

USA CUP Tournament Rules July 14-18, 2026

The USA CUP will be played under FIFA Laws and Regulations in effect August 1, 2025 as modified by the Minnesota Youth Soccer Association with the following modifications:

I. TOURNAMENT FEES

- Please refer to tournament website for tournament fees.
- Teams that drop from the tournament will not be refunded their team application fee and dorm housing deposit.

II. TOURNAMENT HEADQUARTERS

National Sports Center Campus
1750 105th Avenue Northeast
Blaine, MN 55449
Tournament Director: Jen Een 763-717-3235

III. FINAL TEAM CHECK-IN

- Final Team Check schedule: The Thursday before the tournament, one day only – See Team Central on USA CUP web site for hours.
- Updated game schedules, USA CUP Ceremonies line-up and other final tournament information will be provided at Final Team Check-in. (and available on the USA CUP web site www.usacup.org.)
- A team representative may check in the team. Players do not attend Final Team Check-in.
- All teams must provide player passes and coach passes prior to final team check-in.
- Valid US Youth Soccer, US Club Soccer or AYSO players passes, Canadian booklets or passports/international player passes (International Teams Only) are required.
- Your Official Tournament Roster will be frozen and no changes will be made to your roster for the remainder of the tournament at Final Team Check-in.
- Teams must be able provide physical or mobile passes at the field if there is a question regarding eligibility to officials.
- Coaches must provide a physical or mobile pass to referee prior to each game.
- Non-MYSA US Youth Soccer teams must provide proof of permission to travel from home association.
- Non-US Youth Soccer teams must provide proof of insurance.

IV. ELIGIBILITY

- The tournament is open to Intra-Club Tournament Teams, Inter-Club Tournament Teams, Recreational Plus, Classic, Premier and Select Teams who are registered and in good standing with their FIFA affiliated association.
- Teams will be accepted on a first-come first-serve basis through the application deadline posted on the website, after the deadline teams will be placed on a waiting list and duly notified of their acceptance.
- If an age group does not fill, teams registered will be given the opportunity to play up a category.
- FIFA International National Teams are not eligible.
- Age group offered are as follows
 - Boys and Girls 8U Born on or after 01/01/18
 - Boys and Girls 9U Born on or after 01/01/17
 - Boys and Girls 10U Born on or after 01/01/16
 - Boys and Girls 11U Born on or after 01/01/15
 - Boys and Girls 12U Born on or after 01/01/14
 - Boys and Girls 13U Born on or after 01/01/13
 - Boys and Girls 14U Born on or after 01/01/12
 - Boys and Girls 15U Born on or after 01/01/11
 - Boys and Girls 16U Born on or after 01/01/10
 - Boys and Girls 17U Born on or after 01/01/09
 - Boys and Girls 19U Born on or after 01/01/07

V. GAME FORMAT

- 9U-10U– 7v7 Jamboree Format
 - Maximum number of 7 players on the field: 6 field players and a goalie.
 - Will play four games in a jamboree style format.

- Age-appropriate fields will be used.
 - One referee per game. No club linesman
 - Offsides is in effect.
 - Punting is allowed.
 - Build-Out lines will not be used.
 - All free-kicks will be played like older age groups, including direct free-kicks and penalty kicks.
- 8U-10U – 7v7 Competitive Format
 - Maximum number of 7 players on the field: 6 field players and a goalie
 - Is an open flight format. In age divisions where competition warrants, a gold and silver flight will be formed. Teams will apply for acceptance into an open flight.
 - Will play a minimum of 4 games (3 world cup group matches and 1 playoff game).
 - The maximum number of games is determined by the number of teams in an age group.
 - Teams are generally scheduled one or two games per day.
 - Age-appropriate fields will be used.
 - One referee per game.
 - Offside is in effect.
 - Punting is allowed.
 - Build-Out lines will not be used.
 - All free-kicks will be played like older age groups, including direct free-kicks and penalty kicks.
 - 10U-12U – 9v9
 - Maximum number of 9 players on the field: 8 field players and a goalie
 - Is an open flight format. In age divisions where competition warrants, a gold and silver flight will be formed. Teams will apply for acceptance into an open flight.
 - Will play a minimum of 4 games (3 world cup group matches and 1 playoff game).
 - The maximum number of games is determined by the number of teams in an age group.
 - Teams are generally scheduled one or two games per day.
 - Age-appropriate fields will be used.
 - One referee per game.
 - Offside is in effect.
 - 12U-19U – 11v11
 - Maximum number of 11 players on the field: 10 field players and a goalie.
 - Will play a minimum of 4 games (3 world cup group matches and 1 playoff game).
 - The maximum number of games is determined by the number of teams in an age group.
 - Teams are generally scheduled one or two games per day.
 - 12U only offers a single Open Flight
 - A minimum of four teams must register for this option before it is viable.
 - Teams will be placed on a waiting list until the minimum of four teams are registered.
 - 13U-19U offers Gold and Silver Flights. In age divisions where competition warrants, the Super Group and Bronze flights will be formed. The Super Group will consist of premier level teams. Teams will be invited to play in the Super Group after they have been accepted to the tournament.
 - Field size meets FIFA regulations.
 - Goal size is 8 feet high and 24 feet wide.
 - 3 referees per game.
 - Offside is in effect.
- Minimum number of teams at any age/flight is 4.

