

## COMPETITION RULES

The United Soccer Club's League ("USC") is a player development platform for youth soccer players in the Greater Houston, Austin, San Antonio, and Rio Grande Valley areas of Texas. These Rules and Regulations (the "Regulations") provide the requirements and rules for USC Competition (as defined below).

### Rules Definitions

- "USC" means the United Soccer Clubs...a sanctioned "League" of US Club Soccer.
- "USC Club" means a member club of the USC for the USC Season, as provided in the bylaws of the USC.
- "USC Club Member" means a player that has registered to play and/or train with a Club, during the current USC Season, with US Club Soccer and USC.
- "USC Season" means the competitive season beginning August 1 of each year and ending July 31 of the following year including the USC Regular Season and the USC Post-Season.
- "USC Post-Season" means competition held as the USC Play-Offs (Spring Cup Series) and the US Club Soccer Regionals & Nationals.
  - "USC Competition" means a series matches, sanctioned by USC, played during the USC Regular-Season or in the USC Post-Season.
  - "USC Match Report" or "USC Game Report" means the official game report that must be completed for all USC Competitions as provided in Section 5 of these Regulations
  - "USC Registered Player" or "USC Player" or "Player" means a person that has been placed on a USC Team's USC Roster as outlined in Exhibit B.
  - "USC Eligible Coach" means an adult who has completed the US Club Soccer Staff Registration Process and holds a current US Club Soccer Coach / Staff Pass as outlined in Exhibit A.
  - "USC Regular Season" means the regular-season USC games played prior to the USC Post- Season and includes all USC levels of play.
  - "USC Division" or "Flight" means the regular-season USC level of play, e.g., USC Champions League, Champions Division, Qualifying, Juniors, etc.

- “USC Roster” means the roster of a USC Team during the USC Season when playing in a USC Competition. A USC Roster shall only be used for USC Competitions.
- “USC Team” is the team of a USC Club that participates in USC Competition in any age group.
- “Good Standing” means in compliance with all USC rules and all fees have been paid.
- “Incident Report” is a report in the form provided by the USC Board of Directors for reporting disciplinary incidents during USC Competitions.
- “Discovery Player” is a term used in ECNL that refers to a player not affiliated with an ECNL club but is rostered so that they can play for the ECNL team.
- “New player” means a player that is not a currently registered USC Club Member.

## **1. USC Roster Rules.**

### **1.1. USC Roster Maximums.**

- 1.1.1. A maximum of fourteen (14) players may be rostered to a 7v7 USC Roster.
- 1.1.2. A maximum of sixteen (16) players may be rostered to a 9v9 USC Roster.
- 1.1.3. A maximum of twenty-six (26) players may be rostered to an 11v11 USC Eastern Conference Roster.
- 1.1.4. A maximum of thirty (30) players may be rostered to an 11v11 ECNL RL Roster.
- 1.1.5. All players on a USC Roster must meet the requirements shown in Exhibit B.

### **1.2. Game Day Roster.**

- 1.2.1. A maximum of eighteen (18) for 11v11, sixteen (16) for 9v9, and fourteen (14) for 7v7 USC Registered Players from a USC Team’s USC Roster will be eligible for each game in USC Competition (the “USC Game Day Roster”). If more than the allowed number of USC Registered Players appear on a USC Roster, the “active” players for the USC Competition must

be identified on the USC Game Report by drawing a line through any “inactive” player shown on the game report.

**1.3. Game Limits.**

**1.3.1.** A USC Registered Player may play with up to two (2) USC Teams per day and may play in up to two (2) USC Competition per day. A player cannot play with two (2) teams on the same play day in any **ECNL RL**, League games. **In the USC TX RL a player cannot player pass for a team playing in the same USC TX RL Flight.**

**1.4. Roster Add Periods.**

1.4.1. An initial USC Team Roster with a minimum of twelve (12) players for 11v11 and ten (10) players for 9v9 is due to USC by July 15th.

**1.5. Younger Players Playing Up.**

1.5.1. A USC Registered Player may play for any USC Team in their USC Club for which they are age eligible. Younger players on a USC Team may play on the older USC teams within their USC Club and shall not count towards the roster limit for such older USC teams.

