

Copa 9's Soccer Cup | Rules | January 25-26, 2025



1. TOURNAMENT HEADQUARTERS

United Soccer Cup
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2. US SOCCER PLAYER DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

The United Soccer Cup will incorporate the US Soccer Player Development Initiatives, which will include:

- Birth Year Registration & Age Group
- Small Sided Standards
 - 9v9 for U11 & U12
- 9v9 no heading allowed

3. AGE DETERMINATION

Age Division	Birth Year	Maximum Roster	Guest Player Limit
U-11	1/1/2014	16	5
U-12	1/1/2013	16	5

4. ELIGIBILITY

Participation in the United Soccer Cup is open to accepted teams consisting of players meeting the age limit and roster size of the specified division. Players must align with the new birth year standard, as defined by US Soccer guidelines. A team using guest players may have no more than four (4) to six (6) loan/guest players depending on age group.

Except for foreign/international teams, competitive teams must be registered with a National Soccer Association affiliated with US Soccer/US Youth Soccer and present a valid State roster. For these teams, the only acceptable proof of age will be a valid US Soccer/US Youth Soccer, State, or National registration card that includes a signature and a photograph of the player. Players on these competitive teams who do not present valid player passes will not play.

The recreational team must produce, at registration, a roster signed by an official of the club (which club must be affiliated with US Youth Soccer or some other national soccer organization) of which they are affiliated and

played, listing each player, including their date of birth, and must provide, at registration, a birth certificate or state or nationally certified player pass, for each such player evidencing that player's eligibility to play on that team based on birth date.

A player may compete for only one team participating in the tournament. In the event a player is found to have played for more than one team in the tournament, the second team on which the player played in the tournament shall be deemed as the team that fielded an ineligible player. Any team fielding an ineligible player will be disqualified from the tournament and their tournament fee will be forfeited.

Teams participating in the tournament must provide a medical release for each player in a format as required by the Tournament Committee and as posted on the tournament website. These authorizations shall be presented at registration and a copy kept by the team at the field available for presentation in the event of an emergency.

Where required by the State or National Association for which a team/player is registered, all competitive teams/players traveling from within the United States but outside the State of Florida must have a copy of their Permission to Travel Forms, approved and signed by a USSF or duly authorized State or National Association representative.

U11-U12 age group teams will play 9v9 and roster size cannot exceed 16 players. 5 guest players are permitted

The above roster sizes are for the entirety of the tournament in that the same players must be on the maximum tournament roster for the entirety of the tournament. Players may not be listed on more than one tournament roster for the tournament. The Tournament Committee must approve teams applying to "play up" an age group.

5. LAWS OF THE GAME

All games shall be played by FIFA Laws, except as specifically modified by these rules. Law 11, Offside, will be enforced in all divisions.

6. SUBSTITUTIONS

Substitutions will be made with the referee's permission.

7. PLAYING UP GUIDELINES

Players up to 8U age groups (born in 2015 or later birth years) will be allowed to roster for up to 1 year.

Players in the 9U to 14U age groups (2010 to 2015 birth years) will be allowed to roster for up to 2 years, subject to the restriction that no player may participate in an FYSA-sanctioned competition in which heading is permitted before their 11th birthday.

8. HEADING GUIDELINES

A. Deliberate heading is not allowed in age groups U12 and younger

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- B. If a U12 or younger player deliberately heads the ball in a game, an indirect free kick should be awarded to the opposing team from the spot of the offense.
- C. If the deliberate header of a U12 or younger player occurs within the goal area, the indirect free kick should be taken on the goal line parallel to the goal line at the nearest point to where the infraction occurred.

9. FIELD AND GAME EQUIPMENT

Orthopedic casts are not permitted; however, soft braces can be worn with written approval from a doctor, and judgment as to safety is at the discretion of the referee, the ultimate authority is the referee.

- A. It is the policy of FYSA that no player be allowed to wear ANY jewelry while participating in any FYSA-sanctioned match. The only exception that may be allowed is a medical alert bracelet or necklace when taped to the body. The referee shall decide as to the safety of the player and the referee's decision is final.
- B. No player may participate while wearing a hard cast.
- C. Player equipment must conform to FIFA rules. All players will wear (under the socks).
- D. Teams will wear uniforms of matching design and color with a minimum of six (6) inch numbers affixed to the back of the uniform shirt. These numbers shall coincide with those listed on the team's roster.
- E. Where uniform colors are similar, the designated home team will change colors. The home team is listed first on the schedule.
- F. Both teams will take the same side of the field. All other supporters will take the opposite side. Only three (3) carded team officials are permitted on the sidelines with their players.
- G. No one is permitted behind either goal/end line.
- H. Spectators must remain behind the spectator line and coaches must remain in the coaches' area.
- I. In the event the assigned assistant referees fail to appear, the referee must find suitable assistant referees.
- J. The home team will provide the game ball.