VI. PLAYERS AND RESERVES

- 8U–10U playing 7v7 teams may roster and dress up to 14 players.
- 10U-12U playing 9v9 may roster and dress up to 18 players.
- 12U-14U playing 11v11 may roster and dress 18 players for games.
- 15U-19U playing 11v11 may roster 22 and dress 18 players for games.
- Players not on the game roster are allowed to sit on the bench in the team’s opposite uniform or in street clothes.

- Teams must have a minimum of 5 players (8U-10U – 7v7), 6 players (U10-U12 9v9), 7 players (12U-19U – 11v11) to begin a game.
- All players must meet the age requirements and be listed on the team roster with unique jersey numbers.
- Girls may roster on boys' teams; boys may not roster on girls' teams.
- Shin Guards must be worn by all players.
- Hard casts are not prohibited, but they must receive "explicit" approval from the referee before a player wearing such a cast is allowed to play in the game. All casts must have the approval of the Referee. It is not a given that soft casts will be approved.
- No jewelry will be allowed.

VII. CHECK-IN PRIOR TO GAMES

- Teams must present an official tournament roster to check-in each player before each game.
- Approved physical/mobile player passes, signed and laminated or Canadian booklets are checked prior to final team check-in and must be available to officials prior to the start of each game if there is a question regarding eligibility.
- Players must have player passes available for officials in the case of eligibility in order to play. No pass – no play policy.
- A physical or mobile coach pass must also be present in order for an adult to be on the sideline. No pass – no play policy

VIII. GUEST PLAYERS

- Teams may roster up to 6 guest players. Double rostered players are limited to two per team. Any player playing on another team is counted against the two player maximum double rostered players per team.
- Players may only guest play or double roster on one team in addition to their primary team, providing they are not playing on a team in the same age bracket and flight.
- Guest players may come from any FIFA or USSF affiliated association/team. If a team is playing as a US Club team, they are allowed to have registered US Club players or international players as guests. If a team is playing as a USYS team, they are allowed to have registered USYS players or international players as guests.
- A jersey must be provided to the guest player by the host team.
- If age eligible, players may play up or down.
- Players may not play on two teams in the same age and flight. Example: A player may play on a U16 Silver Flight and a U16 Gold Flight team but may not play on two U16 Gold Flight teams.
- Players that are age eligible but registered with an adult player pass are not eligible to play.
- Premier level players cannot play on a Silver or Lower Flight team.
- Non-MYSA players must provide a loan form to participate as part of the required forms.

IX. SUBSTITUTION PROCEDURE

- All teams are allowed unlimited substitutions with their entire roster.
- 8U-12U Unlimited substitutions may be made at any stoppage with the consent of the referee.
- 13U-19U Unlimited substitutions may be made with the consent of the referee at the following times:
 - Prior to a goal kick by either team.
 - After a goal by either team.
 - After an injury by either team when the referee stops play.
 - At half-time.
 - Prior to a throw-in. The team in possession of the ball for a throw-in may substitute. If the team in possession of the ball chooses to substitute, the opposing team may also substitute at that time, provided they are ready and waiting at the midfield line.

X. HOME TEAM JERSEY

- The first team listed in the schedule is the home team.
- The home team must have an alternate jersey and be prepared to change, if, in the opinion of the referee, there is a color conflict.
- Team jerseys must match with unique numbers for each player as submitted on the Official Tournament Roster.
- No sharing of jerseys permitted.

