

ROAD TO NATIONALS

OPEN CUP

2024-2025

Tournament Rules





- There is a restricted tournament open only to those teams in good standing with USC CL Tx and teams that hold valid US Club Soccer passcards. Those teams that do not currently hold US Club Soccer passcards must obtain them prior to competing in the event.
- Participants shall consist of U-13 (2012) through U-18/19 combined age group (2006/2007) boys and girls teams. Please see Attachment D for the age group structure.
- The Event will take place over multiple weekends: October 12 & 13, Nov 9 & 10, December 7 & 8 and Jan 25, 26 2025
- Minimum teams: 4 Maximum teams 8 will be accepted into the Cup. Fees must be paid within 72 hours of acceptance, no refund after acceptance.
- WINNERS: Will advance to US Club National Cup in Aurora, Colorado Boys July TBD and Girls July TBD
- There is no additional entry fee for advancing to the National Cup Finals

USC TX Open Cup: Rules

US Club Soccer reserves the right to accept or reject any application.

TOURNAMENT AUTHORITY

- The Tournament Director shall have ultimate authority over all tournament competitions and discipline matters. The interpretation of the rules and all decisions of the Tournament Director are final. The Tournament Director may be assisted by Regional Competition Directors and the Tournament Rules and Discipline Committee. For the purposes of these rules, the authority of any Competition Director and the Tournament Director shall be synonymous.
- The Tournament Rules and Discipline Committee shall be appointed by the US Club Soccer Executive Director and will minimally consist of the Tournament Director, Competition Director and any US Club Soccer Board of Directors member in attendance. The US Club Soccer Executive Director shall serve as an ex officio committee member and has the authority to appoint additional members to the Tournament Rules and Discipline Committee.
- In all matters of discipline, with the exception of an alleged incident of misconduct towards a game official, the Tournament Rules and Discipline Committee shall render a determination and send a report to the US Club Soccer Discipline Committee pursuant to this section.



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COMPETITION FORMAT

- Please refer to pages 8 and 9 for more details regarding competition formats for various bracket sizes. In most cases, the competition will consist of round-robin play and a single game between two group winners on the fourth day to determine the champion. The Tournament Director, in consultation with the Tournament Rules and Discipline Committee:
- Reserves the right to determine the size of each competitive group, and the right to alter the groups and format to account for larger or uneven numbers of teams in a given competitive division.
- Shall determine the schedule and start times of all games, including adequate rest time between games, and altering the schedule of one game per day where necessary.

ROSTER RULES

- Any player registered with and issued a passcard for a US Club Soccer member club, academy or sanctioned league team, who is a member of the designated age group or younger, is eligible to be placed on the tournament roster. No guest or loan players shall be allowed. No players may be added to a tournament roster other than pursuant to these rules. No Exceptions, Rosters will remain frozen until the end of the competition.
- **Rosters will be frozen: 5:00 PM October 9, 2024 - Max tournament roster 30**
- ***A player may play on only one team during the competition.***
- Coaching staff and team managers: A minimum of 2 adults must be listed on the official roster and have appropriate cards. Staff who intend to be on the team bench MUST have appropriate cards.
- Game roster size: Up to 18 players, selected from the tournament roster of up to 30 players. Players on the tournament roster that are not on the game day roster must be in plain clothes on the team sideline or watch from the spectator sideline. Players not playing in the game day must be marked off the roster



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ROSTER RULES

- Substitutions: U-13 to U-18/19: Once a player is substituted in one half of any Open Cup Competition, the player may not re-enter the game for the duration of the half. Once a player is substituted in overtime, the player may not re-enter the game. There shall be a maximum of seven (7) substitutions in any half or in overtime of any competition. In case of a serious injury (player not returning to game), if, and only if, a team has used all 7 substitutions, an additional substitution may be granted by the referee.
- Any player suspected of suffering a head injury must be evaluated prior to returning to play. If a player is being evaluated on-site by a health care professional with possible return to play, the player may temporarily be substituted without the substitution counting against the team's total number of substitutions / regardless of whether the team has a remaining substitution available. If the player is cleared to return to the field of play, they must replace the substitute player that entered the field as a temporary substitute when the injury occurred.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

- Valid US Club Soccer player passcards or ECNL RL for the current year and a US Club Soccer official roster.
- Valid US Club Soccer staff cards will be required for all coaches and the team manager.

COMPETITION RULES

- The following rules shall govern all Tournament competitions:
- All games shall be played pursuant to FIFA Laws of the Game, unless stated otherwise in these rules.

Length of Games & Playing Format:

- U-13/U-14 35 -minute halves 11 v. 11 Format
- U15/16 40 min halves 11v11 format
- U17/19 45 min halves 11v11 format
- All half times should last 10 minutes.
- Ball size: Size 5 for U-13 through adult.