10. DURATION OF GAMES

Age Group	Ball	Length	Group Play	Playoffs
U11/U12	4	2x25	No overtime. PKs to determine extra point	25 min. halves No OT. Direct to PKs

- A. **Water Breaks:** Will be mandatorily provided at the midpoint of each half of regulation play during a natural stoppage in play. They will be no shorter than 1 minute in duration and the game clock will continue to run.
- B. **Mercy Rule:** All games will be subject to a mercy rule of an 8-goal differential at any time after the completion of the first half.

11. GAME AND SCORE REPORTING

- A. The Head Referee will ensure that the game report forms are properly completed and presented to the Site Director after each game. Uniform numbers must be accompanied by player names if a card is issued.

- B. The Head Referee will ensure that the correct score for each game is reported to the Site Director after each game.

12. FAILURE TO SHOW AND FORFEIT

- A. A team shall be allowed a fifteen (15) minute grace period after the scheduled kick-off time before the match is awarded to their opponent. A minimum of six (6) players is required for agesm U11 and U12.
- B. In no case shall a team that forfeits or does not show up for a game be declared a division winner. If an apparent division winner forfeits a game or does not show up for play, the division team with the next-best record shall be named the division winner.
- C. A forfeit in the preliminary round (group play) will be awarded as three (3) points for the win and a maximum of 4 goals scored. If the score is 0-0 at the time of the forfeit, the score will be recorded as 4-0.
- D. Should a referee call the game and/or be deemed abandoned, the winning team will be awarded three (3) points for the win and a maximum of 4 goals scored.
- E. Forfeits in the play-off rounds shall be recorded as 1-0 games.

13. ABANDONED GAME

If a game is abandoned, meaning the referees must cancel the game while in progress due to actions or behavior of players, coaches, or spectators, the score will be recorded as follows:

- A. If either team is at fault for the abandonment of the game, the team at fault shall forfeit the match and the score will be recorded as a 4-0 win for the opposing team.
- B. If both teams are at fault the score will remain as is at the time of abandonment.

14. NO PROTESTS SHALL BE ENTERTAINED

- A. Decisions by referees may not be appealed.

15. CONDUCT

The United Soccer Cup will have a Discipline Committee of no less than three (3) members. The Discipline Committee will review and rule on all reports of unacceptable conduct by players, managers, coaches, referees, spectators, etc. using the Florida Youth Soccer Association standards as set by Rule Section 502.

- A. Players, coaches, and spectators are expected to conduct themselves within the spirit of the Law as well as the letter of the Law. Displays of temper or dissent are cause for ejection from the game and surrounding field area and/or the Tournament. Repeated violations may result in the suspension of the team from the Tournament as decided by the Tournament Director.
- B. A player, coach, or team official ejected from a game shall receive an automatic minimum one (1) game suspension regardless of the cause of the ejection. Duration of suspension is cumulative based on further misconduct after receiving the initial dismissal. The Discipline Committee shall determine the appropriate sanction for the action resulting in the ejection, Said sanction will be determined and communicated to the affected parties as soon as practicable, but no later than before the next scheduled game in which the offending party would have an opportunity to participate, which is no sooner than two games after the game in which the offending party was ejected since there is at least a one-game automatic suspension.
- C. Any player, coach, team official, or parent exhibiting or threatening violence to anyone (player, coach, referee, spectator, or Tournament official) will be grounds for immediate expulsion from the tournament, such determination to be made by the appropriate referees and tournament officials. When serving a suspension, the suspended party

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must check in and remain at the site tent through the duration of the game or may be asked to leave the park.

- D. All players and managers/coaches shall be subject to Florida Youth Soccer Association Section 502 – Discipline and Sanctions.
- E. Depending on the severity of the unacceptable conduct, the Discipline Committee may recommend the suspension of up to the duration of the tournament with further disciplinary action by the appropriate National and State Association, Federation, or any other USSF-affiliated organization. The Discipline Committee recommendations will be available to the affected parties no later than before their next scheduled game.
- F. By the US Youth Soccer Tournament Hosting Agreement, all red and yellow cards and other matters involving team conduct will be reported to the home club and State Association of the team involved as well as the US Youth Soccer National Office within seventy-two (72) hours of the conclusion of the tournament for possible further discipline.
- G. Alcoholic beverages, smoking, use of profanity, and animals are not permitted at the fields or parks.
- H. Mechanical and artificial noisemakers are prohibited.