XI. LENGTH OF GAME

Age Group Classifications	Minutes Per Half
Boys or Girls 8	25
Boys or Girls 9	25
Boys or Girls 10	25

Boys or Girls 11	30
Boys or Girls 12	30
Boys or Girls 13	35
Boys or Girls 14	35
Boys or Girls 15	40
Boys or Girls 16	40
Boys or Girls 17	40
Boys or Girls 19	40

XII. SCHEDULES, RESULTS AND STANDINGS

- After every game the referee will complete a game card to report the score. The winning coach must verify both scores on the game card after the game. Any scores that are marked incorrectly on the game card will affect the standings and playoff standings. Game cards are collected by tournament runners and brought to Tournament Headquarters for recording.
- Schedules and results are posted on the USA Cup website.

XIII. OFFICIAL GAME BALL

- The tournament provides each team an official game ball to be used in all matches. It is the responsibility of both teams to have their tournament game ball at all tournament games and make every effort to ensure that this ball remains in play. The home team shall provide the ball to start the game.
- If additional balls are needed, they may be provided by either team.
- Only one soccer ball per team will be provided.
- 8U-12U teams use a size 4 ball.
- 13U-19U teams use a size 5 ball.

XIV. PLACEMENT OF TEAMS AND SPECTATORS

- Teams and rostered coaches/managers only will position themselves on the same side of the field.
- Coaching may only occur on the team's half of the sideline from the centerline to within 30 yards of the end line.
- Spectators for both teams will be positioned on the opposite side of the field from the teams.
- Parents/Guardians are responsible for supervision of their children at all times.
 - In the event that a child is lost, immediately notify any volunteer with a radio who will notify the police.
 - Found children will be brought to Tournament Headquarters to be reunited with parents/guardians.

XV. REFEREE SYSTEM

- The diagonal system of control is used with certified referees.
- Referees must be currently registered with USSF; international referees must be certified by their national association.
- Referees are assigned for all matches; however, teams must be prepared to provide a Club linesperson, if necessary.
- A Club linesperson may only determine balls out of play.
- Referees are evaluated by assessors during the week. These evaluations are used to help determine referee assignments for the play-offs.

XVI. FACILITY

- **Minnesota State law prohibits the use of drugs and alcohol. Players in violation will be ejected from the tournament.**
- USA CUP is committed to promoting an environment that is free from harassment and violence in any form: verbal or physical intimidation; vandalism; drug, alcohol or tobacco use; gambling and inappropriate language. These policies apply to all players, coaches, referees and spectators. The NSC is a state-owned facility and adheres to the NO SMOKING POLICY mandated for all state facilities.

XVII. UNSPORTSMANLIKE BEHAVIOR

- Unsportsmanlike behavior is not tolerated on or off the field.
- Know and understand the laws of the game. Educate players on the technical/tactical/physical demands of the game.
- Zero tolerance for fighting or heckling. Persons exhibiting these behaviors will be asked to leave the premises.
- Zero tolerance for verbal or physical acts of discrimination by players, coaches, other match officials or spectators.
- Be a positive role model. Set the standard for sportsmanship with the opponents, referees and spectators.
- Encourage moral and social responsibility.
- Encourage players to have fun and to keep a positive attitude about winning and losing.
- Show pride and support for your club, state and country, but be respectful of other nation's customs and traditions.

- Any player, coach spectator or participant who is ejected from a game or participates in any misconduct will be contacted by tournament headquarters at a minimum and the local authorities will be called if necessary. Misconduct by any of the above listed may result in a warning, game forfeit, tournament disqualification or other action if necessary.

XVIII. FIELD MANAGERS

- A field manager system is utilized to keep the games on time and as a first line of communication in the event of a problem.
- There will be one field manager for every two to four fields.
- Each field manager will have a communications radio and ice for injuries.
- Only tournament officials may use the field manager's tents. This is not a meeting or gathering place for teams or players.
- There will be no pre-game warm-up on the field. Plan your pre-game warm-up in an adjoining area or on the sideline.

XIX. RED CARDS

- Red cards will be administered as per FIFA laws of the game.
 - A player/coach sent off for a second caution or red card will not be allowed to play for the remainder of that game and the next game. The player may remain in the bench area, but not in team uniform, unless specifically asked to leave for further intolerable behavior.
 - A coach dismissed from the game will not be allowed to be on the team's bench for the remainder of that game and the next game. A coach who is removed from a game must leave that area of the field. The area of the field includes but is not limited to the bench and spectator areas.
 - If a coach is out of control, a referee may request the coach to leave before a game continues. If a coach is asked to leave a game, the referee will provide tournament headquarters an appropriate game report.
 - Violent Conduct by a player or coach may result in more than a one game suspension by tournament committee decision.
 - If a player receives a red card, the player must wear a non-uniform to the bench to the next game and the team must notify the official before the game, failure to do so may result in additional suspension.
 - If a coach receives a red card, the coach is not allowed on the bench for the next game and the team must notify the official before the game, failure to do so may result in additional suspension.
 - If player or coach are on multiple teams, they are not able to participate with the other team until the suspension has been served for the team they received a red card for.

