

Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer Challenge Cup

1. Team and Player Eligibility

1.1. This competition is governed by Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer. If a subject is not specifically covered in these rules, the Cup Committee reserves the right to address each specific issue on a case-by-case basis.

1.2. Only Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer affiliated teams are eligible to participate in the Eastern Pennsylvania Challenge Cup. The team roster must consist of at least 50% of players that reside in Eastern Pennsylvania.

1.3. Teams are only eligible to enter one (1) Cup Competition per seasonal year. Players are only eligible to play for one (1) team in either the Eastern Pennsylvania State Cup (NCS), the Presidents Cup, or the Challenge Cup.

1.4. Teams are only eligible for Cup Competitions if they compete in an Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer approved league during the seasonal year of the Cup Competition. Teams can also be eligible if participating in the US Youth Soccer - Regional League, the US Youth Soccer National League, or with Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer's permission in another State Association.

1.4.1. The league competition must consist of a minimum of one game against each of three (3) different teams. For teams playing in late winter or spring leagues, the team must have played at least one (1) league game prior to the start of the Cup Competition. The team must complete their full league schedule. Cup team rosters are restricted to the official team roster approved by Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer for the seasonal year by the Roster Freeze date.

1.4.1.1. Your League Registrar Roster Freeze date may differ from the Cup Competition's Roster Freeze Date. All roster changes must be executed and dated by an approved League Registrar by close of the specified Cup Competitions Roster Freeze date. After the Roster Freeze Date, no roster may be altered for league play by any team competing in the Challenge Cup until their Cup Competition is completed.

1.5. The maximum number of players permitted on a roster at any one time is shown below:

1.5.1. 9U and 10U (7v7) – 12 players

1.5.2. 11U and 12U (9v9) – 16 players

1.5.3. 13U – 19U (11v11) – 22 players

1.5.4. Teams with 22 players rostered for Cup Competitions can ONLY dress 18 players per match. Only 18 players can be identified on the official team lineup and dressed in the Team Uniform. All 22 players on the Cup Competition Roster are allowed to sit in the designated team bench area. Players that are not eligible for the specific match occurring, MUST not be in the team uniform. If an eligible player is injured during the specific match occurring, under NO circumstance is an ineligible player allowed to dress and participate in the game in progress.

1.6. Teams are permitted to have five (5) transferred players from their original league roster during the seasonal year.

1.7. Cup Competition Rosters can only include PRIMARY PLAYERS. Secondary players, Guest players, Club Pass Players are not permitted on any Cup roster.

1.8. A team may have on its roster only players of the following age groups for the seasonal year in which the team is participating in the Challenge Cup:

1.8.1. 8U Teams playing in any divisions of approved leagues are not 9U Cup-eligible. To be eligible to play in the 9U Cup, there must be nine (9) age-pure 9U players on the original league roster.

1.8.2. 9U Teams playing in any divisions of approved leagues are not 10U Cup-eligible. To be eligible to play in the 10U Cup, there must be nine (9) age-pure 10U players on the original league roster.

1.8.3. 10U teams playing in any division of approved leagues are not 11U Cup-eligible. To be eligible to play in the 11U Cup, there must be nine (9) age-pure 11U players on the original league roster.

1.8.4. 11U teams playing in any divisions of approved leagues are not 12U Cup eligible. To be eligible to compete in the 12U Cup there must be nine (9) age-pure 12U players on the original league approved roster.

1.8.5. 12U teams playing in any divisions of approved leagues are not 13U Cup eligible. To be eligible to compete in the 13U Cup there must be nine (9) age-pure 13U players on the original league approved roster.

1.8.6. Teams competing in the 12U to 15U age groups, each player must be

1.8.6.1. Of the age group competition in which the team is participating.

1.8.6.2. Of the age in either of the next 2 younger age groups.

1.8.7. Teams competing in the 16U to 19U age groups, each player must be:

1.8.7.1. Of the age group competition in which the team is participating.

1.8.7.2. Of the age of a younger age group to the 14U age group.

1.8.7.3. Any player over the age of 18 participating in any Cup Competition must complete the SafeSport Compliance Requirements as outlined by USYS guidelines.

