

EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA YOUTH SOCCER STATE CUP | RULES AND REGULATIONS

Part of the US Youth Soccer National Championship Series (NCS)

1. Team and Player Eligibility

1.1. This competition is governed by the United States Youth Soccer Association - National Championship Series Rules and Regulations. If a subject is not specifically covered in the Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer State Cup Rules document rules, refer to the US Youth Soccer National Championship Series (NCS) Rules and Regulation.

1.2. Only Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer affiliated teams are eligible to participate in the Eastern Pennsylvania State 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 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 – Conference League, the US Youth Soccer National League, or with Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer’s permission in another State Association. U18/19U teams are exempt from the Cup Qualifying League requirement.

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.

1.4.2. 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.

1.4.2.1. Your League Registrar Roster Freeze date may differ from the Cup Competitions Roster Freeze Date. All cup 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 cup roster may be altered. League rosters may be altered for league play only and are subject to all league rules.

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

1.5.1. 12U (9v9) – 16 players

1.5.2. 13U – 19U (11v11) – 22 players

1.5.3. 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 state cup level competition 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 National Championship Series:

1.8.1. 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.

1.8.2. 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.

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

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

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

1.8.4. Teams competing in the 16U to 19/20U age groups, each player must be:

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

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

1.8.5. Any player 18 years old and above participating in any Cup Competition must complete the Safe Sport Compliance Requirements as outlined by US Youth Soccer guidelines.

1.9. For Conference League teams that will participate in the Eastern Pennsylvania State Cup (NCS) May and June Cup competition, the roster for the Eastern Pennsylvania State Cup will freeze at the Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer designated date for their respective playing dates. Once rosters are frozen, no changes may be made to the roster until they have completed their League play and Eastern Pennsylvania NCS State Cup play and are eliminated from eligibility for advancement to USYS NCS Regional competition.

1.9.1. Please note that any players released from a team in the Conference League after the appropriate freeze date, are also considered 'frozen' and cannot be added to another team's USYS National Championship Series roster, Presidents Cup roster, or Challenge Cup roster in this seasonal year.

1.10. For teams that are using Conference Leagues to qualify for state cups, rosters freeze on the date designated by Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer for the Cup Competition. Rosters for Conference League Teams playing in the 19/20U State Cup Competition will freeze on the posted roster freeze date and not the spring Roster Freeze date.

1.11. The team must demonstrate continuity of rosters between their league and every level of the National Championship competitions by maintaining a minimum of eleven (11) players common to the roster of the team at every level of the 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. 11U age teams and below are not allowed to head the ball. This competition will follow the US Soccer's Guidelines and Standards for Heading.

2.3. Duration of the match:

Age Group	Match Duration	Overtime*
12U	Two 30-minute periods	Two 10-minute periods
13U and 14U	Two 35-minute periods	Two 10-minute periods
15U and 16U	Two 40-minute periods	Two 15-minute periods
17U, 18U/U19	Two 45-minute periods	Two 15-minute periods

2.3.1. 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.

2.3.2. Penalty Kick Procedure:

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

2.3.2.2. Teams will alternate kicks – the first team to kick will be determined by the referee's coinflip.

2.3.2.3. 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.

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

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

2.3.2.6. 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.

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

2.4. 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.

2.5. Substitutions:

2.5.1. For 12U, 13U, and 14U age groups, substitutions are unlimited and can be made at any stoppage of play, with the referee's permission.

2.5.2. For 15U through 19/20U age groups, there is no re-entry in a half. "Half" is defined as one of the three segments of the match - 1st half, 2nd half, Overtime. Substitutions can be made at any stoppage of play with the referee's permission.

2.5.2.1. The overtime period is considered one half for substitution purposes. Once a player is replaced on the field in overtime, that player may not re-enter the match.

2.5.2.2. If a player leaves the field of play due to a possible concussion and is cleared to return to play by a licensed physician that player may re-enter the match even if they have been substituted for. Neither the player nor the substitute shall be penalized by the NCS re-entry rule. Both players may return in that period without prejudice.

2.6. Forfeits:

2.6.1. Teams must be present at the game field with at least seven (7) players no later than 15 minutes after the scheduled start time of the match otherwise the game will be determined a forfeit by the referee. If neither team is present within the 15-minute period after the scheduled start time, the game will result in a double forfeit.

2.6.2. 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.

2.6.3. Forfeit Score: 4-0

2.6.4. Double forfeit score: 0-0

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

2.7. Abandoned Games:

2.7.1. 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.

2.7.2. 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.

2.7.3. 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) will be reported from the game card and entered into the GotSport scheduling software by the game referee.

3.2. Teams must always have a properly rostered team official on the sidelines. 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.

3.3. 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).

3.3.1.1. Team Officials can be awarded yellow or red cards by a referee for their behavior and or continued and disruptive behavior of spectators of their own team.

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. It is the responsibility of the coach to document on the next game(s) team roster sheet any player suspensions that are being served.

3.3.4. Suspensions are transferable to the Regional and National Competitions. Suspensions not served in the current year Cup Competitions will carry over to the Cup Competitions of the next seasonal year.

