

USA CUP Qualifier Minnesota Tournament Rules April 17-19, 2026

The USA CUP Qualifier Minnesota will be played under FIFA Laws and Regulations in effect January 1, 2026 as modified by the Minnesota Youth Soccer Association with the following modifications:

I. TOURNAMENT FEES

- Please refer to the tournament website for all pricing.
- Teams that drop from the tournament will not be refunded their team application fee.

II. TOURNAMENT HEADQUARTERS

National Sports Center Campus
1700 105th Avenue Northeast
Blaine, MN 55449
Contact: Clinton LaBeau clabeau@nscsports.org 763-785-3679

III. FINAL TEAM CHECK-IN

- All teams must check in 90 minutes before the team's first game or earlier with Tournament Headquarter staff.
- Updated game schedules will be provided at Final Team Check-in.
- A team representative may check in the team. Players do not need to 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 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

- 10U – 7v7 Competitive Format
 - Maximum number of 7 players on the field: 6 field players and a goalie
 - Will play a minimum of 3 games
 - Age-appropriate fields will be used
 - One referee per game.
 - Offside is in effect after the build out line.

- No punting allowed.
- Build-Out lines will be used.
- All free-kicks will be played like older age groups, including direct free-kicks and penalty kicks.
- 11U-12U – 9v9
 - Maximum number of 9 players on the field: 8 field players and a goalie
 - Will play a minimum of 3 games
 - Age-appropriate fields will be used
 - One referee per game.
 - Offside is in effect.
- 13U-19U – 11v11
 - Maximum number of 11 players on the field: 10 field players and a goalie.
 - Will play a minimum of three games.
 - Field size meets FIFA regulations.
 - Goal size is 8 feet high and 24 feet wide.
 - Three person referee team per game.
 - Offside is in effect.
- The tournament will be conducted as one “open” flight. The tournament reserves the right to combine age groups depending on the total number of teams in identified age divisions. Teams will be notified prior to the tournament if age groups are to be combined. In addition, any age group may be flighted to help parity of competition if a group exceeds 8 teams.
- Minimum number of teams at any age/flight is 3.

VI. PLAYERS AND RESERVES

- 10U playing 7v7 teams may roster and dress up to 14 players.
- 11U-12U playing 9v9 may roster and dress up to 16 players.
- 13U-14U playing 11v11 may roster and dress 18 players for games.
- 15U-19U playing 11v11 may roster 22 and dress 18 players for games.
- All players must meet the age requirements and be listed on the team roster with unique jersey numbers.
- Teams must have a minimum of 5 players (9U/10U – 7v7), 6 players, (11U-12U 9v9), 7 players (12U-19U 11v11) to begin a game.
- Girls may roster on boys’ teams; boys may not roster on girls’ teams. Girls teams may play in boys’ divisions; boys teams may not play in girls’ divisions.
- 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.
- Players may not double roster on two teams in the same age and division. Double rostered players are limited to two per team.

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.
- Guest players may come from any FIFA or USSF affiliated association/team.
- A jersey must be provided to the guest player by the host team.
- If age eligible, players may play up or down
- Players that are age eligible but registered with an adult player pass are not eligible to play.
- Non-MYSA players must provide a loan form to participate as part of the required forms. .

- USYS players may NOT guest play on US Club Soccer teams. US Club Soccer players may NOT guest play on USYS teams.

IX. SUBSTITUTION PROCEDURE

- All teams are allowed unlimited substitutions with their entire roster.
- 10U-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.

XI. LENGTH OF GAME

Age Group Classifications	Non-finals	Finals
Boys or Girls 10 Competitive	25	25
Boys or Girls 11-12	25	30
Boys or Girls 13-14	30	35
Boys or Girls 13-19	35	40

XII. SCHEDULES, RESULTS AND STANDINGS

- After every game the referee will report 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.
- If the game is a tie, either coach may sign the game card to verify both scores.
- Scores are posted on the event web site

XIII. OFFICIAL GAME BALL

- The tournament provides each team an official game ball to be used in all matches. The home team shall provide the ball to start the game.
- If additional balls are needed, they may be provided by either team.
- 10U-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 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, 10U-19U teams should be prepared to provide a Club linesperson, if necessary.
- A Club linesperson may only determine balls out of play. Exception: 9U and 10U Jamboree matches will have one referee.

XVI. FACILITY

- Minnesota State law prohibits the use of drugs and alcohol on NSC Fields. Players in violation will be ejected from the tournament.
- USA CUP Qualifier Minnesota 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.
- Pets are not permitted on the NSC campus.

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 retain the member's pass and will send it to tournament headquarters along with the 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 to the next game and the team must notify the official before the game, failure to do so may result in additional suspension.

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

- Teams will be divided into groups of 3, 4 or 5 for round robin play.
- All games do count in the group standings for determining play-off placement
- If there are an insufficient number of teams in a group/flight, the tournament reserves the right to combine age groups or flights. When this occurs, teams will be notified.
- 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 the minimum number of players required have 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 will 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 maximum recorded "goal differential" in any one game shall be 7.
- The winning coach must sign the game card after verifying both scores. 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.
 - Head to head record. (This will not be considered if three or more teams are tied)
 - Goal difference. Subtract total goals allowed from total goals scored.
Please note: The maximum recorded "goal difference" in any one game shall be 7.
 - Least number of goals allowed.
 - Earliest application date.

XXIII. ADVANCEMENT PROCEDURES 10U Competitive-19U

- In a group of 4 the top 2 teams will advance to the championship game. In a group of 5 teams will play two preliminary games and all teams will advance to the playoffs. In groups of 6 or 7 teams will play two games within their own group, the top two teams from each group will play a semi-final, and championship, the teams that finish in 3rd place in each group will play a consolation game. In a group of 8 the top team from each world cup group will advance to a championship game. In groups of 10, the top team from each group, as well as a wildcard from the flight will play a semifinal and championship. In groups of 12, teams will play two games within their own group, the top teams from each group will play a semi-final, and championship, the remaining teams will play a consolation a game. In groups of 14 or 16 the top team from each group will play a semifinal and final.
- 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 Qualifier Minnesota 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 Qualifier Minnesota in the future.

XXIV. AWARDS

- Trophies will be awarded to the 1st and 2nd place teams.
- Awards can be picked up at tournament headquarters.

XXV. WEATHER PROVISIONS

- The USA CUP Qualifier Minnesota will follow MYSAs weather guidelines.
- Severe weather is a possibility. All weather decisions are the sole decision of the tournament committee and are based on the Weather Sentry storm tracking system and weather spotters used by Anoka County Airport, TPC Golf Course and the NSC Victory Links Golf Course.
- 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, if the heat index is high. This is not a coaching break; players must remain on the field.
- Shorten the length of games.
- Suspend games due to lightning.
 - 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.
 - If it is necessary to suspend games, suspension and “all clear” announcements will be made over the radios to the field managers. Information will also be posted on the website.
 - When games are suspended, coaches and players are instructed to proceed to the nearest safe location: team buses, cars, or the buildings on the NSC campus. Teams should not be on the playing fields, in tents or shelters during game suspension due to lightning.
 - 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.

XXVII. 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.

XXVIII. 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 MYSAs 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 MYSAs policies are available at: <http://www.mnyouthsoccer.org/concussions> .”