1.8.8. The team must demonstrate continuity of rosters between their league and the Challenge Cup competition by maintaining a minimum of nine (9) players common to the rosters used in both competitions.

2. Match Rules

2.1. FIFA Laws of the Game shall govern all Cup Competitions play unless specifically noted in this document.

2.2. U9 and U10 games must follow the US Soccer Build-out Line Procedure. For fields without a build-out line, codes should be used. Punting and dropkicking are not allowed in the U9 and U10 age groups.

2.3. U9, U10, and U11 age teams are not allowed to head the ball. This competition will follow the US Soccer's Guidelines and Standards for Heading.

2.4. Duration of the match:

Age Group	Match Duration	Overtime*
9U and 10U	Two 25-minute halves	Two 10-minute periods
11U and 12U	Two 30-minute halves	Two 10-minute periods
13U and 14U	Two 35-minute halves	Two 10-minute periods
15U and 16U	Two 40-minute halves	Two 15-minute periods
17U, 18U, 19U	Two 45-minute halves	Two 15-minute periods

2.4.1. Overtime periods are NOT “Golden Goal”, each overtime period must be played to its conclusion. If the match is still tied after both overtime periods, then the Penalty Kick Procedure will be used.

2.4.2. Penalty Kick Procedure:

2.4.2.1. Each team will select five (5) players to kick – only players on the field at the end of the game may be selected.

2.4.2.2. Teams will alternate kicks – first team to kick will be determined by the referee’s coin flip.

2.4.2.3. If the score remains tied after five (5) kicks, teams will alternate kicks one at a time from the remaining players on the field until a winner is determined.

2.4.2.4. No player may shoot more than once until all eligible players have taken a kick.

2.4.2.5. Keepers may be changed after any shot from the list of participating players for the penalty kicks.

2.4.2.6. If, at the end of the match and before the kicks start to be taken from the penalty mark, one team has a greater number of players than its opponents, it must reduce its number to equate with that of its opponents and the team captain must inform the referee of the name and number of each player excluded. Any player thus excluded may not participate in kicks from the penalty mark or serve as the keeper.

2.4.2.7. Unless participating in the penalty kicks as a kicker or goalkeeper, team members, coaches, and other bench personnel shall remain on designated sideline (of the field).

2.5. Each team must provide a game ball to the referee prior to the start of the match. The size of the ball is based on the standards of play outlined by US Youth Soccer.

2.6. Substitutions:

2.6.1. For 9U through 19U age groups, substitutions are unlimited and can be made at any stoppage of play, with the referee’s permission.

2.7. Forfeits:

2.7.1. Teams must be present at game field with at least seven (7) players no later than 15 minutes after the scheduled start time of the match. If a team is not present (with appropriate players) within 15 minutes of the scheduled start, the missing team will forfeit the match. If neither team is present within the 15-minute period after the scheduled start time, the game will result in a double forfeit.

2.7.2. If a team official is ejected from a match and there is no other team official present, listed on the team roster, the team will forfeit the game.

2.7.2.1. Forfeit Score: 4-0

2.7.2.2. Double forfeit score: 0-0

2.7.2.3. Forfeit fee: \$150 per forfeited game.

2.8. Abandoned Games:

2.8.1. A Cup game that is started and not completed on the scheduled day, due to any cause, shall be replayed in its entirety if neither team is at fault and play has not begun in the second half of the game.

2.8.2. If the game is stopped during the second half of a Cup game due to any cause and play cannot be resumed and completed on the scheduled date and if neither team is at fault, the Cup Committee may deem the game complete or, order a replay of the game in its entirety.

2.8.3. If a Cup game is started and not completed on the scheduled date due to one of the teams being adjudged to be at fault, it shall be at the discretion of the Cup Committee whether the game is to be replayed in its entirety or declared a forfeit.

3. Misconduct and Cards

3.1. All misconduct (yellow and red cards) MUST be reported with the score and entered into the GotSport scheduling software.

3.2. Teams must always have a carded coach on the sideline. It is strongly encouraged to have at least two team officials, listed on the team roster at each game. In any situation where a single team official is ejected from a game and there is no other team official present that is listed on the team roster, the team will forfeit the match.