1.5.2. Age eligibility is determined by Exhibit B of these Regulations.

1.5.3. A USC Registered Player may play on different USC Teams within their USC Club from game-to-game during the USC Regular Season.

1.5.4. A USC Registered Player that will “play-up” on an older USC Team in their USC Club for a USC game must be listed on the USC Game Report for that USC game.

**1.6. Player Transfers.**

1.6.1. A USC Registered Player may not play for more than one USC Club during the USC Season, unless:

1.6.1.1. the Director of Coaching of both the prior USC Club and the proposed new USC Club consent to the transfer in writing;

1.6.1.2. the new USC Club has an available spot on a USC Roster, and;

1.6.1.3. the USC B.O.D consents to such transfer in writing.

1.6.2. The consent of the USC B.O.D shall be granted at their discretion, and will consider, without limitation, the following factors: whether a geographic move by the USC Player has occurred; how many games the USC Player has participated in; what time of the USC Season the transfer request is made; and other factors surrounding the request. If the prior Director of Coaching does not consent to the transfer, the receiving Director of Coaching may request, in writing, the facts and circumstances surrounding the transfer request. The USC B.O.D will review and make a decision based upon the best interests of the player and the league, independently determine whether the transfer shall be approved over the objection, and if so whether any additional suspension or conditions shall be imposed on the transfer. A player transferred shall be referred to as a "Transferred Player." A Transferred Player shall be removed from the USC Roster(s) of the "original" USC Club. The USC B.O.D may impose a suspension, at their discretion, for any Transferred Player.

1.6.3. In the USC TX RL the ECNL must approve of the transfer

#### **1.7. Players Transfers from Disbanded or Teams Unable to Finish a USC CL Yearlong Competition.**

1.7.1. Pending USC Board approval, players from a disbanded or team unable to finish a competition, or, the players displaced from the team disbanded team players are moving to, become 'free agents' to move to other teams within their club or to other clubs if an opportunity is not available within their club.

1.7.2. Players opting to leave their club for another club may request for the USC Board to review and approve or deny the transfer/move based on individual circumstances.

#### **1.8. Trapped Player Exceptions**

1.8.1. A trapped Under-19 Player: A USC Registered Player that is in high school, but who is born during the trapped Under-19 player age eligibility dates outlined in Exhibit B, who provides documentation from their school

that they are still in high school, may request approval to participate in an Under-19 USC Competition as a Trapped Under-19 Player.

1.8.2. The trapped player request must be received, and approval granted, prior to participation in any Under-19 USC game.

1.8.3. The opposing coach must be notified of the participation of a Trapped Player prior to the start of the game.

1.8.4. No more than two (2) Trapped Players per team may participate in any individual USC game.

1.8.5. A Trapped Player may only play in one (1) game per day.

1.8.6. Trapped player participation does not apply to USC Regional and National Spring Cups or to US Club Soccer post season events.

1.9. **USC Post-Season Roster.** The USC Post-Season includes three stages, the USC Open Cup, the US Club Soccer Regionals and the US Club Soccer National Finals. A USC Registered Player may play for only one USC Team within their USC Club during the USC Open Cup. Players will be roster-tied to a specific team by midnight on the Tuesday prior to the USC Open Cup based on the roster on which they appear for the first game at the USC Open Cup. A USC Club that qualifies a team for the US Club Soccer Regionals and/or the US Club Soccer National Finals will adhere to all US Club Soccer event rules regarding rosters.

1.10. **Club Loyalty Rule.** A USC Registered Player may only participate in competitions with their USC Club for the duration of the USC Season (unless released pursuant to the USC transfer rules herein or otherwise as provided above in section 1.6). (For purposes of clarification, the USC Registered Player may appear in any competition in which the USC Club participates during the USC Season.) Except as provided below, if a USC Registered Player plays in a competition for a different club besides the USC Club to which he/she is registered as a USC Registered Player after the date he/she became rostered as a USC Registered Player ("Multiple Club Rostering"), the eligibility of the USC Registered Player will be reviewed by the USC B.O.D. If it is determined by the USC B.O.D that the USC Club to which the USC Registered Player is registered was aware of the Multiple Club Rostering, the USC B.O.D may take any or all the following actions:

1.10.1. Declare the USC Registered Player ineligible for the remainder of that USC Season;

1.10.2. Declare all games in which the USC Registered Player appeared on the USC Roster as forfeits by the USC Team on which such player was rostered and / or;