XX. PROTESTS

- No protests will be heard on any judgment calls by the referee. All decisions by the referee are final.
- Protests on player eligibility and other technical matters may be made in writing and submitted to headquarters within one hour of the conclusion of the match.
- Express concerns regarding violations prior to the start of the game or at the time the incident occurs.
- If you have a problem regarding the rules or procedures at your game, take the following steps:
 - Notify the referee immediately so that a correction can be made.
 - If the situation is not resolved, notify the field manager and a tournament official will respond.

XXI. SCHEDULING

- Games will begin Tuesday 7:00 am, with teams playing at least one game that day. Requests for late starts are not possible.
- 9U-10U Jamboree games will begin Friday July 16 at 8:00 am. Requests for late starts are not possible.
- 8U-19U teams will be divided into groupings of 3, 4, or 5 for round robin play.
- 9U-10U Jamboree teams will play 4 games in a jamboree style format.
- If there are an insufficient number of teams in a group/flight, the tournament reserves the right to play that group as one all-team World Cup group. Example: For an age group or flight with a total of 6 teams, the tournament may choose to play a 6 team round robin rather than two groups of 3.
- All games count in the group standings for determining play-off placement
- Coaches who coach more than one team must roster enough coaches to cover teams when games conflict. Each coach must have a physical pass to be on the sideline.
- Forfeits: The tournament will make every effort to avoid a forfeit. A forfeit may only be decided by Tournament Headquarters. The tournament philosophy is to put its effort into playing tournament games rather than declaring forfeits. In general a forfeit will be called if a team consisting of at least 7 players has not arrived at the field within 1 hour of the start time. The tournament staff reserves the right to determine whether or not a team who forfeits during group play advance to the playoffs regardless of the standings.

XXII. WORLD CUP GROUP RANKING

- No overtime will be played during group competition.
- Teams will be awarded three points for a win and one point for a tie.
- A forfeit score will be recorded as a 3-0 victory.
- The winning coach must sign the game card after verifying both scores (either coach may sign in the event of a tie). Any scores that are marked incorrectly on the game card will affect the standings.
- Following preliminary rounds, criteria in order of importance will determine placement for the play-off brackets:
 - Greater number of points. Each team receives 3 points for a win, 1 point for a tie, and 0 points for a loss.
 - Goal difference. Subtract total goals allowed from total goals scored.
 - Greater number of goals.
 - If two or more teams are equal on the above criteria, their place shall be determined as follows:
 - Greater number of points obtained in matches between the teams concerned.
 - Goal difference resulting from matches between the teams concerned.
 - Greater number of goals scored in matches between the teams concerned.
 - Earliest application date.

XXIII. ADVANCEMENT PROCEDURES

- All teams advance to the playoffs:
- If there are more than 14 Teams in a bracket, teams advancing to the A playoff will be positioned into brackets as follows:
 - Group winners will be placed in the brackets first with groups receiving byes selected at random.
 - Second place teams will be positioned next.
- If there are more than 14 Teams in a bracket, Teams advance to the B playoff will be positioned as follows if there are 14 or more teams:
 - Third place teams will be positioned first with groups receiving byes selected at random.
 - Fourth place teams will be placed next.
 - Fifth place teams, if applicable, will be positioned next.
- For all play-off brackets, placement will be made to keep teams in the same World Cup group from competing in early play-off rounds, unless there are cross bracket world cup group play.
- Advancement for playoff competition tied for playoff games (non-finals):
 - If the game is tied at the end of regulation, the FIFA tie-breaking procedure of kicks from the penalty mark will be used to determine who advances.
 - Players will be taken to a designated area where a referee crew will control, monitor and officiate the series of kicks from the penalty mark.
 - Only those players on the field at the end of regulation may participate in the taking of the kicks from the penalty mark.
- Championship game advancement, will include a maximum of two 5-minute overtime periods will be played.
 - If a team is in the lead at the end of two 5-minute overtime periods, then that team will be declared the winner.
 - If the game is still tied at the end of the second overtime period, the FIFA tie-breaking procedure of kicks from the penalty mark will be used to determine who advances.
 - Players may be taken to a designated area where a referee crew will control, monitor and officiate the series of kicks from the penalty mark.
 - Only those players on the field at the end of the overtime period may participate in the taking of the kicks from the penalty mark.
- If at any point in the play-offs, a team chooses not to continue, USA CUP reserves the right to move other teams forward into its position, even if that other team has already lost. Teams who choose not to continue may not be invited to participate in USA CUP in the future.