4. Referees

4.1. All matches will be officiated with a three (3)-referee system: one (1) referee and two (2) assistant referees.

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 Tournament Director, 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 certified 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 Championship games.

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

4.2.3. Referee 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 Referee 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-Referee system; the referee may request to use Club Linesmen (CL), 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 has no authority to indicate 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 circumstances, 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 field 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, field conditions, or Force Nature; 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.

5.2. The player roster should be exchanged and examined by the opposing coaches prior to the game.

5.2.1. Check-in procedure is to line up each team in a line.

5.2.2. The opposing coach should check each player against the 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 team check-in process during 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.

5.2.7. The Assistant Referee will document all substitutions for 15U-19/20U games on the game card without the use of physical player passes.

5.3. All team officials that will be present on the team 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 may be levied against any team for failure to adhere to this policy.

5.3.3. At the cup finals each team may only have 3 team officials on the sideline and those officials must be rostered to the team

6. Elimination

6.1. For the 2024-2025 NCS State Cup competition the Cup Committee will seed up to four entrants based on the number of teams in each age group competition. If there are 10 or fewer teams included in the draw, 2 teams may be seeded. If there are more than 10 teams included in the draw, then 4 teams may be seeded.

6.2. The Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer State Cup (state level of National Championship Series) is a single elimination competition.

7. Scheduling Procedure

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

7.2. The scheduling of a Cup match must occur before Monday at 5:00pm. The match must be scheduled and confirmed in the online scheduling software.

7.3. If a Cup match is scheduled for a weeknight, the match MUST be in the scheduling system at least 7 days before the scheduled date.

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

7.5. 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)

7.6. If after the schedule is published both teams wish to play the game before the scheduled date, they must submit the agreed date, time, and location to the Tournament Director, Dave Jones (djones@epysa.org) at least 4 days in advance for approval. The rescheduled game will be contingent on the availability of fields and referees for the proposed change. Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer reserves the right to decline the requested schedule change.

7.7. 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.

7.8. If one team wishes to play early and the other team does not, the request to change the schedule can be sent to the Tournament Director, David Jones (djones@epysa.org) at least 7 days in advance for consideration. Where necessary, the Cup Committee and Tournament Director can schedule the game on behalf of both teams. The decision on any schedule changes by the Cup Committee and Cup Manager will be final and cannot be appealed.

7.9. 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.

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

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

7.12. During playoffs, the Cup Committee Chair and the Tournament Director 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.

8. Fields

8.1. 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. A protest made regarding field conditions must be made prior to the start of the match to the referee.

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

8.3. 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.

8.4. 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. Spectators should remain on the side of the field directly opposite their players and coaches.

8.5. 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 teams' responsibility to ensure games are played on outdoor fields.

9. Results

9.1. Scores are reported by the winning team, if there is a tie, the home team will report the score within one hour of the game ending. Scores will be updated in the Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer State Cup Software only after being verified.

9.1.1. Teams will have until 10:00 am the morning following a game to appeal the score, or cards entered by the official. Once a game card is signed by both team's officials, the score and cards are official and cannot be protested.

9.2. If a score is entered incorrectly, you must contact the Tournament Director before 10:00am Monday following the game to appeal (David Jones djones@epysa.org)

10. Protests

10.1. There are no protests on referee decisions. Only protests regarding a player's eligibility.

10.2. 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.

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

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

10.5. Playoff Round Protest:

10.5.1. 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.

10.5.2. If the winner of the Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer State Cup Championship game is disqualified after the match is played, the runner-up will be declared the State Champion. If this occurs before the start of the Regional event, the runner-up will represent the state in the Regional Competition. When the Regional Competition begins, the Regional Committee will determine which, if any, team will fill that role in the competition.

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

10.7. 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.

10.7.1. Decisions of the Arbitration Board are final, and no further appeal is possible as described by the US Youth Soccer – National Championship Rules.

11. Semi-final and Finals

11.1. 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.

11.2. 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.

11.3. Award Presentation:

11.3.1. 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. Regional and National Competition

12.1. Winners of the Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer State Cup will represent the State at the US Youth Soccer Regional Championships.

12.2. Winners of the US Youth Soccer Regional Championships qualify for the US Youth National Championships.

12.3. Entry into the Eastern Pennsylvania State Cup competition acknowledges the above and represents an agreement as a State Champion (or Wild Card) to participate in the US Youth Soccer Regional Championships and the US Youth Soccer National Championship competition.

12.3.1. Should the Eastern Pennsylvania State Cup champion (or Wild Card) renege on this obligation, the Championship may be forfeited, and the team will be subject to a fine from US Youth Soccer. In addition, the team will be responsible for any fines or fees assessed to Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer because of their non-performance at the Regional Championships or National Championship Competition.

12.3.2. If the fine and fees are not paid, the sponsoring organization, including all its teams, players, etc., may be determined by Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer to be in “bad standing” until the fine is paid.

13. Fines and Fees

13.1. Eastern Pennsylvania Youth Soccer reserves the right to adjust any fine or fee associated with 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