national governing federation
 - Copies of player passes for guest players if applicable
 - Originals may be requested by referees prior to each game

ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA

The following criteria are used by the event staff when selecting teams to participate in this event.

1. Team Payment has been received
2. Team Hotel has been booked through the event housing coordinator
3. Team level of play is based on the following listed below...

Current League , State Cup Results, Current and Past League Results , Previous Calendar Year
Tournament results

FLIGHTS CRITERIA

Please make sure that your GotSport information is correct- your head coach (the one coaching the games) and your team name. You can log into GotSport to change what you need. This will ensure that we can try to accommodate any coaching conflicts. This **MUST** be completed before flights are posted.

Please click [here](#) to assign your primary coaching assignments: Coaching Conflicts

Before you request a change in flight placement, please note that the tournament committee has done their due diligence in researching the following:

- Current Registered League play
- Current/Past League play results
- Past Tournament results
- Comparison to other teams in Event
- Application information
- Requested bracket

If you believe your team has been bracketed incorrectly, please email the event staff with specific results that support your argument by our deadline stated in the flight email. Please include the following in the email:

- Team name, age group/gender and current flight.
- Scores against other teams in the event or scores from leagues or recent tournaments.

Please don't include anything with "rankings". We especially look at actual scores and events that teams have attended this fall/winter/spring. These are the most accurate indicators of your team's level. Again, be specific please. It is not our goal to set anyone up for failure or to stack the deck in any team's favor, we want the best competition for all of the teams in our event.

*Please note this does NOT guarantee a change in flight, the final decision is at the discretion of the tournament committee.

SCHEDULE CRITERIA

Please let the event staff know by submitting an email if any of the following have appeared on your schedule:

- A direct coaching conflict within this event for coaches who coach multiple teams (up to two (2) teams). If you are coaching more than two (2) teams you must have an assistant coach.
- A major mistake (a team playing two games at the same time or back to back games).

Although we know life happens but we simply cannot honor requests for the following reason as there are just too many:

- Travel Distance: Event staff will attempt to accommodate a teams traveling distance to and from the event, it is not guaranteed.
- Personal reasons (weddings, etc).
- Non-event specific coaching conflicts not related to this event (another team you are coaching is playing elsewhere).

All support ticket emails must be made before schedules become final.