1.10.3. Recommend immediate revocation of the USC Club's membership in the USC.

1.11. **Recruiting; Try-Outs; Registration.** No-Tampering. USC Clubs may NOT recruit players for participation on USC Teams at any time during the year (subject to these regulations). Notwithstanding the foregoing, USC Clubs may not train, invite a player to train, invite a player to try-out or tryout a player from a USC team of another USC Club prior to the end of the USC Season, unless the player has been released by their current USC Club. A time framed May Tryouts for U11 to U18/19 age groups will be the "open" cut off dates for players to train and try-out with a variety of USC clubs, if desired. Note: USC coaches and administrators may be subject to the rules of other U.S. Soccer organization members regarding recruitment and try-outs, if they compete in other competitions or leagues outside of the USC.

## 2. USC Competitions and Matches.

2.1. **Competitions Eligibility.** USC Competitions are open to all USC registered teams in good standing.

2.2. **Scheduling Competitions.** The USC Board of Directors shall identify the dates and locations of all USC Competitions for each USC Season. All USC Clubs must play all scheduled USC games within the appropriate USC Season.

2.3. **Number of Competition Matches.** The USC Board of Directors shall determine the total number of USC Competition Matches during the USC Season, based on the number of teams in the division, the age group and the format e.g. single, double, triple round robin.

2.4. **General.** Unless otherwise provided in these Regulations, all USC Competitions shall be played in accordance with the FIFA Laws of the Game in force at the time of competition as provided by the International Football Association Board.

2.5. **Cancelled Competition Matches.** If any USC Competition Match is cancelled without starting, or without reaching half-time, the USC Board shall determine if and how such USC Competition Match shall be rescheduled. If the USC B.O.D determines that it is impossible to reschedule such cancelled USC Competition Match, the USC Competition shall be considered a non-played game, unless a 3 or greater score differential existed at the time of cancellation. If neither team is awarded

points in any Match that is cancelled pursuant to this Rule the USC Board of Directors may alter the method by which USC standings are determined, any qualification or advancement process for any USC Competitions or US Club Soccer Regionals or Nationals, for impacted age groups. Any USC Competition that reaches half-time before being cancelled shall be considered a completed game.

2.6. **Substitutions.** Limited substitutions are used for Players in the U13 and older age groups in the USC TX Regional League. In these age groups, a player substituted in one half of a Regional League Match may not re-enter the match for the duration of the half and a Player substituted in either period of overtime in a USC Regional League may not re-enter the game. A maximum of seven (7) substitutions is allowed in any half or in overtime of any USC Competition for the U13 and older age groups in the a Regional League. Unlimited substitutions are allowed for the U11- U19 age groups in both Eastern and Western Conference Champions Brackets of play. Substitutions for the USC Open Cups will be determined by the Open Cup Rules.

2.7. **9v9 - U11 No Heading Rules.**

[http://www.usctx.org/USC/USC\\_Documents/9v9%20rules%20for%20U11-U13.pdf](http://www.usctx.org/USC/USC_Documents/9v9%20rules%20for%20U11-U13.pdf)

2.8. **Disbanded Teams or Teams Unable to Finish a Competition.** Teams who are competing in a USC CL yearlong competition that opt to drop out or disband following the end of the fall session of play will:

2.8.1. Be removed from the competition and have their associated points zeroed out.

2.8.2. Not be allowed to drop down into a USC Eastern or Western Conference A bracket competition.

2.8.3. Are subject to a \$1,000 fine due to the negative impact placed on the schedule for the remaining teams.

3. **Disciplinary.** [http://www.usctx.org/USC/USC\\_Documents/USC\\_DP.pdf](http://www.usctx.org/USC/USC_Documents/USC_DP.pdf)

3.1. **Yellow and Red Cards (Players).** Any USC registered Player receiving a red card in a Match will be suspended for the remainder of that Match, and for the next full day on which any USC Competition is played by their USC team. Until the Registered player has served the requisite game suspension(s) with his/her primary USC team, he/she may not participate in any other USC Team in any age group. For purpose of clarification, if a USC Registered Player receives a red card in a USC Competition, the USC Registered Player will not be eligible to participate in any USC Competition until they have served the requisite game suspension(s) with their primary team. A Registered USC Player receiving a red card while club passing with

another USC team in their club, which is not their primary team, will serve the requisite game suspension(s) during the next game day(s) actually played by their primary team. Additional suspension or sanctions may be imposed by the USC B.O.D at its discretion.