XXIV. AWARDS

- 9U-10U 7v7 Jamboree participation awards are given to all players and are given out at the awards state following their final game on Saturday.
- All play-offs will have 1st and 2nd place games only, with trophies awarded to the 1st and 2nd place teams.
- Individual gold medals are also awarded to 1st place teams; silver medals to 2nd place teams.
- All medals and trophies will be awarded at a ceremony area no more than two hours from the end of the championship game.

XXV. WEATHER PROVISIONS

- USA CUP will follow MYSA weather guidelines

- Severe weather is a possibility. All weather decisions are the sole decision of the tournament committee using the Thorguard Weather system to help make decisions.
- If weather or the condition of fields makes it impossible to carry out the tournament to its full extent, the tournament committee will make the necessary decisions concerning the rearrangement or cancellation of games for any reason. **Every effort is made to play all games in their entirety.** Fees are non-refundable, if games or the tournament are cancelled for any reason.

The tournament committee has the right to:

- Institute water breaks, this is not a coaching break; players must remain on the field.
- Shorten the length of games.
- Suspend games due to lightning or tornado warning.
 - A game may be suspended by the tournament committee without being cancelled or considered complete if in the second half of play. If the decision to terminate a game is made, and, if one half of the game has been played before termination for weather conditions, the game stands as a completed match.
 - Coaches are requested to stay with their teams. A team representative may come to tournament headquarters to await updates.
 - Coaches/players should stay in a safe location until they see field managers return to their posts with radios.
 - Coaches and referees should then proceed to their respective field manager to receive instructions on resuming games.
 - Tournament participants can check weather updates on the website, mobile app and Facebook.

XXVI. WEATHER FLAGS – SEE CENTER FLAGPOLE ON TOP OF WELCOME CENTER

- The health and safety of participants is a primary concern. If the tournament officials and medical staff determine that the risk of heat exhaustion and/or air quality is becoming too high, various options using a flag indicator system will be utilized.
- Heat index flags will be flown on the top of the Welcome Center on a flagpole.
 - Green Flag - Normal play conditions. Follow regular conditions and allow free access to fluids.
 - Yellow Flag - Moderate heat conditions; 2-minute water break at the middle of each half is instituted. The clock is stopped during water breaks.
 - Red Flag - Game length shortened. Please ask field manager or referee headquarters for protocol during red flag conditions.
 - Black Flag - Suspension of play. Inclement weather or other emergencies may cause suspension of games. Suspension does not mean cancellation of games. After a suspension is called, games may be restarted. In the event games are cancelled, games that have completed the first half of play are considered final.
 - **Modifications may be made with any of the above flags depending on the weather.**

XXVI. INJURIES

- Coaches are considered guardians for underage participants when the parents are unavailable, and for all players regardless of age, when impairment of mental status renders the player incapable of making an informed decision. As such, they have a responsibility to make decisions in the best interest of the health and safety of the player.
- A coach's decision to allow a participant to play, contrary to the recommendation of the medical staff, may leave the coach open to legal liability.
- If the coach is under the legal age, the team is required to have an official representative of legal age at the field who will serve as the legal guardian.
- Coaches are responsible for having emergency medical information for all players in their possession at all games.
- Referees are responsible for summoning the coach and first aid personnel onto the field, in the event of an injury.
 - The injured player will first be evaluated on the field by first aid staff.
 - If further evaluation is warranted, the injured player will be moved to the sideline when medically safe, according to emergency medical protocol.

XXVII. MINNESOTA CONCUSSION LAW

- This tournament, held by the National Sports Center and sanctioned by the Minnesota Youth Soccer Association, requires compliance with Minnesota Statute 121A.37 in accordance with MYSA Concussion Policies. All participating coaches and referees are required to take concussion training. The US Center for Disease Control and Prevention has a free, online course entitled *Concussion Training for Coaches (and referees)*, accessible by the following link: www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/training/index.html

Copies of the Minnesota statute and MYSA policies are available at: <http://www.mnyouthsoccer.org/concussions>.”