16. COMPLETING GAME SUSPENSIONS

Per FYSA Rule 504.1 Red card suspension or send-off suspensions can only be served with the team with which the suspension was earned in games played by their team. Until the suspension is served the player/coach is suspended from any other team(s) to which the player/coach may be registered. Games may not be scheduled to “work off” suspension. Players may not serve suspensions as “guest players” nor may they “guest play” with any other team(s) until the original suspension is served.

- A. Issued during league games must be worked off during the next scheduled league, Cup, or tournament game(s).
- B. Issued during (American) District, Regional, or President's Cup, they must be worked off during the remainder of the competition. If no competition remains, the suspension must be worked off in the next scheduled league and/or tournament game(s).
- C. Issued during Tournament Play: Tournament Red Card Report filed along with game reports as required by post-Tournament rules. FYSA office is to send a copy of the Red Card Report and appropriate game reports to the DC in the next immediate mail out. DC to notify the club of discipline/sanctions remaining.
- D. Issued during "friendly games" must be worked off during the next scheduled league, Cup, or tournament game(s). "Friendly games" may not be scheduled to work off game suspensions nor if previously scheduled, used to work off suspensions given during league, cup, or tournament games.
- E. Issued during the US Youth National Championship (State Cup), at any level, shall not be allowed to participate in the next immediately following National Championship (State Cup) game played by the player's team. A player may receive more than one (1) game suspension. Local clubs/leagues may issue additional discipline to be served in other than National Championship (State Cup) games.

A red card suspension issued during a small-sided tournament, which cannot be served during the event, shall be served during the player/coach's next scheduled club, league, or cup game(s). For a suspension issued during a normal league/cup game, the player must sit out the first game of any small-sided tournament previously entered. The player shall then be able to compete in the remainder of the tournament. The player shall not receive credit for the small-sided game(s) against the original suspension.

17. DETERMINATION OF PLAYOFF FINALISTS

Finalists will be determined through a seeding format or by a division winner's format. The Tournament Committee will decide which format each age group and bracket will follow. This will be announced before the commencement of the competition. The rules to determine tiebreakers will be the same for either format. Each team will be awarded three (3) points for a win, one (1) point for a tie, and zero (0) points for a loss. At the end of the preliminary rounds, if the division winner determines the finalists for a particular age group and bracket, the division winner will be the team with the most points in their division. In

the event of a tie within a division, the following criteria will be used to determine who moves forward:

1. Head-to-head competition (this criterion will not be considered in the case of a tie among more than two (2) teams.) ****
2. Goal differential to a maximum of four (4) per game.
3. Most goals are scored to a maximum of four (4) per game.
4. Least goals allowed to a maximum of four (4) per game.
5. Most Shutouts
6. FIFA penalty kicks.

**** In the event of a tie between more than two teams, once a tie is broken by the above system, and if ties between remaining teams still must be decided, starting again from the top of the tie-breaking procedure would break those ties.

If a wild card team must be selected for the playoff rounds, the above procedure will be used across the entire age group and bracket involved.

If a division winner does not show up for play, the division team with the next-best record shall be named the division winner.

In the event the finalists for a particular age group and bracket are determined by seeding, the finalists (or semi-finalists if applicable) shall be determined based upon the two teams (or more if semi-finals are applicable) with the most points in the overall age group and bracket involved. In the event of a tie, the same criteria as utilized for division winners shall be used to determine the finalists.

If there is an age group(s) and bracket, in which semi-finals are held, to be determined at the discretion of the Tournament Committee, the foregoing rules shall be applied to determine the teams that shall qualify for the semi-finals.

18. PLAYOFFS

- A. There may be a playoff depending on the number of teams in the division/ age group bracket.
- B. If there are playoffs and a wild card team must be selected for the playoff rounds, that team will not be assigned to play the winner of its division in the first playoff round.
- C. In the case of a draw at the end of regulation time in the playoff rounds, the winner will be determined as follows:
- D. The best of five penalty kicks taken alternately by each team will determine the winner. Only those players on the field at the end of regulation time of the playoff game may compete. If the penalty kick score is tied at the end of the five kicks, the teams will continue to take penalty kicks alternately until there is a winner. All players on the field must kick before any player may kick a second time.