3.2. **Yellow and Red Cards (Coaches).** Any coach being sent off in a USC Competition must leave the facility and will be suspended for the remainder of that USC competition day; the next day of USC competition; and the next game actually played by the team from which they were sent off. Additional suspension or sanctions may be imposed by the USC B.O.D at their discretion.

3.3. **Yellow and Red Cards (Carryover).** Un-served suspensions for red cards or yellow card accumulations of 9 or more points will carry over into subsequent USC Seasons / Competitions (i.e., Fall to Spring; Spring to Cup) but will not carry over into a subsequent seasonal year or any US Club Soccer post season competitions.

3.4. **Yellow and Red Card Suspensions.** Suspensions will not be considered served in a game that has been forfeited due to a no show; rained out; canceled; re-scheduled; is a non-regular USC or a friendly game; or, is an invitational tournament game.

3.5. **Yellow and Red Card Accumulation.** More details about card accumulation is posted on the site.

3.6. **Disbanded Teams or Teams Unable to Finish a Competition.** Teams that are disbanded or unable to finish a competition following the end of the fall session of play, are subject to a \$1,000 fine due to the negative impact placed on the schedule for the remaining teams.

#### 4. **Forfeiture of match.**

4.1. There are two distinct forms of forfeiture.

4.1.1. One occurs when a team is unable to meet the basic standards for playing the game, either before the game begins or because of actions that happen during the match. In such a case, the team not forfeiting wins the match.

4.1.2. The other is when a team has been found to have knowingly broken the rules of a sanctioning body during a match they have won and must have the results stricken from the record; whether or not the other team receives a win in such a case depends on the rules of that body.



- 4.1.2.1. A team forfeiting a game, by not showing up, without notifying the opponent and/or League, may be dismissed from the league.
- 4.1.2.2. A team may be suspended / relegated or dismissed in the event it forfeits two games within the same season.
- 4.1.2.3. A team forfeiting any game, as per section 4.1.2, will be subject to any of the following based on the decision of the USC Board:
  - 4.1.2.3.1. 3 Points Deduction and/or \$250 fine
  - 4.1.2.3.2. Relegation and/or \$250 fine
  - 4.1.2.3.3. Suspension and/or \$250 fine
  - 4.1.2.3.4. All of the above

## 5. **Standings.**

- 5.1. The standings in each age USC Division shall be determined at the end of the USC Regular Season (the "Regular Season Standings").
- 5.2. The Regular Season Standings shall determine qualification and seeding for the USC National and Regional Play-Offs as provided in the USC Play-Off Rules.
- 5.3. In each USC Game during the USC Regular Season, teams shall be awarded three (3) points for a win, one (1) point for a tie, and zero (0) points for a loss.
- 5.4. In USC Post Season Competitions teams will be awarded 3 points for a win and 0 (zero) points for a loss. Post Season games tied at the end of regulation time will proceed directly to shootout.
- 5.5. If a team is disbanded or is unable to finish a competition, all games played by that team will be removed from the stats and will not be included in the league standings.

## 6. **Tie-Breakers.** The following tie-breakers will be used for resolving ties between USC Teams in determining the Standings, in the following order:

- 6.1. USC Regular Season

6.1.1. If two teams are tied, total points earned in head-to-head games. If more than two teams are tied in total points, this head-to-head tie-breaker does not apply.

6.1.2. Goal Difference

6.1.3. Goals For

6.1.4. Goals Against

6.1.5. Coin Toss

6.2. USC Post Season

6.2.1. If two teams are tied, highest total points earned in head-to-head games. If more than two teams are tied in total points, go to 6.2.2.

6.2.2. Goal Difference (based on Group Play - MOST)

6.2.3. Total Goals For (based on Group Play - MOST)

6.2.4. Total Goals Against (based on Group Play - LEAST)

6.2.5. Coin Toss.

6.2.6. There should be no cap on the Goal Difference in any USC Competition.

6.2.7. If the result in any USC competitions is determined by penalty kicks the then the following procedure will be used: The winner of the shootout will be awarded 2 points and a bonus goal. The loser will be awarded 1 point.