3.2.1. Any changes to a team roster relating to team officials must be updated prior to kickoff of each match.

3.3. Card Accumulation:

3.3.1. Three yellow cards received by a player or coach within the same Cup Competition year will constitute a 1 game suspension (must be the very next Cup match after the accumulation occurs).

3.3.2. If a player or coach receives a Direct Red Card or two yellow cards (resulting in a red card) they cannot participate in their next scheduled Cup match.

3.3.3. Suspensions are transferable to the Regional and National Competitions. Suspensions in Cup Competitions will carry over to the Cup Competitions of the next seasonal year.

4. Referees

4.1. All 9v9 and 11v11 matches will be officiated with a three (3)-referee system: one (1) referee and two (2) assistant referees. 7v7 matches will use a one (1)-referee system.

4.1.1. Teams must play even if less than three referees are present. If the full official contingent does not appear, the game will be played with the available personnel using the following system:

4.1.1.1. 2 Referees: 1 Center Referee, 1 referee as an AR, 1 Volunteer Linesperson (referees' discretion)

4.1.1.2. 1 Referee: 1 Center Referee, 2 Volunteers for the lines (referees' discretion)

4.1.1.3. If the referees do not show up, you MUST contact your Cup Assignor and determine if the referee(s) has been delayed or no referee was assigned. Teams leaving without playing their Cup game could be subject to Forfeit or Double Forfeit if they leave the field of play without confirming their referee through their assignor.

4.1.1.4. If the Cup Assignor cannot be reached, you MUST attempt to contact Cup Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer Director of Soccer Operations, David Jones (215-778-7747) to discuss additional scenarios that may exist to complete the match.

4.1.1.5. If less than 3 referees are present at the match, teams are only responsible for paying each official for their assigned role. If a referee is not assigned to the match but is able to fill in for the missing official, they shall be paid.

4.1.2. A two-whistle system is NEVER approved in any Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer or US Youth Soccer sanctioned competition.

4.2. Referee Payment and Scenarios:

4.2.1. Each team is responsible for referee payment. Payment of the appropriate referee fees (in cash) for all games except the Finals. Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer will pay the referee fees for all FINALS games.

4.2.2. Referee Fees for the 2025 Challenge Cup will be the same as those approved by Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer for the 2024-2025 season

4.2.3. Referee payment scenarios:

4.2.3.1. If less than 3 referees are present, teams only pay the fee for each official present and for their role in the match. If a certified referee not assigned to the game fills in for the missing referee, they should be paid by each team.

4.2.3.2. If the Center Referee does not show up but the 2 Assistant referees do show up; AR#1 is promoted to the Center Referee and AR#2 will be moved to AR#1.

4.2.3.3. If one Assistant Referees does not show up; the teams will keep the other AR payment if no certified referee is used to fill in.

4.2.3.4. 1-Man system; the referee may request to use Club Linesman's, but the CL is only responsible for signaling "out of bounds" – no direction or possession can be indicated. The CL has no authority and are only providing secondary assistance to the Referee. The CL should have no authority to indicated offsides or fouls to the Center Referee.

4.2.3.5. If the referee (one) shows up late but within the first half; they should be paid the full referee fee. If the referee arrives at halftime, they should be paid half the game fee.

4.2.3.6. If a referee is not notified in adequate time of a change in venue, time, or cancellation due to weather or unforeseen circumstance; all referees will be paid in full by the HOME TEAM.

4.2.3.7. If a game is cancelled by the referee at the eld site prior to the start of the match for unplayable conditions, each team pays the referees half of the regular game fee.

4.2.3.8. Once the game has started, if the game is cancelled or abandoned due to weather, eld conditions, or Force Majeure; the entire referee fee must be paid.

4.2.3.9. If a team shows up for a game and the opposing team forfeits by no-show, then the team that is present will not pay referee fees – referees will receive the fees at a later date.

5. Competition Check-in Procedure

5.1. All players must be registered with the State Association and be listed on the official Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer Cup roster to be eligible for cup games. In addition, each team must have a printed copy of all Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer player passes or US Youth Soccer player passes for players who reside in another state.