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COMPETITION RULES

- In excessive heat conditions, water breaks can be allowed by the referee at his/her discretion, after prior consultation with the Competition Director. U.S. Soccer Federation Heat Guidelines will be used to define procedure during excessive heat conditions.
- In the group stage, games ending in a tie will be recorded as a tie, with each team receiving one point.
- Overtime (if needed): No overtime will be played except for semi-finals and finals. When an overtime period is required, it shall consist of two 10-minute halves (five minutes between halves) and then, if necessary, kicks from the mark.
- All players must wear shin guards. All other equipment rules shall be pursuant to FIFA Laws of the Game.
- The home team shall be listed first. The home team shall wear dark-colored uniforms and the away team shall wear light-colored uniforms. In case of uniform color conflicts, the designated away team shall change uniforms.
- The use of personal recording devices to record your athletes and teams at our events are permitted, but ask for your cooperation ensuring the safety of yourself and those around you. If utilizing an elevated recording device (this includes the use of high pods / anything over 6ft in height) the device MUST be properly secured with weights and stabilizers. You must be courteous to those around you and not block viewing and if a tournament official asks for the device to be lowered at any time, full compliance is expected.
- Casts must be approved in advance of play by the referee. Referee will use best discretion in determining if the cast is safe for play. If the cast is deemed unsafe, players may make adjustments, but must be approved in advance of entering the field of play. Referee Assignor and Tournament Director will have final say in any disputes over cast safety.
- Any eyewear worn during games must be sport-approved eyewear.
- All injuries should be evaluated by training staff onsite. Head injuries will be evaluated with extreme precaution. In the event that a serious head injury occurs during the tournament, the referee or trainer will pull the player's passcard and bring it to the tournament HQ. Players will only be allowed to return to play after written clearance is provided by a medical doctor and on-site trainer as given the approval.



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STANDINGS AND TIEBREAKERS

- Game Points: 3 points awarded for a win; 1 point for a tie; zero (0) points for a loss.
- Forfeits: In a case where a team forfeits one or more matches, the Competition Committee can remove all game results versus the forfeiting team (those played and those yet to be played). Out of the remaining played games or games to be played, the average points per game will determine placement within the group (winner, 2nd place, 3rd place, etc.). In a case where a wild card is selected for division playoffs (and there is a forfeiting team), teams will be advanced based on average points per game of matches played, regardless of number. In either case, if the average points per game is tied, the rest of the tie breakers can be used to determine placement, including averaging tiebreakers per game if needed (i.e. goals per game).
- In the event a game is in progress and is abandoned during the play for any reason, the team getting the forfeit win will either utilize the process outlined above or the score at the time play concluded, whichever is in their benefit.
- Only the winners from each age group should report to the specific award area after the completion of the team's final game at Regional competition.
- Tiebreakers: For teams tied in points at the end of a round-robin competition, tiebreaker criteria shall be: 1) head to head competitions (but not in the case of a three-way tie); 2) goal differential (max of 5 per game); 3) total goals (max of 5 per game); 4) fewest goals allowed; and 5) kicks from the mark.
- In a case where three teams are tied in points but one team has defeated the other teams tied in points, the
 - The winner of the two games will advance.
- If 3 teams are tied in all of our tiebreakers and no one has defeated each other (Example all teams played 0-0 games) then a 3 way coin flip will decide who advances. The first flip of all 3 coins that has an odd man out advances (Example 3 coins tossed at same time and two land on heads and one on tails - tails advances)
- If 2 teams need to advance from the three tied teams go back through the tie breaker eliminations after one team advanced from the coin flip. If everything is still tied then penalties to decide who moves on



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GAME AUTHORITY AND DISCIPLINE

- The referee's decision in all matters related to the field and the game itself shall be final. There shall be no protests of any referee's decision or game result. Referee Evaluation Forms (to be completed by a coach only) are available at usclubsoccer.org or via the administrative/HQ location on-site. No other forms will be provided.
- Red cards awarded to players or substitutes during a tournament game or dismissals of team officials shall result in that player or team official being suspended for the next tournament game. The team official shall serve his/her suspension in a game involving the same team when the dismissal occurred, unless the team has no more such games remaining. In this case, the club official shall serve the suspension on the next available game. The Tournament Rules and Discipline Committee shall have the authority to take further disciplinary action should it be deemed necessary.
- There shall be no yellow card accumulations. Note that FIFA Circulars #866 and #821 requires that a sendoff for a red card or a sendoff after two yellow cards in a game be treated the same. Thus, in both cases, the player must sit out the remainder of that game and the next tournament game.
- Suspensions for normal red cards and staff ejections shall not extend beyond the USC TX Open Cup unless disciplinary committee deems otherwise.
- At all times, all coaches shall have complete responsibility and control for the conduct of their players, bench area, parents, family and friends. A maximum of 3 coaches / team staff will be allowed on a team bench.
- If, in the opinion of the referee, it is necessary to terminate a game due to the misconduct of a team or others associated with that team, the game shall be forfeited to the opposing team and the matter shall be referred to the Tournament Rules and Discipline Committee, which may, among other penalties, suspend the team for the remainder of the tournament. If, in the opinion of the referee, the termination is the result of substantially equivalent misconduct by both teams or by persons associated with both teams, the matter will be resolved by the Tournament Rules and Discipline Committee.
- At the end of each game, the referee's game report shall be submitted to the Competition Director.