7. **Game Length.** USC Competitions shall be played with the following game length:

7.1. Under-11: 2 x 30 minutes

7.2. Under-12: 2 x 30 minutes

7.3. Under-13: 2 x 35 minutes

7.4. Under-14: 2 x 35 minutes

7.5. **Under-13-U14 ECNL RL: 2 x 40 minutes**

7.6. Under-15: 2 x 40 minutes

7.7. Under-16: 2 x 40 minutes

7.8. Under-17: 2 x 45 minutes

7.9. Under-18: 2 x 45 minutes

7.10. **USC Post-Season.**

7.10.1. **USC Open Cups.** Any Team registered with US Club, U13 and older, are eligible for Open Cup Competition. Teams that qualify for US Club Soccer Regionals or Nationals during Open Cup or State competitions must notify the league by December 15th if they will not be participating in Regionals or Nationals

7.10.2. **Advancements.** Upon conclusion of the USC Open Cup, teams shall advance to the US Club Soccer Nationals, as provided in the USC Open Cup Rules.

7.10.3. **Inclement Weather.** In the event inclement weather or other factors prevent group games from being completed, the USC reserves the right to alter schedules and take other actions reasonably necessary to determine the group winners based on competition on the field if at all possible.

8. **Game Day Procedures.**

8.1. **An official USC Match Report** must be completed for each USC Competition.

8.1.1. The names of all players participating players should be printed on the match report.

8.1.2. Regardless of the number of players listed on a USC Game Report, no more than 18 players shall be eligible to appear in the USC Competition. Need to add other age groups

8.2. **For USC Regular or Post-Season Competition,** the USC Game Report must be completed in full and signed by both teams upon conclusion of the game.

8.3. **Reporting Game Scores** The Home team coach or manager is responsible entering the score and any red and/or yellow cards issued and uploading a copy of the Match Report (Game Card) into TGS within 48 hours of the conclusion of the game via the United Soccer Clubs app or by logging into the team account. In any

games where a Red Card is issued, the manager or coach is responsible for submitting an [Infraction Report](#) within 24 hours.

8.4. **The referee will submit** the USC Game Report to the designated home team contact upon conclusion of the game.

9. **Player Pass.** The intent of the club player pass is to provide players with additional development opportunities. Primarily, it is used to: provide players doing well with their current level an opportunity to play up to a higher level or older age group; provide players that make up the bottom third of the roster an opportunity to play and enhance their development; or, to ensure a team will have enough players to field a team. Clubs are required to use the player pass system for its intended purposes only.

9.1. Use of the club player pass is not intended to change the competitive nature of a team or to impact the result of a game but merely to provide a deserving player an extra opportunity for development. Impact players for a team are not permitted to play for a lower ranked team.

9.2. All players participating as an eligible club player pass player in a USC Competition must be a currently registered United Soccer Clubs (USC) player.

9.3. Clubs are required to only club player pass one team or one level down WITHIN the same geographical locations of the Club. Meaning a bottom third first team player can play for the Club's location second team ONLY if the second team (not third team or lower) is from the same geographical location.

9.4. Clubs are required to only club player pass one level down BETWEEN geographical locations of that club.

9.5. A player playing up, can come down to their true age group, but only at the highest league level within their club.

9.6. When using the club player pass, it is required that the player be rostered and on the printed match report.

9.7. There are no limits on a player moving up an age group(s) as long as it remains at an adequate/similar level(s) of play, in compliance with the spirit of the rule.

9.8. 9 aside: 4 club player passes allowed per game.

9.9. 11 aside USC Eastern and Western Conference Local: 6 club player passes allowed per game.