5.2. Player rosters should be exchanged and examined by the opposing coaches prior to the game.

5.2.1. The proper procedure is to line up each team in a line.

5.2.2. The opposing coach should check each player against their opponent's roster.

5.2.3. The Referee does NOT check team rosters and player passes.

5.2.4. Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer Cups staff are responsible for the team check-in process during the FINALS.

5.2.5. Refer to Team and Player eligibility for documentation of game day roster requirements.

5.2.6. Ineligible players shall be marked on the match report by the referee prior to the start of the game.

5.3. All team officials that will be on the game-day roster (and in the bench area) must be listed on the Official Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer Cup roster.

5.3.1. The Cup Committee reserves the right to amend this policy at any time.

5.3.2. A \$25 fine can be levied against any team for failure to adhere to this policy.

6. Elimination

6.1. The Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer Challenge Cup is a World Cup formatted event.

6.2. There is no overtime in the preliminary or group stage games. Group stage games tied at the end of regulation will be FINAL.

7. Competition Format

7.1. Teams will be placed into groups to play; division winners will be determined after the group stage matches.

7.2. At the conclusion of the group stage matches, division winners and wildcard teams (based on the structure of the age group) will compete in a single elimination World Cup bracket.

7.3. Standings and Determination of Division Winners

7.3.1. Group Stage Points:

7.3.1.1. Three (3) points for a Win

7.3.1.2. One (1) point for a Tie

7.3.1.3. Zero (0) points for a Loss

7.3.2. Tiebreakers: will follow the criteria below in the order listed. If a three-team tie, skip to the 2nd tie breaker (Goal differential)

7.3.2.1. Winner of Head-to-Head competition

7.3.2.2. Goal Differential – total from all group stage matches; Maximum of +/- 4 goals per game

7.3.2.3. Fewest goals allowed – total from all group stage matches; Maximum of +/- 4 goals per game.

7.3.2.4. Playoff – if after applying the criteria above two or more teams remain tied, then a playoff will be set-up to determine the bracket winner.

7.3.3. Wildcard Selection and Placement

7.3.3.1. Once division winners are determined, wildcard teams may also advance to bracket play; the number of wildcard teams is dependent on the size and structure of the age group.

7.3.3.2. Determination of wildcard teams

7.3.3.2.1. Team that earns the most points from the group stage (minus the division winners that have advanced)

7.3.3.2.2. If potential wildcard teams are tied in points, the tie breakers above should be used to determine who should advance.

7.3.3.2.3. If the first three tiebreakers are used and a winner cannot be determined, the 4th tie breaker will be a coin flip, instead of a playoff game as listed above.

7.3.3.3. If a wildcard team is scheduled to play a team from their group stage play, the placement will be modified so they do not play a team they played in the group stage. The Cup Committee can make such an adjustment if needed.

8. Scheduling Procedure

8.1. The home and away teams will be determined by the Cup Committee.

8.2. The scheduling of group stage matches deadline is the weekend before playoffs start in your age group. Each match must be confirmed in the online scheduling software.

8.3. The scheduling of a knockout match (not semi-final or final) must occur before Monday at 5:00pm. The match must be scheduled and confirmed in the online scheduling software.

8.4. Failure to schedule the match by the required time may result in the State Office scheduling the match and may result in a \$25 Game Change Fee (fee subject to both teams).

8.5. Rescheduling a match within 7 days of the original scheduled date may result in a \$50 Game Change Fee (fee subject to both teams). (Non-weather related)

8.6. If the two teams receive approval to reschedule a Cup match, the burden for completing that match is the responsibility of the two teams. If the game is not played before the day of the next round of competition, the game will be declared a double forfeit and neither team will advance to the next round.

8.7. The Cup Committee may exercise discretion to change a game time or date if one of the participating teams will be missing players due to regional or national team commitments.

8.8. Coaches with multiple teams must recognize that Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer cannot accommodate requests to be able to attend all their games which occur on the same date. Coaches should be prepared to have alternate-carded coaches available to cover for their teams.

8.9. The Cup Committee may also designate a common competition site for all or part of an age group in the Challenge Cup.