19. CONCUSSIONS

Under Florida Statutes (FS 943.0438) Florida in 2012 enacted a very stringent Head Injury and Concussion Law. If the referee (or assistant referee) believes that, in his/her opinion, a player has suffered a head injury or possible concussion, the match must be stopped IMMEDIATELY. The injured player if able to leave the field on their own must be escorted to their coach and the coach must be told that the player cannot return for the duration of the match. If a trainer is brought onto the field because the player is incapacitated, the referee must still notify the coach that the player cannot return to the game. It is the responsibility of the coach and the player's parent(s) or legal guardians to seek medical attention. The player may not resume participation until he/she has been cleared by a medical doctor. The Referee HAS NO FURTHER responsibility beyond removing the player from the match in which the player was injured. The referee crew must ensure, that UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES or due to the appeal from any coaching staff that the player is not allowed to return to the game.

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20. INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event of inclement weather, the Tournament Committee will have the authority (in its sole discretion) to change games as follows:

- A. **Reschedule or relocate the match** (Time and location determined by the Tournament Director).
- B. **Shortened match** - The Tournament Director may reduce the length of halves due to weather conditions before the restart of a match once delayed due to weather; all such matches will be considered official.
- C. **Go to "Penalty Kicks"** (Time and location determined by Tournament Director)
- D. **Be Cancelled** (The tournament committee has the right to cancel any match. Any game that is not started and is canceled [as opposed to postponed] due to weather or other external conditions will be recorded as a 0-0 tie. Canceled games will not be rescheduled.)
- E. Games that have been started and subsequently suspended due to inclement weather or other external conditions will be deemed complete if one-half of the play has been completed or the first half cannot be completed before the start time of the next scheduled game on that field. For any such game that is not completed, the score at the time of the suspension will be the final score. Any game that is not started and is canceled (as opposed to postponed) due to weather or other external conditions will be recorded as a 0-0 tie. Canceled games will not be rescheduled.

*** If in the event the Tournament Director rules that during the preliminary round "Taking of Kicks from the Penalty Mark." will be done due to inclement weather or field conditions, the following rule will apply:

- Each team will take a maximum of five (5) penalty kicks.
- At the end of five (5) kicks the game will be scored as a 1-0 win for the team that has scored more penalty kicks, or a 0-0 tie if both teams are tied in penalty kicks at the end of five (5) kicks.
- In the overall standings, 3 points will be given for the win, 1 point for a tie, and 0 points for a loss.
- In the overall standings, 3 points will be given for the win, 1 point for a tie, and 0 points for a loss.
- The 1-0 win in penalty kicks will be counted for or against to determine the tiebreaker for advancement.
- If regular games have been played in the bracket and the Tournament Director has determined that other games go to penalty kicks due to inclement weather or field conditions, the regular game's score will revert to a 1-0 win or a 0-0 tie.

Only referees or duty managers can suspend a match already started due to weather conditions. The Tournament Director will determine the duration of any suspension. In case of extreme weather (heat/humidity), a break will be given at the midpoint of each half of regulation time and the end of each overtime period (if played) for player hydration. This break will be given at a normal stoppage of play, and it is mandatory for any FYSA-sanctioned match during which the air temperature is or is expected to reach eighty-five (85) degrees. (FYSA Bylaw 402.4)

21. REFUND POLICY

- A. Within five (5) days after notification that the team is not accepted by their application.
- B. Within five (5) days upon cancellation of the tournament.
- C. Within ten (10) days of withdrawal request of the application by a team before acceptance of that application by the tournament.
- D. Any team that will not be permitted to play in the contracted age group shall have the option to withdraw and receive a full refund of all entry fees. The tournament committee shall notify any participant not less than fifteen (15) days before the beginning of the tournament if any age group advertised will not be offered.

22. GENERAL

- A. Under no circumstances whatsoever, will the Tournament Committee, United Soccer Academy, FYSA, or US Club Soccer be responsible for any expenses (including tournament entry fee) incurred by any team. This includes a situation where the tournament or any game(s) is canceled in whole or part, due to any factor including inclement weather.
- B. Teams that cancel participation or pull out of the tournament following the August 30, 2023, registration deadline will not be granted a refund.
- C. The Tournament Committee's interpretation of these rules shall be FINAL.
- D. The Tournament Committee reserves the right to decide on all matters about this tournament.
- E. The Tournament Committee, based on its interpretation of these rules, will determine the teams, which advance into the final rounds.
- F. Out-of-area teams are required to stay at tournament-approved host hotels.
- G. NO SALES OF ANY KIND ARE PERMITTED WITHOUT THE WRITTEN PERMISSION OF THE UNITED SOCCER CUP.