9.10. Lateral Move (within a same flight): The requirement is the same as players playing a level down.

9.11. A player cannot play with two teams on the same play day in any ECNL RL.

9.12. By rule, Developmental Academy players are not permitted to play in a USC game.

9.13. Fulltime ECNL players are only permitted to play in a ECNL USC TX RL game under the following condition and circumstance:

9.13.1. The ECNL player has missed four weeks or more due to injury and the game serves as a rehab assignment.

9.13.2. The coach using that ECNL player must contact the USC Rules Committee for approval.

9.13.3. Opposing coach must be notified within 24 hours of the scheduled game.

9.13.4. The ECNL player may only play for the club's highest ranked USC team in the age group(s) they are eligible.

9.13.5. ECNL players participating in any USC game(s) must be noted on the game card.

9.13.6. Additional circumstances not covered in these guidelines can be presented to USC Board for approval.

9.14. Fulltime U14 and older **Boys ECNL/MLS Next and Girls ECNL/GA** players are only eligible to play in USC TX RL games provided they are:

9.14.1. Registered with USC TX RL and included on a USC TX RL team roster within the normal USC TX RL roster rules and limits.

9.14.2. Used in compliance with USC player pass rules.

9.15. Fulltime U13 and older Boys ECNL and Girls ECNL Regional League players and boys and girls FDL players are not eligible to play on USC Eastern Conference or Western Conference "A" bracket or lower teams.

9.16. Properly registered U13 boys ECNL players are eligible to play on U14 and older USC TX RL teams but are only allowed to play on U13 USC Eastern Conference or Western Conference "A" bracket teams in compliance with normal USC roster limits and club player pass rules.

9.17. **Penalties for Abuse.**

9.17.1. Clubs should report potential abuses of the club player pass to the USC CL Rules Committee. The Rules Committee will review reports and take the appropriate actions. The Rules Committee reserves the right to act if it recognizes that a Club has failed to obey by the USC League requirements listed herein, and therefore acted in an unethical manner. These actions may include but are not limited to:

9.17.2. Determining no violation of the guidelines.

9.17.3. A warning.

9.17.4. Suspension of using the club player pass (team, club, or coach) with length of suspension to be determined by the USC Board.

9.17.5. Forfeiture of the game with Points Deduction.

9.17.6. Coach suspension.

## 10. Disciplinary Matters

### **Exhibit A:**

All USC Eastern Conference Rostered Players and Club Pass Players listed on a match report must be registered with US Club Soccer and have a current valid US Club Soccer Player Pass.

All USC TX RL Rostered Players listed on a USC TX RL match must be registered with the ECNL and have a current valid USC TX RL Player Pass.

#### Eligible / Registered Coach

Pursuant to US Soccer rules, only individuals who have completed the US Club Soccer Staff Registration Process and hold a current US Club Soccer Coach / Staff Pass are permitted work with USC registered players and to be on the team sideline of USC sanctioned events or games as coaches, assistant coaches, or managers regardless of whether they are paid staff or volunteers or registered with another US Soccer member organization. The three steps required in completing the US Club Staff Registration Process are: SafeSport Training, Sideline Sports Doc on-line course, and Background Screening.

· Soccer Staff Registration Process and hold a current USC Club Soccer Coach / Staff Pass listed on the match report .

- USC Clubs whose coaches are not in compliance with this requirement are subject to disciplinary action.
- Information regarding the US Club Soccer Staff Registration process can be found at the following link: [Staff Registration](#)

*Player / Club Tie.*

A player may only be rostered to USC Teams within one (1) USC Club each USC Season, except pursuant to the Transfer Regulations provided below:

Initial Roster Submission Date: August 1<sup>st</sup>.

*Player Drops.*

No USC Registered Players may be dropped from a USC Roster during a USC Season, except pursuant to the Transfer Regulations below.

*Roster Freeze Date.*

Players may be added to the USC Roster until May 1st of each year.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, after May 1st of the USC Season, the USC allows each club to add three (3) new players at each age group to their USC Eastern Conference/Western Conference roster and two (2) new players at each age group to their ECNL RL roster after the May 1 roster freeze date for the remainder of the USC Season. These “new” players still count against the roster maximums, but may be added provided:

- they are joining the USC team for the upcoming USC season, and;
- there is room on the existing roster to do so.

## Exhibit B

### 2022-23 Player Age Eligibility

<b>Birth Year</b>	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
<b>Age Group</b>	Too Old	U19	U18	U17	U16	U15	U14	U13	U12	U11

Players may play for their own age group and for “older” age groups.

### 2023-24 Player Age Eligibility

<b>Birth Year</b>	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Age Group</b>	Too Old	U19	U18	U17	U16	U15	U14	U13	U12	U11

Players may play for their own age group and for “older” age groups.