8.10. All matches are expected to be played by the scheduled date and time. All group games must be completed by the age group/gender playoff round. Failure to get your games played before the playoff round could result in a forfeit or double forfeit.

8.11. The Cup Committee reserves the right to revise the schedule after it is published.

8.12. During playoffs, the Cup Committee Chair and Director of Soccer Operations have the right to change home and away venues, particularly when the home team may not be decided within 72 hours of the next playoff game.

9. Fields

9.1. Preparation of the field is the responsibility of the HOME team. Proper lining of fields, goal sizes, nets, and corner flags must be present on all fields. Protest made regarding field conditions must be made prior to the start of the match.

9.2. It is the responsibility of both teams to communicate and ensure that each team knows the correct time, location/directions, and uniform color.

9.3. Field location changes may result in a \$50 fee if changed to an opponent's field and an additional \$50 fee if moved to a neutral location.

9.4. Carded players and coaches from both teams must be on one side of the playing field. Spectators from both teams must be on the opposite side of the field from the players and coaches.

9.5. All Cup games must be played on outdoor fields. No indoor or dome facilities may be used for Outdoor Cup games, unless given prior approval by the Tournament Director. Any game in violation of this will result in a double forfeit as it is both team's responsibility to ensure games are played on outdoor fields.

10. Results

10.1. Scores are reported by the winning team and will be done within 1 hour of the game ending.

10.1.1. Scores are also required to be entered by the WINNING TEAM (or in the case of a tie, the home team) within one hour of the game ending. Scores will be updated in the Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer State Cup Software only after they have been verified.

10.2. You must be logged into GotSport and the correct Cup Competition to enter your scores. Scores are only able to be verified ONCE. If a score is saved incorrectly you must contact the Director of Competitions immediately (David Jones djones@epysa.org)

10.2.1. The GotSport Tutorial on Reporting Scores is located on each individual Cup Competition website.

10.3. A \$25 fee may occur for any match score that is not entered by Sunday at 11:59pm of the game weekend.

11. Protests

11.1. There are no protests on referee decisions. Only protests regarding players eligibility.

11.2. If a team wishes to file a protest, it must be completed within 48 hours of the game. If the next match is within 48 hours, then the protest must be submitted ASAP. Protests received outside these guidelines will not be considered.

11.3. Protests must be presented in writing directly to the Tournament Director David Jones djones@epysa.org. Email submission is considered acceptable; however, you should also notify by phone (215-778-7747).

11.4. Protests must be accompanied by a protest fee of \$200 which will be refunded if the protest is upheld.

11.5. Playoff Round Protest:

11.5.1. If the match is played and a protest is filed against the winner of the match by either the losing team or another Cup participant and the protest is upheld, the winner would be

disqualified from competition. The Cup record will show the winner of the protested game as Vacant; the losing team will NOT advance.

11.6. The Cup Committee will evaluate any properly submitted protests and respond with a decision via email.

11.7. If the team would like to appeal the decision of the Cup Committee, they may submit an appeal to the Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer Arbitration Board following the submission guidelines of the Board.

11.7.1. Decisions of the Arbitration Board are final, and no further appeal is possible as described by the Cup Rules.

12. Semi-finals and Finals

12.1. Semi-finals are scheduled by Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer. Matches will be played at either the home field of one of the teams or a designated field by Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer.

12.2. The Finals are scheduled at the sole discretion of Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer. If inclement weather is received prior to the Finals, Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer may require back-to-back play on some weekends.

12.3. Award Presentation:

12.3.1. At the conclusion of the Championship Match, teams will be presented awards for their participation in the Cup Competition. Teams are required to participate in the award presentation.

12.3.2. There is no Regional or National Competition beyond the Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer Challenge Cup.

13. Fines and Fees

13.1. Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer reserves the right to adjust any fine or fee associated with any Cup Competition given unforeseen circumstances.

14. Cup Competition Organization

Tournament Director: David Jones | djones@epysa.org | 215-778-7747

Director of Operations: Leo Kelly | lkelly@epysa.org | 484-633-2771

Discipline Commissioner: David Jones | djones@epysa.org | 215-778-7747