USC TX Open Cup: Rules

GAME START TIMES AND RESCHEDULING:

- All games shall start at the designated time. A forfeit shall be declared if a team cannot field a minimum of seven (7) players at the start time of the game. However, the Tournament Director shall have the authority to adjust the schedule in cases where a team's arrival has been delayed due to unforeseen travel or weather conditions or other circumstances beyond the control of the team.
- Every reasonable effort will be made to complete a game as long as the safety of the participants and spectators is not jeopardized. Should a game not be able to be started or should a suspension of play be required due to safety concerns or unplayable conditions, the referee, coaches, Tournament Director and Competition Director shall consult, but the referee shall have the ultimate authority to either suspend or terminate the game.
- If it is not possible to complete a game for the reasons set forth in this section, if the first half is completed, the results shall stand. If the first half is not completed, or if the game is tied, the Tournament Director or Competition Director shall determine whether it shall be rescheduled or another resolution of the matter shall be implemented. The schedule of remaining games shall be a factor in any determination. The teams involved shall be consulted, but the ultimate decision on such resolution shall rest with the Tournament Director and Competition Director and there should be no protests or appeals.
- In all cases, the Tournament Director has the ultimate authority to adjust the schedule of any or all remaining games, including shortening the length of games, to arrive at an equitable result and in consideration of the overall integrity of the competition.

ATTACHMENT B: Playing Format – USC TX Open Cup

Bracket of 3:

- The group winners will be determined as follows: Played as a single group of 3 teams in a round-robin format, with the team accumulation the most points declared the champion.



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ATTACHMENT B: Playing Format – USC TX Open Cup

Bracket of 4:

- **The group winners, will be determined as follows:**
- Played as a single group of four teams in a round-robin format, with the team accumulating the most points declared the champion. [Round Robin]

Bracket of 5:

- **The group winners, will be determined as follows:**
- Played as a single group of five teams in a round-robin format, with the team accumulating the most points declared the champion. [Round Robin].

Bracket of 6:

- Two groups of 3. They play 3 Cross Bracket games. Then the Bracket Winners from A and B groups play in Final.

Bracket of 8:

Played as two groups of four. The winner of each group following round-robin play will compete in a final game to determine which team is declared the champion. [Round Robin, Final]

re-seeded based on points. In a case where two semi-finalists have played against each other during round robin play, teams will be split into each of the semi-finals. [Round Robin, Semi-Final, Final]



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ATTACHMENT D: Birth Year Age Groups

Eligible age groups to participate:

2006/07 – Players born on or after January 1, 2006 (19U)

2008 – Players born on or after January 1, 2008 (17U)

2009 – Players born on or after January 1, 2009 (16U)

2010 – Players born on or after January 1, 2010 (15U)

2011 – Players born on or after January 1, 2011 (14U)

2012 – Players born on or after January 1, 2012 (13U)

Teams that earn a berth to the National Cup Finals must follow these guidelines:

Teams that earn a berth to the National Cup Finals must follow these guidelines:

Teams winning a Regional in the 2007 through the 2012 age groups are eligible to participate at the National Cup Finals.

The 2006 age group will be played as a combined age group at both the Regionals and the Finals. No over age or trapped players are eligible to compete.



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SPECTATORS

Home and Away team spectators should sit directly across from their team's technical area on the opposite side of the field. The Teams spectator area shall be located at least two (2) yards outside the touchlines, beginning not closer than ten (10) yards from the midfield line and extended and extending twenty yards going away from the midfield line extended toward the end line on the left. No one is allowed to be behind the goals. This includes both coaches and spectators.

Match officials may enforce these provisions and suspend or terminate a match if a coach, player, or spectator fails to abide by the request from match officials to comply. Coaches are required to maintain control of their players and team's fans on the sideline. A coach or an assistant coach may be cautioned and/or ejected by a referee for the misconduct of a fan of the team which he/she coaches.

